

Police to potholes

Questions, kudos fill town hall meeting

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STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills City Council's fifth town-hall-style meeting drew a lot of questions from some 45 residents who showed up Thursday at the William Costick Center on 11 Mile road.

The meeting is the fifth of six proposed meetings and the various areas of the city. The city council wanted to meet with residents in their own area and discuss issues that affect them.

City officials got an earful, of both praise and questions.

Praise came early in the meeting for the police department.

"I appreciated putting a notice in the paper offering to review a residence security," said one woman.

Police Chief Bill Dwyer said the free inspection service has been offered for years, but many residents have not taken advantage.

Other residents asked about speed enforcement in subdivisions and other problems.

But one praised the department's reputation, noting that foreign visitors from as far away as Tanzania are familiar with the community's excellent police force.

Dwyer also introduced the two officers who are regularly assigned to patrol the area, Evan Warsceke and Eric Buckberry. Although other officers also work in the area between 10 and 12 Mile and Inkster and Farmington, the two officers should become familiar faces to residents.

Warsceke quipped that since the police chief, fire chief, mayor and police inspector Richard Niemis- to all live in the district, "I work extra hard."

Dwyer said having some officers regularly assigned to a given district allowed for better feedback from residents, made the officer more familiar with the area's problems and helped in crime prevention efforts.

Fire Chief Rich Marinucci thanked the residents for supporting the public safety millage that not only added police officers, but has added four new full-time firefighters and money to build the fifth station, currently under construction behind the city complex at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake.

To one resident's question, Marinucci said the

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Tom Biasell
— public services director

station, which will eventually be manned 24-hours a day, will lower the response time.

Marinucci answered a question about possible misuse of the fire department.

"We get a lot of calls from seniors that some would consider abuse, like when a woman says her husband has fallen out of bed and she can't get him up," he said. "That's something we'll do. We don't consider that an abuse of the system."

Another question asked about volunteer firefighters driving to emergencies. Marinucci said they are all provided with lights and sirens for their cars and are all trained how to drive in an emergency situation.

Public services director Tom Biasell anticipated some questions about the city's roads.

"We try to be a transparent service," he said of the city's sewer, water, trash collection and road crews. "The best compliment we can have is when people take us for granted."

But poor roads and heavy traffic have been noticed, he said.

Biasell said new SCAT traffic lights at intersections on Orchard Lake Road from 11 Mile to 14 Mile should help ease one of the city's worst traffic nightmares when it comes on line this summer.

Repairs will be completed on the Farmington Road bridge over I-696 this summer, when traffic volumes drop, forcing the closing of the road at that point, but hastening the repairs, which should be complete by the end of August.

Biasell said the completion of a water main project will end the somewhat-annual summer moratorium for lawn sprinkling.

In answer to a question about potholes, he said this was "one of the worst years" for the problem.

"The ultimate fix would be a major repair of the roads," he said, adding that 12 Mile and other county roads are not under the city's jurisdiction.

Residents from the Pendleton Subdivision south of 11 Mile on Middlebelt said they were concerned about the higher grade of the new hospice facility and possible draining problems for them.

And several residents had questions about the cellular tower issue, which is still being discussed at the planning stage. A proposed ordinance to regulate where cellular towers can be placed is in the works.

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Homeless from page A1

nothing like a shelter," said Farmington Hills resident Elma Granata, who was covering the dinner menus. "We decided to treat everyone like they would if they were guests in our own home."

Volunteers from the church and school also did little things to "Let them know people care," Granata said.

School children made welcome posters and placemats, and bought coupons for coffee at McDonald's. Girl Scout Troops No. 3491 and 3270 helped with lunches while Brownie Troops No. 2188 and 3352 helped with the shelter set up. Big Apple Bagel in the Downtown Center donated bagels for breakfast and IGA on 10 Mile and Orchard Lake roads contributed food items.

The parish center resembled a cozy diner with

linen table cloths and chafing dishes. The dinner was a well-balanced, nutritious meal, Granata said.

Homeless guests include those who have low-paying jobs but cannot find housing, Melville said. Transportation is another problem.

"It's a biggie," Melville said.

Some take up to three buses and walk a mile and half to get to work. Bus fare can add \$5 a day.

A lot of people don't realize that until they get down to dinner with people who are homeless. "When you walk away from the table, you walk away with a different perspective about the homeless," Melville said. "This program has gone a long way in shattering the stereotypes of people who are homeless."

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