

points of view

Let's say yes to Hills parks millage

By Mark Davis
special writer

I'M CONCERNED about the outcome of the parks and recreation millage renewal election in Farmington Hills on May 7. Why? Some residents may vote no.

How could residents possibly vote against continuing a millage that:

- Provides funding for needed bike trails, playgrounds, youth athletic fields, senior citizen facilities, teen activities and preserves a pristine woodland for future generations.

- Is the product of over one year of concentrated study, heated debate, and ultimate compromise that satisfies every involved citizen.

- Is a renewal, not a "new tax."

• Is probably the best bargain for my tax dollar I've ever seen.

If you are a registered voter, invest a minute or two right now. Review the facts before casting your ballot on May 7. Make sure the following assumptions do not sway your vote.

NEGATIVE PUBLICITY — During the past year, the Observer has meticulously covered the public debate surrounding the Farmington Hills Parks & Recreation Master Plan, the Feltz-MDOT property and related issues. The debate has been heated, emotional and very public. I was one of the most constant critics. The democratic process works. Every dedicated resident was heard. Plans were modified and agreement

guest column

was reached. The millage plan was hammered out through an arduous process of detailed study and dozens of public meetings.

An always open microphone at Farmington Hills city council meetings and unfettered reporting by the Observer allowed everyone a chance to contribute their views. A program that best serves the needs of all Farmington Hills residents has resulted.

Unfortunately, some voters who read about the earlier controversies

may have prematurely decided to vote against the millage renewal.

VOTER APATHY — It's a shame. Farmington Hills has more than 40,000 registered voters, yet fewer than 20 percent usually cast their ballot on these local issues. Some voters may believe the measure will pass easily and their vote doesn't matter. Every vote counts.

DEFEAT OF SCHOOL MILLAGE — Voters turned down the school

district request for funding. Some claim these votes were "bought" via newspaper ads by a local business, Alexander Hamilton Insurance. Will the voters who defeated the school millage also be opposed to parks and seniors? I certainly hope not.

Officials at Alexander Hamilton have studied the parks & rec millage renewal in detail. Their president is known for his concern that tax dollars be spent wisely. Headline supports the parks millage. If you followed his advice on the school millage, please do so again. Vote yes on May 7.

CONCERN ABOUT HIGH TAXES — Every homeowner carries a heavy property tax burden. The millage is not a tax increase. It is a re-

newal of a tax we are already paying. And it is a bargain — less than \$1 per week for a home with a market value of \$200,000.

Why vote yes? The programs to be funded will benefit everyone. Your yes vote on May 7 will produce a vital and positive impact on the quality of life for every resident of Farmington Hills. I urge each registered voter to vote yes for the parks and recreation millage renewal.

Mark Davis, a Farmington Hills resident, owns Professional Development Association, a training and consulting company in Franklin. He's on the board of directors of the Quaker Valley Homeowners Association.

from our readers

Why she's voting for park millage

To the editor:

I am writing to express my support for the May 7 millage. I feel that it is very important for the citizens of Farmington-Farmington Hills. Not only is the park a beautiful place, it also provides a safe and relaxing area for many events.

Last year I graduated from Harrison High School. As a tradition, we sponsored a pre-Prom picture-taking party.

In order to be able to accommodate the amount of students, parents and friends who would attend the party, without leaving anyone out, it was necessary to hold the event some place large.

The park was perfect. Its location couldn't be better, nor could the scenery been more beautiful.

By holding the picture party at Heritage Park, everyone felt welcome to come resulting in the biggest turnout and the greatest and most memorable pictures.

The volleyball nets at the park are a big attraction for people my age, actually all ages. There are very limited areas where teenagers are welcome these days.

At Heritage, everyone is welcomed. Most places for teenagers are lame and "cheesy", therefore no one cares to go.

However, I remember many times when we would all meet at the park and play games upon games of volleyball, basketball, Frisbee, etc. Heritage allows students to have a good time without having to worry about "partying".

I'm very concerned that if the millage is not renewed, facilities like Heritage will not be built for the citizens of Farmington Hills.

I truly hope that the taxpayers will see the need for this and vote yes, as I will. It is such a small price to pay for such a huge benefit.

Jennifer Fitzgerald,
Farmington Hills

Another yes on park vote

To the editor:

On May 7, voters of Farmington Hills will be asked to vote for a renewal of the parks and recreation millage. Among many other things, this millage will provide more ballfields and soccer fields for our youngsters.

I ask the voters to consider how difficult it will be in the future for our sports organizations to promote soccer and baseball without having enough fields for teams to compete. We must not wait.

The four home fields we presently use for 27 teams have never been rested. The fields are being slowly destroyed by overuse.

Let's help the kids and vote Yes on May 7. They deserve an adequate number of sports facilities.

Thomas K. Fero,
activities director,
Farmington Soccer Club

Three say yes to millage

To the editor:

The millage proposal of May 7 will fund a master plan adopted in early 1991. Questions have recently arisen with respect to the specific uses of these funds and in the intended use of property presently owned by the city and to be acquired.

The master plan expressed commitments to:

- Senior citizens. The millage will guarantee the ability to continue programs for the next eight years.

- Open spaces. Acquisition and preservation of quiet, green open space for residents to enjoy in its natural state.

- Preservation of the Pelz-MDOT property. Of the 36 square miles of Farmington Hills, this is the last one-tenth of one percent of the area of the city still blessed with a rolling, wooded mature forest.

- Bike paths, hiking trails, nature trails, arboretum.

- Youth sports.

This millage provides funds for long-term, thoughtful planning. A resolution recently adopted by the city council reiterated the council's commitment to follow this master plan.

Cities with commitments to parks, open space and children make the most attractive cities. These communities enjoy a reputation for excellent facilities and a high quality of life.

With this millage, Farmington Hills will emerge as one of these re-

spected, sought-after communities.

The adopted master plan is a genuinely positive step for the entire community. This millage provides the last best chance for the city to maintain and improve senior programs, purchase additional park land and preserve the natural beauty of parcels presently owned by the city.

Relying upon the commitments made by the city council, concerns we have raised are now resolved properly and acceptably.

We strongly recommend your vote in favor of the parks and recreation millage on May 7.

Roy Lindhardt,
Joe Derek,
Kurt Yockey,
Farmington Hills

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TEMPORARY PARKING RAMP CLOSING

Beginning May 1, the Woodward Avenue Parking Ramp will be closed for necessary repairs and renovation. No need to fret...there's plenty of space in the Chester Street Parking Structure and it's just kitty-corner from our Women's Apparel Store, and conveniently close to our Children's Store and Store for the Home/Men's Shop. Of course, when you shop here, we'll validate your parking ticket so you'll never have to think twice about time!

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