

Ohio firm, local one get nods

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

There is nothing smooth about ice arenas.

That was the case again at the May 16 Farmington Hills City Council meeting as the issue of what architect/construction management team was preferred for the proposed \$6 million ice arena project.

Ice Arena

After an hour and a half, council members voted 6-2 to approve Siegal/Tuomala as architects and Rudolph/Libbe as the construction manager. The idea is to pair an architect and construction manager as a way of preventing cost overruns on the project.

Council members Joanne Smith, Terry Sever and Cheryl Oliverio along with ice arena study committee members Robert Picard, Susan McKendrick and Dale Doleah with city manager Bill Costick interviewed seven firms May 6 and recommended the two for the project.

Siegal/Tuomala, a local firm, enjoys a good reputation with the city, but has not worked on ice arenas recently. Rudolph/Libbe has a solid reputation building ice arenas on time and on budget, but is based in Sylva, Ohio, near Toledo.

That created a problem for councilman Jon Grant, who along with councilwoman Nancy Bates, voted against the recommendation.

"All things being equal, I'd prefer a local business," Grant said. "I wanted to hear what wasn't equal and didn't hear it."

The Edkin Group of Farmington Hills had also been interviewed, but was rejected in favor of the Ohio firm.

In addition, Grant said although the architect's fees are covered by guidelines, the construction manager's aren't.

Sever said he has always pushed for local businesses on all things being equal.

"I personally don't think they're equal," he said. Sever said the Ohio company had recent experience building ice arenas in Michigan and Ohio with excellent results.

Sever added that Rudolph/Libbe had not bid on a competing ice arena project in Novi, while the Farmington Hills company had.

Schools smooth way for new conflict-resolution program

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Along with math, students in Farmington Public Schools will also learn how to solve problems minus name-calling and fists.

The district has adopted a conflict-resolution program, which calls for new curriculum, staff and student training and peer mediation in disputes.

The program will start for grades kindergarten through 12 in September.

Conflict resolution is designed to teach kids how to settle arguments before they escalate into violence. Similar programs have been successful in cutting down on the number of violent incidents in schools elsewhere, proponents say.

Farmington Board of Education adopted the program after a presentation by the district's task force on conflict resolution and violence prevention May 17.

"I embrace this curriculum," said trustee Bobbie Feldman.

Other board members said they see it as a short-term investment for a long-range solution. Superintendent C. Robert Maxfield said the program can

forge alliances, which would involve schools, parents and police.

Some residents were also quick to praise the district's efforts as innovative.

"I'm extremely proud of the steps you are taking," said Terry Fobbs, who served on the Farmington-based Citizens Against Violence in the Schools. "I'm very, very pleased. As we've seen in West Bloomfield, when you want to take action sometimes it's too late."

Not everyone is totally sold.

Trustee David York said he's concerned adding conflict-resolution curriculum could squeeze time for core subjects such as math and science. He also questioned whose responsibility it really is to keep the peace.

"I don't read much about parents here. Where are they?" York asked. "They have to realize when their children are not supporting a learning environment."

District Health coordinator Estralee Michaelson said fights are not a problem in the classroom.

Educators said in a district survey they're concerned about

potential conflicts in and around school buildings. Staff polled also said verbal disagreements between students are also a problem, which disrupts classes.

The Conflict Resolution/Violence Prevention Task Force was formed last year. The subject became a focus after a highly publicized incident where a student was beaten at Farmington High.

The boy's mother, Joanne LaFleur, was critical of how the district handled the incident. She founded Citizens Against Violence in the Schools and is on a state task force dealing with the problem.

LaFleur was also a member of the district task force, which included Farmington educators, counselors, and law enforcement officials. Her views have changed.

"In fact, when I go and give speeches I tell them how proud I am of the district," LaFleur said. "They're really doing something good. It takes awhile for something to get started."

"The best thing is everyone took the time to make sure they did it right."

director, who is Cowan. The new document gives the board, or a person designated by the board, the authority.

In the past year, eight students have received long-term suspensions. No student has been expelled from the district in 22 years.

"Suspension is taken for two reasons in most cases. It's not only for discipline. . . It's used also to remove (the student) and provide a safe environment."

In those situations, administrators have leeway in what punishment they can hand out. Currently, long-term suspensions are handed out by the Building and Student Services

The St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center presents "La Fete Au Jardin" - The Garden Party '94 - from 2-6 p.m. Sunday, June 5, on the Center grounds at 27400 Twelve Mile in Farmington Hills.

Co-chaired by Gail and Dick Puritan, WKQI-FM radio host, and Bill Bonds, WXYZ-TV 7 news anchor, the event benefits the center's programs for abused and neglected children.

Attracting more than 1,100 community leaders, the seventh annual Garden Party continues its tradition of gourmet appetiz-

ers, entrees and desserts prepared by chefs from over 55 of the area's finest restaurants, fine wines from around the world and music from nationally acclaimed jazz artist Alexander Zojnic.

The event sponsored by Huntington Banks, also features a fine wine auction of rare and collectible wines auctioned in 60 minutes by event chairperson Ed Jonna, owner of the Merchant of Vino.

The center's "Beyond Peanut Butter and Jelly" cookbook, featuring favorite recipes from Gar-

den Party chefs, will be available for a donation to the center.

For 65 years, St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center has helped support children and families in crisis.

The center's six programs include residential treatment, special needs adoption, treatment foster care, Marillac pregnancy services, Seton Community Preschool and Infant Child Care, and Transitions residential program for mothers and infants.

Overall these programs provide comprehensive services to 250 infants, youth and families

on a daily basis.

This year, the center celebrates the 150th anniversary of its founders, the Daughters of Charity, who came to Detroit in 1845 to open one of the city's first hospitals, now Providence Hospital.

Within two years, the sisters responded to community need establishing the St. Vincent Orphan Asylum. In 1869, they began a program for unwed and/or deserted mothers and their children.

The doors of the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center were officially opened in Farmington Hills in 1929 to house existing programs and provide additional quality care and treatment to the community's children and families in need.

Tickets to the Garden Party are \$90 per person, \$300 for patrons, which includes two tickets, and \$500 for benefactors, which includes four tickets.

For information call the center's agency relations department at 626-7527.

Strumming, smoking and relaxing



What parks are for: Farmington Hills resident Greg Lewerenz, a college student, took advantage of a beautiful day last week to relax in Heritage Park in his home town. In Lewerenz's case, that means enjoying his guitar and a cigarette in the back of his Chevy pickup.

Garden party to benefit abused children

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DISTINCTIVE PERSONAL BANKING

Code from page 1A

oping consistent discipline procedures districtwide.

The board could approve the new student code of conduct at its June 7 meeting.

The new code is comprehensive and tougher, officials said. Due process for students is covered thoroughly, including how appeals can be heard by the school board.

The code also calls for short-term suspensions to last up to 10 days, instead of five. Short-term suspensions are

usually leveled for assault, battery, fighting, gambling, vandalism and harassment.

Long-term suspensions can exceed 10 days. A student can receive more than 10 days for arson, bomb threats, felonious assault, drug use or breaking and entering.

In those situations, administrators have leeway in what punishment they can hand out. Currently, long-term suspensions are handed out by the Building and Student Services