

## Community Corner

This week's question:

Read any good books lately?

We asked this question at Books Abound and Books For Less in downtown Farmington.



"I've been reading Kurt Vonnegut. I've just finished 'Galapagos.'"  
—Skip Rosenthal  
Southfield



"I've been reading a history book about exploring. 'The Arctic Grail' by Pierre Berton, a Canadian.  
—Charles Wilson  
Redford Township



"I'm about to head for Vegas, so I'm reading John Scarro's 'On Cards.' He was so good that they had to change the games."  
—Chris Grobar  
Dearborn Heights



"'Whiskey River' by Loren Estleman. It's a good book and he's a local author."  
—Angela Middaugh  
Farmington Hills



"'Jay Armes, Investigator.' It's a biography about Jay Armes, a private investigator. He's great at what he does."  
—Boss Grobar  
Farmington



"I like Agatha Christie. 'Murder on the Orient Express.'"  
—Violet Polakowski  
Dearborn Heights

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# Mayor's statement: No harm intended

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

How Farmington Hills officials handled the proposed replacement of wetlands from the 12 Mile boulevard project to the Peltz-MDOT park land was not intended to cause harm, particularly to the ad hoc Peltz-MDOT committee, said Mayor Jonathan Grant.

"While there has been public concern raised over the process by which this proposal unfolded, one must not lose sight of the fact that it was truly put forth with the best interest of the city and the property in mind," Grant said in a statement released a week ago to the city council and ad hoc committee.

But two outspoken ad hoc committee members still wonder about the relative secrecy of wetland replacement plans that city staff began discussing for Peltz-MDOT as early as April 1991. The ad hoc Peltz-MDOT committee first met in September 1991 with the charge of planning basic improvements, such as an entrance road and picnic areas.

"I believe we should have been in-

formed from day one about the (wetlands) mitigation," said Roy Lindhardt, committee member. "The last two meetings (of the committee) were concerned totally with the mitigation — a subject no one originally told us about to begin with."

LINDHARDT and fellow committee member Joe Derek remain annoyed that city staff made plans for wetlands replacement on Peltz-MDOT while the ad hoc group were making other plans for the acreage. "I think everyone concerned should have been upfront, especially with the committee. For whatever reason, they chose not to let the committee know. We wasted valuable time," Derek said.

Ad hoc member Dennis Fitzgerald, chairman of the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Commission, doesn't see what the big deal is. "To me it (how wetlands replacement was handled) has no bearing on anything. I've always felt that way. The fact that the city is doing something at the same time the committee is doesn't mean they (city officials) are bad guys."

In his statement, accompanied by a chronology of events leading up to the Peltz-MDOT committee discussing wetlands replacement plans, Grant said the city council was first informed of need for replacement on Oct. 21, 1991, which included a total of 12 sites. At the time, city staff requested permission to propose the Peltz-MDOT property get a wetland permit so the boulevard project could be bid in the spring of 1992.

THE CITY received a permit Feb. 5 from the state Department of Natural Resources to allow the city to fill in regulated wetlands along the 12 Mile boulevard. The permit allows replacement of only 5.1 acres and does not specify where the wetlands must be replaced.

Without the replacement of wetlands along 12 Mile, the city stood to lose a \$3.6 million state grant that will help pay for the next estimated \$7 million boulevard mile. Hasted to Haggerty.

The ad hoc group will present its recommendation to the council Monday night to replace a maximum two acres of wetlands — from the total

5.1 acres — on the west side of Peltz-MDOT, based on recommended plans from committee consultant Todd Holloway.

Fitzgerald, however, wanted the committee to oppose wetland replacement on Peltz-MDOT. With wetlands there, the city is prevented from using the land for any of its future needs, he added.

Despite public complaints that the city council illegally entered closed sessions to discuss the issue, Grant said the council was on a sure legal footing.

"AT THE point that our staff brought this issue to council, they had no inclination of what direction council might wish to proceed," Grant said.

He also made it clear that it is not uncommon for city staff to study an issue for months before talking to

the city council. "Surely, the taxpayers of Farmington Hills are better served when the city's need of land for a very specific purpose is not made public until that land has been acquired," Grant added.

Releasing information prematurely, he continued, would have guaranteed that any land the city was interested in for wetlands replacement, would automatically go up in price once property owners were aware of the city's search.

While Derek and Lindhardt wondered why city officials waited so long to offer a statement on how the issue was handled, Fitzgerald wasn't concerned.

"I think it was a sincere effort," Fitzgerald said. "If someone wants to throw stones at Jon (Grant), he just took over (as mayor in January)."

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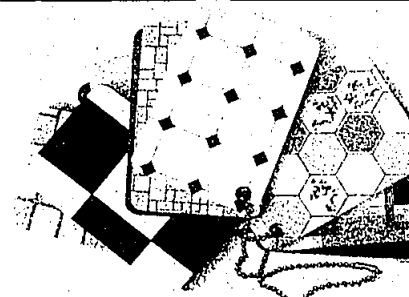
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