

Bush, Campbell take 4-year Farmington seats

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The new kid on the Farmington City Council block again will have to wait his turn for a four-year term. But Jim Mitchell

doesn't mind waiting. Mitchell, a council member since 1995, tallied 484 votes - good for third place out of the three incumbents who were guaranteed re-election in Tuesday's uncontested race. With that, he'll soon begin serving

another two-year term. Winning four-year stints were the top vote-getters, Mary Bush and Arnold Campbell, who finished with respective vote totals of 633 and 518. Only 676 of 8,427 registered voters, an estimated 8 percent,

came out to the six precincts. Clerk-treasurer Patsy Cantrell said the showing was comparable to 1995, when 8.8 percent participated in a similarly uncontested election.

"I'm happy with the two-year term," Mitchell said. "Certainly, I'd like to have had a four-year term. But, given the fact there were only three candidates, someone had to be third."

Mitchell said he is still building the kind of name recognition that eventually might help land him a full term. But for now, he is eager to start work on his second half term.

"This is a good council," he said. "I don't think anybody has any ego."

His re-elected colleagues were in agreement. "I'm very proud to be on the city council of Farmington," said Bush, elected to her second consecutive four-year term. She added that her top goal is to "Make Farmington an even better community than what it (already) is, if that's possible."

Ten-year council veteran Campbell congratulated Bush and Mitchell for running good campaigns and said he looked forward to continuing the council's track record.

"I think you'll see a lot of changes in the community," Campbell said. "Downtown is key, and so is maintaining city services."

Campbell was disappointed in the "very low" voter turnout. "Only five or six votes can make a difference between a two- and a four-year term. It's close."

It was evident earlier in the day that few people would decide the election.

Shortly before 2 p.m. at Precinct 1, located inside Farmington City Hall, there were five workers serving one gentleman who was casting his ballot. With the election seven hours old, he was only the 48th person to show up out of the precinct's 1,078 registered voters.

"I think we sort of expected this, yeah," said precinct worker Harry Paris, who earned \$80 for

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more than 13 hours of work. "It makes for a long day."

Another precinct worker, Phil McHugh, chalked it all up to the uncontested race.

"There's nothing to vote for, not much choice," McHugh said, leaning back in his chair waiting for the next voter to arrive.

The rest of the day at Precinct 1 wasn't any busier. The total voter turnout there for the day was 90, the lowest of the polling places. The busiest day was at Precinct 4 (Flanders Elementary School), with 160 of 1,368 registered voters casting ballots.

Cantrell said the election cost the city about \$13,050, including staff time. Of that amount, \$4,500 went for incremental costs, such as supplies, ballots and wages for precinct workers.

"The cost of the election is, in some ways, irrelevant," said Cantrell, emphasizing that it is required per city charter.

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Salut! Luigi's gets beer, wine license

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

It won't be long before patrons at Luigi's Trattoria in downtown Farmington can have a glass of wine with their pasta.

And restaurant co-owners Dominic and Vivian Belcastro still can't believe their wish is coming true.

"I've waited a long time for this," said Dominic Belcastro, now finalizing remodeling plans that will enable beer and wine service at his Italian restaurant on Farmington Road near Grand River. "It's a necessity for those customers who want to have a glass of wine with their meal."

Belcastro said finding out Luigi's was one of the first four recipients of new Class C liquor licenses made available under Public Act 440 was "an honor itself."

Judy Downey, executive director of the Farmington Downtown

Development Authority, this week announced Luigi's license.

Three other Farmington restaurants remain in the running, however, said state Sen. Bill Bullard, who helped spearhead the 1996 law that opened up 50 potential Class C licenses for restaurants that are located in qualified DDA Districts.

There is no deadline on when the licenses can be decided by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, nor is the LCC mandated to award them. It can award any number of licenses up to 50.

"The 50 licenses can be either for beer and wine (such as Luigi's) or full-scale liquor, depending on what the business wants," Bullard said, giving much of the credit for Luigi's license to Downey and Farmington City Manager Frank Lauffhoff.

Besides Luigi's, Farmington

applicants included Mrs. Lovilla Tea Cozy, Dimitri's of Farmington and The Thai Kitchen. They were among 32 restaurants applying for the licenses.

The other three are still pending," Bullard said. "The LCC hasn't decided whether to grant more than one (license) to a DDA. But there are only 32 applications for the 50. Unless there are more applications coming in, it's very possible Farmington could get another one of them."

Lauffhoff said the city remains "very positive that the commission will get together and consider the other ones."

According to Bullard, his proposed legislation to bring more liquor licenses to DDAs, in order to improve business and draw more people to downtowns, was originally passed by the House but defeated at the Senate. It was revived in fall 1996.

J.P. McCarthy

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As producer of J.P. McCarthy's show on WJR radio, Michael Shiels knew the legendary radio personality very well. In his biography, *J.P. McCarthy: Just Don't Tell*, 'Em Where I Am, Mr. Shiels recounts the life and career of the man whose insightful interviews and conversations were heard throughout the Great Lakes and the nation. Please join us in welcoming Mr. Shiels as he signs copies of his book.

Mr. Shiels will sign advance orders and same-day purchases of his book. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the J.P. McCarthy Memorial Foundation.

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