

Community Corner

This week's question:

What is your opinion of Tuesday's upcoming school millage election?

We asked this question at the Crossroads Center in Farmington.



"Being retired, we just don't feel we have to keep upping it (the millage)."
— Beatrice Schumacher
Farmington



"I don't think they should get it."
— Dale Milligan
Farmington



"We don't have children in school any longer. We don't feel we should have to pay any more."
— Dorothy Kobmann
Farmington Hills



"I just got back into town. I'm against it. We don't know what we heard about it before we left."
— Bob Ferguson
Farmington Hills



"I'm voting for it. I have kids in the schools and I don't want anything cut."
— Dawn Link
Farmington Hills



"I still don't know how I'm going to vote. I have kids in the schools, but it seems like they could manage what they have better. I don't want kids to get any less."
— Barbara Kenerson
Farmington

Hills council to look at options for 'active' recreation

By Sue Buck
staff writer

Farmington Hills will attempt to find other locations for "active sports" before putting them on the Peltz-MDOT property.

The council Monday approved 7-0 a five-year recreation plan, which would add \$1 million to a previously budgeted \$4 million for land acquisition.

Development would be for parks and active sports, including soccer

and ballfields, bringing the total in this category to \$5 million.

That \$1 million was pulled from the original \$1.6 million designated for building seven new ballfields on the controversial 72-acre Peltz-MDOT property.

The thrust will be to acquire as much land as possible for this purpose in other areas of the city, thus leaving the use or parceling out of the city-owned Peltz-MDOT property as a last resort.

"This isn't the final step," said Dan Potter, director of Hills public services.

The vacant land, located south of I-696, west of Farmington Road and north of Quaker Valley, has divided soccer ballfields and jocks (athletic fields advocates).

BOTH GROUPS turned out at Monday's council meeting, generating 24 hours of discussion.

"I'm not a tree or a bunny

hugger," said Joe Derek, a naturalist and outdoor educator. "In our urban society, we just don't get a chance to mingle with nature."

"Enjoying the outdoors is as important as enjoying sports. Here in Farmington Hills, we still retain a certain quality of life, although I know some people here would trade it away for a few dollars."

The Peltz-MDOT property is the site of the 100-year-old Beech Maple "climax" forest (the trees have reached their maximum growth) and the prickly ash shrub, a food source for the caterpillar of the Giant Swallowtail butterfly, Derek said after the meeting.

Representatives of the baseball and soccer leagues say they need more fields. Some 1,100-1,200 kids participated in 85 teams sponsored by South Farmington Baseball League last year.

League officials maintain that another five or six fields should be added to the existing 19 fields.

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JOE MILLER, representative of the Farmington Soccer Club, believes the action plan is a good one and said he would recommend passage of the recreation millage to his members.

"Every field is filled," said Ray DelCorvo of the North Farmington-West Bloomfield baseball organization. Last year, 1,400 children participated, he said.

Area backyard naturalists contend that other areas in the Hills should be exhausted as choices first before tampering with the Peltz-MDOT property which they describe as "pristine." They want as much of the wooded and hilly area preserved as possible.

Roy Lindhardt, also an outdoor enthusiast, hopes the city makes more than a half-hearted effort in finding alternative sites.

City officials are expected to draft

a plan explaining how money will be used if voters later this year renew a .05-mill parks and recreation tax which expired in July 1990. The Feb. 11 council meeting will set the date and language for the upcoming millage.

Council also nixed a \$60,000 snow-making machine which was originally included in the five-year action plan. Councilmembers Nancy Bates, Terry Sever and Larry Lichtman wanted the snow-making machine to remain in the plan.

"I can accept this plan as it is or with changes," councilman Ben Marks said. "If we don't get the millage passed, we can throw this plan down the toilet because there is no money for this plan in the general fund."

UNDER THE proposed five-year action plan — distributed to city officials and interested residents in mid-January — the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended construction of four ballfields and three soccer fields, gravel roads,

hiking trails, picnic area and parking on Peltz-MDOT.

Also included in the five-year action plan with parks and recreational millage revenues as financing sources are:

- Bicycle pathway development (\$325,000)
- Senior adult cultural facility, lease or build (\$2.4 million)
- Ball and soccer fields, one new ball field and renovation of 10 existing soccer fields (\$70,000)
- Heritage Park capital improvements (\$290,000)
- Acquisition of a roving recreational trailer (\$25,000)
- Senior transportation vehicles (\$270,000)
- Golf course acquisition expansion (\$3.1 million)
- Teen program center, lease or contract (\$125,000)

Planning commissioners want Peltz-MDOT mentioned in the plan as simply a community park. It's exact future configuration would remain vague.

Man gets prison for threatening cop

A Farmington Hills man has received a two-year prison sentence and a concurrent probationary sentence for threatening an off-duty Detroit police officer with a gun in an incident at the Gateways Apartments last May.

In a one-day bench trial before Judge Edward Senack in Oakland County Circuit Court Tuesday, 28-year-old Miguel Vassel was found guilty of felonious assault and felony firearms charges.

Senack sentenced him to two years prison for the firearms charges, and gave him credit for 12

days served in jail before his preliminary examination last spring. Vassel will serve a two-year probation term concurrently for the felonious assault charge.

The incident occurred the evening of May 29, 1990, when Vassel threatened an off-duty Detroit police officer with a shotgun at the guardhouse of the Gateways Apartments, which are on 12 Mile just east of Harrison High School. The officer pulled his

service revolver and wounded the man, who was taken to Botsford General Hospital where he was later arraigned on the charges. The officer was at the complex helping a female cousin move from an apartment she shared with Vassel.

It was determined Detroit Police Officer Robert Dunlap fired in self-defense and he was not charged in the incident.

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