

# Board candidates favor regional development

By Tim Smith  
staff writer

With the threat of urban sprawl through projects such as the proposed mega mall in Auburn Hills, regional development is backed by both 21st District candidates, incumbent Lillian Jaffee Oaks and Myrten Byrd Jr.

They agreed that the Oakland County Board of Commissioners should make sure attention is paid to communities in the south end of the county.

"The county commission can play a role in steering funds wherever it wants to, and the south end of the county can't be neglected," said Byrd, a candidate in the district, which includes Southfield and a portion of southeast Farmington Hills.

BUT REPUBLICAN challenger Byrd said the county commission recently voted against a proposed development in the city of Royal Oak. The city had wanted the county to invest \$5 million in bonds for the project, at 10 Mile Road and I-96.

According to Democrat Jaffee Oaks, the commission is "working on developing areas already developed and to keep infrastructure in as good a shape as possible."

Those communities should have been in the process, she added.

Jaffee Oaks, meanwhile, said transportation is a commission priority for the county's southeast por-



Lillian Jaffee Oaks

tion, noting that a proposal was made to establish a county clerk's office near the 21st District. She said the proposal has not yet been acted on.

AN INCINERATOR eventually will be needed because of the growing population in Oakland County, Byrd said.

And the candidate said that combining the proposed county incinerator in Auburn Hills with one used by 14 Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority communities (including Lathrup Village) in

Madison Heights is the preferred course.

"It's better to combine for the good of the entire county" instead of catering to individual municipalities, he said.

Jaffee Oaks also said the county needs an incinerator, but she added that other efforts such as recycling and composting might help make that necessary a minimal one.

While in favor of combining facilities, Jaffee Oaks emphasized that the county first would have to listen to input from communities either in SCORHA or the Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwestern Oakland County, which includes Southfield.

PAYING OVERTIME to drill instructors hired for the county sheriff's boot camp is the way to go but only for the short term, Jaffee Oaks said.

An evaluation of how effective the minimum confinement program is should take place in four to six months. "Then propose how to man the program."

Byrd agreed that overtime pay is something the county should consider on a temporary basis, until it is determined whether or not the boot camp should be continued.

He said he thinks the boot camp concept is a good one because it is "an interim step" toward changing law breakers into productive citizens.



But before the program becomes a permanent one, an assessment should take place in about a year to find out how many people who completed boot camp subsequently wound up back in jail, Byrd said.

BOTH CANDIDATES said Democrats, despite being the minority party on the commission, should forge ahead toward achieving its legislative agenda.

But Jaffee Oaks stressed that issues "should be completely non-partisan, you vote the way the issues go and not on a party basis."

With 20 Republicans and seven Democrats now comprising the commission, many proposals brought up by the minority party have not been acted upon, according to Jaffee Oaks.

Although he calls himself a "party man," Byrd indicated that he wouldn't hesitate to support the needs of the people in the 21st District over his party allegiance in cases where that would be warranted.



Myrten Byrd Jr.

BECAUSE BYRD, if elected, would become a member of the majority party and because county executive Daniel Murphy also is a Republican, that would better allow him to get things done for his district.

Meanwhile, the general public could put more pressure on county decision makers if it were better educated on how the system works, he added. "People know about city councils, but county government is so important."

Jaffee Oaks said there should be more give and take between the poli-

cy-making commission and county executive, a quality that she added is lacking now.

"The county executive sometimes is not cognizant of the same issues that we (Democrats) are," Jaffee Oaks said. "It depends on the issue. There could be a better relationship... through discussion, a lot of communication."

There is a checks and balances system in place between the two, Jaffee Oaks added. Although Murphy can veto a commission resolution he dislikes, the commission can override the veto.

CONTINUING to work on several ongoing problems that the commission hasn't been able to yet solve would be a goal for Jaffee Oaks.

"There is a dire need for more funds being poured into the mental health area," Jaffee Oaks said. Another problem area is improving transportation.

According to the incumbent, she helped get a resolution passed to study child care for county employees that needs to be further probed.

Byrd said he would "be a fresh face in Pontiac," and be accessible to the "regular, ordinary people."

Also, he promised to provide new leadership and help unite divergent groups in the district.

## Hills residents meet for 3rd time in county board race

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Two Farmington Hills residents will square off for the third time Nov. 6, vying for the District 15 seat on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Although incumbent Republican David Moffitt, 36, and challenging Democrat Albert Zolton, 55, both list solid waste and garbage removal, taxes and roads as top priorities, each is taking a different look at the issues on this year's campaign trail.

The two also faced each other in 1988 and 1986, vying for the same seat.

Moffitt, a Blingham Farms-based attorney, believes he has done a good job as a 3-term Oakland County commissioner during the past six years, considering what he calls the "opaque, slow-moving river" of county government. He is taking a



David Moffitt

low-key approach to the campaign, using informational newsletters to tout county issues.

Challenger Zolton, an associate professor at Mercy College, believes it's time Moffitt and other commissioners "got off their soft seats and made the hard decisions." As he has in past campaigns, he is going door-to-door, meeting voters and trying to make inroads in what he knows is a heavily Republican district.

THE 15TH District covers the north central to northeast part of Farmington Hills, a small piece in the southeast corner of West Bloomfield Township, the southwest corner of Bloomfield Township, the village of Franklin and a small portion of Southfield Township.

On the issue of solid waste, recycling and other garbage concerns, both candidates realize something needs to be done quickly.

