Renaissance city?

Businesses take a chance on Farmington

Downtown officials are pleased with two unusual stores coming to town this fall and plans for a major restaurant opening next spring, es-pecially in light of the down econo-

pecially in light of the down econo-ny.

Santia Surplus, a temporary oper-ation, will fill 3,000 square feet at the Village Commons through De-script takes to the high visibility cor-ner at Grand River and Farmington Road.

Mr. B's, a regional restaurant group, plans to open a 6,200-equare-

Road.

Mr. B's, a regional restaurant group, plans to open a 6,000-square-foot restaurant next spring also in the Village Commons.

"In some ways, it's astounding," said wendy. Strip-Sittamer, executive director of the city's Downtown Development Authority. "I don't think wer'e in a position to gloat extrainly we have our share of vacancies.

cancies.
"But we want to be in a position to react to opportunities, and in a couple of cases, the opportunities were there. I think they're all interesting

businesses, not your run-of-the-mill."

SANTA'S SURPLUS will open Oct.

SANTA'S SURPLUS will open Oct. 25 — during the downtown's Midnight Madness promotion — and operate through Dec. 24, stocked with holiday items from Christmas Around the World and run by its regional director and Farmington Hills resident Karen Cox.

Fun Wilt Plaster, a store that blends ceramics and fun, allows visitors to pick out a piece of pottery then put on a smock and paint it. The store's owner, Tamars Peysathov, came to downtown Farmington after being part of a successful Summer Fun Series sponsored by the city's Downtown Development Authority.

The store, which opened Saturday, is on the southwest corner of the city's main intersection next to the new Books for Less discount store.

The new businesses are especially important for owners of The Village Commons shopping center, which has had more vacancies than tenants since it opened.

Since the former owners of the center split up, new owner Ross Financial has allowed more negotiat-

'You know, Farmington has a rap against it — that it's not a good place to do business. There's not enough parking and it's been a tough go for people. . . We were one of the first ones to take a chance there (Royal Oak). And look at it now."

ing for space, said Melissa Jenkins.
"The ease of negotiations has allowed four new office tenants in the past four months," she said.

SHE IS negotiating with a furni-ture store to come into the center at-ter the first of the year.

"It's a beautiful center and defi-nitely the change in ownership made a big difference."

Mike Nash, majority shareholder in Mr. Bs, said he is excited about

coming to Farmington and believes the city could be on the edge of a Renaissance. "You know, Farming-

Renaissance. "You know, Farming-ton has a rap against if - that it's not a good place to do business. There's not enough parking and it's been a tough go for people." But things were not so great in Royal Oak when he opened his first restaurant there eight years ago, he said. "We were one of the first ones to take a chance there. And look at it now."

Grand River 椰園 Farmington iov. 1-5 iov. 20-**∞** Leaf pickup The leaf pickup program for Farmington residents begins Oct. 29 this year. This map shows the area schedules and dates on pickup. Residents are requested to rake leaves onto the right-of-way area between the schowak and the cutto on uncurbod streets leaves should be raked to the odgo of the street. Leaves must be bagged for regular pickup on weeks not scheduled. All whiches must be parked on private property during leaf pickup hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4 pm. This schedule is subject to change. 坶 Nov. 1 Nov. 18, 19 Eight Mile TAMBIE GRAVES/Observer & Eccentric

on the agenda

Below are highlights from the preliminary agenda of the Farmington Hills City Council. Meetings are open to the public.

Farmington Hills City Council Council chambers 31555 11 Mile 7:30 p.m., Monday, Oct. 14

The council will reconsider the

Canfield street paving project, traf-Cannico street paving project, trail fic control requirements and evalua-tion along Drake Road, between Grand River and 12 Mile, and a reso-lution regarding land and zoning use by adult foster care facilities. The council also will consider introduc-tion of regulations for temporary free standing, wall signs and happens.

New eatery slated for downtown

ning commission, which is expected to consider the project in the coming months. Nash said he is planning to spend \$500,000 on the Farmington venture and wants to open May 1,

"Without ample parking, easy ac-cess and an upturn in the economy, I don't believe the vacancies in the downtown area will decrease.

An aesthetically pleasing parking ramp downtown could be built to al-leviate some parking concerns, Ken-ney said.

FIRST-TERM councilwoman Johne McShane said a strong city and civic pride go a long way in fostering new opportunities for the

Owntown.

She called for "adoption of strategic and intelligent ordinances which preserve the aesthetic business appeal of Farmington," enforcement of the city code, and promotion of

presuming all goes well.

He has already obtained a Class C resort liquor license through the state, as there are no Class C licenses available through the city. The number of Class C licenses, which allow liquor to be served by

the glass, is determined by a city's population.

Nash, a West Bloomfield resident, is the son-in-law of longtime Farmington community activist Herb Henry. Nash said his father-in-law gave him a lot of insight into the city and area. Nash had planned to open a restaurant in downtown Farmington several years ago and had even bought a building downtown, he said, but parking problems prohibited the project.

THE NEW owners of the Village Commons, Ross Financial, ap-proached him about the opening a restaurant here, he said. Melissa Jenkins of Ross Financial,

unique events and business promotion efforts.

Councilman Ralph Yoder said be
believes the downtown development
authority has worked closely with
landfords to get vacancies filled
downtown. "Apparently, there is an
overabundance of retail market
space in the area." be said, "and
when we have an economic downturn, the weaker tenant is at risk.

"I think it's going to turn around."
He said he considers it a councilman's role to talk up the city and act
as an armbassador: "which I think we
all do." Mellssa Jenkins of Ross Financial, said the lease for the space is signed and the project is moving along. The new restaurant will take up 15 percent of the shopping center.

"They've wanted to come to downtown for some time," she said. 'Mr. B's is by far a quality restaurant that can, by far, enhancy, the downtown. To believe it should perk up the downtown, not to mention the shopping center.

'Mr. B's is by far a quality restaurant that can, by far, enhance the downtown, I believe it should perk up the downtown, not to mention the shopping center.'

– Melissa Jenkins Ross Financial

Jenkins called Mr. B's "more of a fundy kind of Beinigans," a comparison to another popular chain. "It's definitely a place you can take your kids."

The city is pleased with the prosed investment, said Wendy Strip-Sittsamer, Downtown Development Authority greecture director.

"I don't Link' It's an understatement to say it's a coop. It's unlike



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filling city's vacancies

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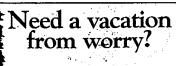
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The five candidates face off Nov. 5 to fill three seats on the city council. The top two vote-getters will win four-year term, while the third-place finisher will get a two-year term.

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