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Council starts process to fill 7th seat

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

There were plenty of congratulations to go around for newly-elected Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi and council members Vicki Barnett, Nancy Bates and Terry Sever.

After the kind words, applause and reception, the new council began with the task of determining who will replace Vagnozzi until next August, where voters will choose the new council member. The council agreed with the new mayor to speed along the process. "I agree that this ought to be on a fast track," said Councilman Jon Grant. "But I'm a bit concerned with not allowing time to (apply) for people wanting to do this."

Councilman Terry Sever said he would prefer having some time between interviewing candidates for the vacancy and the actual election.

"I'd prefer that we not select on the same night," he said. Grant said he was concerned that there would be political pressure brought upon council members in that interim. But after some discussion, Grant agreed with the time frame proposed by Barnett, who said she wasn't worried about people pressuring the council for or against a particular person.

FARMINGTON

"My phone's been ringing for months," said the top vote getter in last week's city council election. "I understand power plays. But I think it's important that we have an open process and provide enough notice."

Council members set the deadline for applications of Nov. 27 at 4 p.m. at the city clerk's office. Anyone interested in serving should include a resume and statement on why they are interested in serving.

The city council will conduct public interviews at the regular meeting of Dec. 11 and announce a final decision on the new council member at the Dec. 18 meeting.

In addition, the council agreed to publish openings for city boards and commissions in order to attract interested citizens to serve. There are existing vacancies on the city's beautification commission, parks and recreation commission and commission on aging.

Most commission and board terms end in the month of February. Council members also presented their goals for the coming year and beyond for the city.

Councilwoman Cheryl Oliverio said she will be especially interested in the work of a committee on a possible city swimming pool. She wants to look at the feasibility of whether a third sheet of ice should be built for the city's ice arena. She would also like to see planning commission meetings cablecast.

Sever said he would like to see a traffic study and more improvements based on that within the city. In addition, he would like the city to consider keeping land it owns "banked" rather than selling it.

Grant said he will be working with Library Director Rev. Pasi

and the library board on the planned expansion of the 12 Mile branch thanks to a recent land purchase of adjoining property. He said continued work on the Grand River corridor, as well as work on the Eight Mile corridor, will be priorities.

Grant will also keep a close eye on the city's plan to improve its technology, including computerization.

Bates said she will continue her efforts to improve family life in the city through programs on the city's commission on children, youth and family. She said once the 12 Mile Boulevard is complete, which should be by the end of the year, she would also like to see a traffic study.

Barnett agreed with Sever and Bates that traffic would be a priority and said a regional approach would help the city solve that problem.

Vagnozzi said traffic, roads and density of development were the biggest concerns of the many residents he visited during his door-to-door campaign. The first directly-elected mayor quoted former President John F. Kennedy extolling courage, judgment, integrity and dedication.

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