

Planners Will Decide

Heather Hills Organizing Against College

FARMINGTON Homeowners in Heather Hills are organizing to oppose the location of the John Wesley College adjacent to their subdivision in Farmington Township.

Leading the homeowners is Robert Wickham of 22733 Walsingham, Farmington, who has gathered signatures from 43 of the 55 homeowners in Heather Hills.

home is located on a strip of property which runs along the eastern boundary of the 53-acre site.

Armstrong is asking the Farmington Township Planning Commission to approve a site plan which initially calls for an all-purpose building to house living units, classrooms and recreational facilities.

THE PLANNING commission will hear representatives from the foundation at its next meeting at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 25, in the Farmington Township Hall on 11 Mile just west of Orchard Lake.

The concept of the college, Armstrong says, is for students to live on the campus

and take religious and moral-oriented instruction while attending state universities nearby for academic credit leading towards a degree.

One of Wickham's objections is that access to the 53-acre site is very restricted with bad road conditions on Drake, Halstead and Nine Mile.

The site plan presented at the earlier zoning board of appeals meeting, Wickham says, was lacking in detail and limited to the one multi-purpose building.

The foundation had appeared before the zoning board requesting a variance, but the board decided to refer the request to the planning commission to review

the site plan for the proposed college.

WICKHAM POINTS out that one of the foundation's principal backers is Ben Smith of Farmington Township. Wickham says Smith is involved with a group of investors who have assembled to purchase property on a combination basis.

Smith, Wickham adds, owns 100 acres to the immediate west of the proposed campus site. Wickham questions why Armstrong's residence is still tax-exempt. He said it was made tax-exempt when Armstrong was pastor of the Detroit First Church of the Nazarene but should be placed back on the tax rolls now that Armstrong has resigned his pastorate to direct the foundation.

"The residents are concerned that the 53 acres might be removed from the tax rolls at a time when taxation undeveloped property in the immediate area is escalating rapidly," says Wickham.

"Phase I planning calls for a beginning enrollment of 100 students, but what is the intended enrollment at the completion of John Wesley College development?"

"Will out-of-state students and day students complicate the enrollment of state-supported schools?"

"Further, the ambitious construction schedule of the multi-purpose building does not suggest permanency. Could the 56 living units at some later date be converted to multiple dwellings?" Wickham asks.

WICKHAM ADDS that although the site is located south of 196, the only access is via Nine Mile Rd.

"Will the college provide road improvements in the area, and who will provide the wherewithal for water and sanitary sewers?"

Assuming the college qualifies for tax-exempt status, Wickham asks, will it depend upon the township for fire and police protection?

"What is the source of funds for the development of John Wesley College? Are these commitments irrevocable? And do they provide a basis for assured planning?"

When asked why the foundation has been raising funds for two years but has yet to build a college, Armstrong explains zoning problems disrupted earlier plans to build the campus in Southfield, Beverly Hills and Bingham Farms.

Armstrong says the foundation is thinking of locating Wesley campuses near an Oakland Community College campus and near Wayne State University. A group of businessmen in Lansing have donated 160 acres there to the foundation and have asked for a Wesley campus near Michigan State University, Armstrong adds.

The foundation acquired ownership of Owosso Bible College, 50 miles northwest of

Detroit, recently by paying \$80,000 worth of that college's debts.

ARMSTRONG SAYS Owosso's charter is in the process of being amended so that col-

lege will become an extension of the John Wesley College proposed for Farmington Township.

The foundation reportedly has raised almost \$800,000 in assets over the past two years and has some \$360,000 invested in real estate. The foundation is said to own two industrial facilities in the inner city of Detroit, one worth \$65,000 and the second \$230,000.

Armstrong, who holds two doctorates from the University of Denver, wrote his doctorate dissertation on fund-raising for the small, private college.

the Farmington entrepreneur Observer

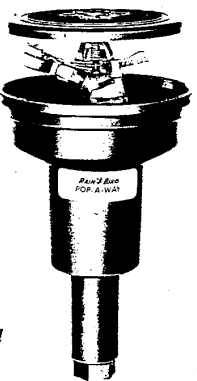
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EIGHTH FATALITY

David R. Torbico, 17, of 29900 Sugar Spring, Farmington Township, became the township's eighth traffic fatality of 1971 when he died Tuesday morning in Botsford General Hospital. The boy was driving north on Middle Belt Friday night when his car (shown above) collided with an auto driven by Frank Cox Jr., 47, of Farmington Township.

The accident occurred just north of Utley St. at 7:30 p.m. March 19. Cox was treated and released from Botsford and a passenger in Torbico's car, Rick Fisch, 16, of Farmington Township, is in Botsford in satisfactory condition. Torbico was the township's third traffic fatality within a week's period.

Writers Honored

Susan Toffanetti of North Farmington High School won a gold key for her short story submitted to the 1971 Scholastic Writing contest. Lauren Spooner of Farmington Junior High School received a gold key in the junior division for a dramatic script.

Of 6,500 manuscripts submitted from 350 schools, 829 received either a gold key, honorable mention or commendation.

Honorable mention in the senior division was awarded to Lisa Douglas and Suzanne Hult of North Farmington High School for short stories and to Kevin Kropp for an informal article.

Ruth Kowaleski of Longacre Elementary in Farmington won honorable mention in the junior division for a short, short story. It is most unusual for an elementary student to achieve a place in the list of winners.

Commendations were accorded to the short stories of Robert C. Davis and Barbara Page of North Farmington and to the short, short story of Karen Stewart of Farmington High. Suzanne Campbell of North received one in the poetry category.

Catherine C. Cowie and Mary Rau of North Farmington were commended for their informal articles.

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