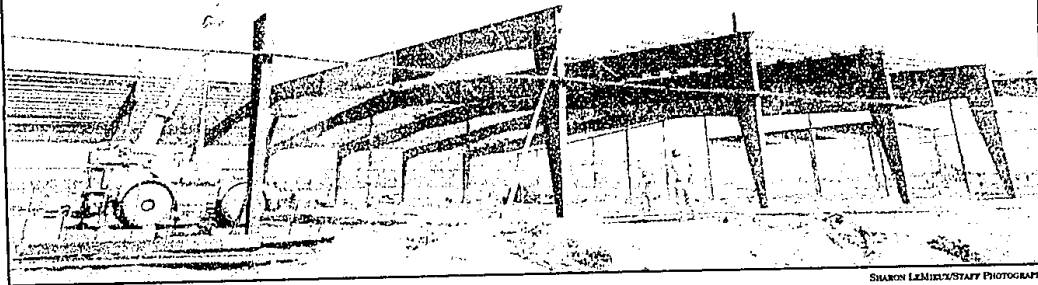


Steel is up: The ice arena in Founders Sports Park in southern Farmington Hills takes shape. City voters approved the project in August of 1994.



SHARON LEMLEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Arena from page 1A

hour for prime-time use and \$115 for nonprime-time use would likely allow the arena to make its \$1.2 million projected revenues along with other money from concessions, a pro shop and other amenities.

But some members of the committee, including Richard Dagavano, said the arena could charge higher rates (\$145/\$125) and still be competitive with other area arenas.

But Susan McKendrick, a figure skater and member of the original ice arena study committee, said charging the higher rate might keep away potential skaters.

"We have to be competitive with other arenas," she said. "We have not yet proven our-

selves."

Dennis Fitzgerald, former parks and recreation commission chairman and also an original study committee member, said even at \$145, the arena would be charging less than some others and as a state-of-the-art arena, could command a higher hourly rate.

After some debate, the committee agreed to recommend the \$145/\$125 rate for hockey, senior hockey and club ice (figure skating), but lower the free style/individual rate to a tiered rate favoring residents.

After Nelson recommended a schedule that included 97 hours of time for the newly formed Farmington Hills Hockey Association, with time for open skat-

"We have to be competitive with other arenas," she said. "We have not yet proven ourselves."

Susan McKendrick

ing, figure skating, senior hockey, learning to skate, shift hockey and community groups, Byron Siegel said he and Nelson had had contacts with Detroit Country Day School, which wanted to contract for some afternoon ice time that would change the "model" schedule.

Some committee members, along with representatives of the hockey association, objected.

Judy Antishin said she did not like the idea of committee members "negotiating" with out-

side groups on their own.

Dennis Patterson, chairman of the hockey association, said since the hockey association had about 65 percent Hills residents and many more from Farmington, and since it would be the largest user of the arena and would be paying prime-time rates, contracting with an outside group would be wrong.

The committee agreed not to reject or accept DCD's proposal until the city council heard the committee's recommendations

at tonight's regular meeting.

Six of seven Hills council members attended the meeting. Councilman Larry Lichtman said the committee should keep in mind that the hard part was getting voter approval of the project. And he added that a suggestion by Patterson that the committee include members of the hockey association would give the appearance of a conflict of interest, since the association would have a direct stake in the committee's recommendations.

Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi said he had no problem with a hockey association representative being part of the committee since it was only an advisory committee and the city council makes the decisions.



Jerry Nelson

Downtown area to boom with renovation plans

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Downtown Farmington will need a building permit the size of a bed sheet this spring and summer.

Several expansions and renovations are planned in the coming months. Most of those will take place at downtown businesses.

"We're going to be very, very busy here this coming year," City Manager Frank Lauffhoff said. "It's all good news."

Building work planned is not expected to affect traffic, either. Most include exterior and interior renovations at existing facilities.

They include:
■ A 7,000-square foot expansion at T.J. Maxx in the Downtown Center. Sewers are already being put in for the project.

■ Ongoing interior renovations at the State Bank Building. The owner had contemplated having a restaurant there but Lauffhoff

■ "We're going to be very, very busy here this coming year."

said, "It looks like it's going to be office space."

■ Conversion of the R R Products soap factory on Thomas Street into offices for August Production, which makes television commercials. Plans call for replacing windows, opening the ceiling and adding a stairway atrium.

■ Exterior renovations at Arbor Drugs on Farmington Road. Windows will be replaced along with the concrete wall at the rear of the store's parking lot.

■ Putting on a new facade that will create a peaked roof on Luigi's Barb-B-Que on Farmington Road.

■ Continuing Downtown Development Authority sidewalk and pedestrian light improve-

ments for School to Mayfield streets and Liberty Street. Also, the DPA will put up a picnic area on Orchard Street behind the Downtown Center after removal of a house there.

One of the larger projects will take place at the Village Commons. A major renovation on the nine-year-old facility is scheduled to take place, Lauffhoff said.

The building's new owners, Nu-Vest Associates, are also going to create a boulevard type entrance off Grand River.

"That would probably do wonders for this place," said Marco's restaurant owner Marco Conte. "Because it's hard to get in and out because of the traffic on Grand River."

"A few more stores would help."

City council gives go-ahead to perk up Shiawassee Park

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Carin Harrington has two play areas near her Farmington Hills home, but something always brings her to Shiawassee Park.

Harrington was pushing her sons, David, 4, and William, 9 months, on the swings Thursday. They were among several park goers last week in the unseasonably warm temps.

"It's clean," Harrington said. "There's no drug paraphernalia, no broken glass and it's safe."

"It has a river, so you can go and look at the water."

Farmington city officials agree the park has many natural splendors. However, they want

to spruce up its man-made features — mainly buildings.

The City Council gave the go-ahead to a renovation project, which includes adding a concession stand and a gable roof on the comfort station. Buildings would be painted to enhance their appearance.

Additionally, the city is holding a public hearing 8 p.m. today, Monday, March 20, to receive comment on a grant application that could bring further improvements.

The city is applying for \$40,000 in grants through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Two previous grant applica-

tions were turned down, but officials are hopeful this year. They proposed to match any grant money with 60 percent city funds.

If granted, the money would pay for improvements to tennis courts and parking as well as new volleyball courts and three new sets of bleachers, city officials said.

Tennis courts need to be "fixed up," said Tina Hauptmann of Farmington Hills. Otherwise, Shiawassee Park is a great place to walk and play Frisbee with her Labrador retriever and German mixed dog ZuZu.

"There just seems to be a lot of people here, and it's friendly," Hauptmann said. "And pretty."

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