Moffitt said when he took office, there had been "10 years of talk," about the issue, and that he was pleased it has finally been trans-



ferred into action which includes a plan for recycling, reusing and incinerating garbage.

But the regulatory environment has caused the county problems, Moffitt admits.

"THE LAWS SEEM to change every darn day," he said. "It's just a staggering burden of work that we have not been staffed to deal with. It's just barely manageable."

The solid waste issue has been studied for "too long," Zolton said, adding that the county needs to address the issue now.

He calls the solid waste issue "a



Albert Zolton

bi-partisan issue, a people issue," which has been stalled because of partisan politics. He is in favor of

the waste-to-energy incineration which would "pay for itself — the energy could easily be sold."

Politically speaking, Moffitt said he believes he can do a better job on the commission, which currently has a majority of Republicans. Zolton believes more Democrats on the county commission will give Oakland County more clout in Lansing with the Legislature.

Moffitt is married to Kathleen Moffitt, a student at the University of Detroit, and has a new son born in June.

His law practice focuses on real estate and defense work.

ZOLTON TEACHES theater and communications at Mercy College. He is married to Mary Kay Zolton and has two children.

He has been a precinct delegate since 1984, and was a member of the Farmington Hills Mayor's Committee of Increase Voter Participation from 1986-88.

## Board hears complaints about school bus service

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

It's been a banner year for complaints about school bus service.

About 30 residents attended a meeting of the Farmington school board's Safety Committee Tuesday to air their complaints — many more than trustees recall hearing in years past.

Concerns came from throughout the district, and involved children of all ages, from elementary through high school.

"I will not let something happen to my kids — my kids come first," said one parent of a Warner Middle School student who has to cross the 14 Mile-Middlebelt intersection. "I leave work everyday to pick up my daughter."

Parents were concerned about bus stop locations with traffic problems, students walking to school in the dark, and students walking too far to a bus stop. Parental inconvenience was also noted in several cases. One non-parent complained about kids at the bus stop coming onto his property and playing with his dogs.

BEVERLY HAUSMAN, who supervises transportation operations for the Farmington district, said the district receives hundreds of calls at the beginning of each school year, sometimes upwards of 500 in a day.

But trustees said there appear to be more complaints this year coming directly to the board level. In past years, there are never more than a few.

"It seemed as if the people had gone the full route, and had been turned down by the transportation people. I felt the only thing we could do was hear them out," said trustee Jack Cotton, who heads the board's Safety Committee.

"It just seemed like... an accumulation of concerns."

Those complaining Tuesday had written letters to the board detailing their concerns. Cotton called another meeting for 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 31, at the board's central office to, again, discuss the complaints.

"Our concern is your concern about safety," Cotton told parents Tuesday. "But we cannot pick up every youngster at their doorstep when we have 10,000 students."

Hausman cautioned the board to take care in making decisions in the cases. "Each request taken on its own may not seem like a lot," she said. "But (there are) thousands of requests that never get to this level... It's an expense, it's an addition of (bus routing) time." Julie Teddy, transportation supervisor for the district's drivers, highlighted the district's guidelines on the matter. For kindergartners, "we try to stick to a five-house distance," she said. "We don't pick up kindergarten children on main roads in any situations. We try to centralize stops wherever possible."

Under the guidelines, kindergarten students can walk up to a quarter of a mile; other students can walk up to a mile to the bus stop and up to 1 1/4 miles to school, Teddy added.

funding, Flanagan said.

Although not behind with the payment, Oakland Schools has advised local districts like Farmington that its special education program fund has an estimated \$6 million deficit.

Bill Keane, superintendent of Oakland Schools, said the intermediate district will take five or six weeks to check claims against the special education fund by the county's 28 local school districts. It will then collect back money from those districts that received too much.

"IT'S GOING to be paid back from the districts (that were overpaid), spread over several years," Keane added.

The Oakland Schools debt to Farmington is noted in the local district's auditor's report from Plante & Moran, presented to the board earlier this month. Flanagan said it was his decision and his "fiduciary responsibility" to include the note in the statement, even if it is eventually paid back.

The auditor's note states that: "A recalculation of the last five years' claims submitted by all districts in the county indicates a shortfall... It is not immediately determinable what recourse the district has in this matter."

## Debt to district raises concerns

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

A \$2.6 million special education debt owed to the Farmington school district by Oakland Schools has local officials concerned, although they believe it will be paid.

Noted as an item of concern in Farmington's recently released financial statement, the questionable debt comes as the district faces \$5.7 million in cutbacks in state categorical aid funding.

The money represents about 3 percent of the district's total \$92 million budget.

"It shakes our confidence a bit," explained Farmington superintendent Michael Flanagan. "I'm not sure they have this under control. They're telling us they're going to reimburse us 100 percent. We're going to take them at their word."

"I think we'll get it. The only problem is time."

OAKLAND SCHOOLS, the county's intermediate school district, pays Farmington to handle several of its centralized special education programs for students from throughout Oakland County.

The \$2.6 million represents about three months of

### EXPRESSIONS

## 1/2 PRICE SALE

On The Fabric When Placed On A New Frame

Over 100 fabrics—33 colors of leather  
Over 150 frame styles  
Lifetime warranty on frame & springs  
(Some restrictions apply. See store for details.)

**FINAL DAYS!**

**EXPRESS**

950 S. Woodward (near Lincoln) Birmingham 647-8882  
Open Mon.-Wed. & Fri 10-6, Thurs. 10-9, Sat. 10-5