

NOTABLES

Employees recognized

The following Farmington area residents are employees honored by Lawrence Technological University for their dedication in starting a new recognition program: Vernon Hoffer, Scott Schneider, Alan Prasuhn, William Moylan, Rochelle Martin, Barbara Noll, Suzanne Hasson, Lydia Lazurenko, George Schneider, Harold Linton, David Brown, Ronald Corkins, Roy Schenkel, John Kushner, Edward Dolan, William Toth, Yash Vij, Larry Virtuo, James

Abernathy, Clyde Kraft, Gerald Scherr, Judith Mitic, Matthew Schack, Abolhas Khosrovanch, Nancy Fearon, Parviz Ahmadi, Robert Fearon, Marilyn Fullerton, Sonia Henckel, Robert Ellis, John Goodenow and Richard Marburger.

Nutcracker Ballet

Maya Ergas Shwayder of Farmington Hills is a member of the Michigan Ballet Theatre and is appearing in the Nutcracker at Macomb Center for the Performing Arts.

By Tim Smith

STAFF WRITER

Get ready to walk, Farmington.

At last Monday's Farmington City Council meeting, landscape architect John Grissim detailed projects that would spruce up the central business district, with several of the suggestions emphasizing good old-fashioned walking.

Grissim's presentation of the Downtown Development Authority 10-Year Draft Improvement Plan gave an overview of what the district could look like in a decade.

"One of my goals in all of these developments is to get people used to walking in the city," said Grissim, who showed slides of various suggestions, "and not just depend on driving."

For example, enough space to shoehorn some green space, park benches and sidewalks for pedestrians could be opened up by merely converting parking at Downtown Farmington Center from the angle variety to 90-degree spaces.

Grissim talked about building a pedestrian link completely encircling the center, bounded by Grove Street on the east, Orchard Street on the south, Grand River on the north and Farmington on the west. Too

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The Farmington Observer

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Plans put spring in downtown's step into future

"The next 10 years will be very dramatic for the downtown area. It's evidenced by some of the new tenants ... Farmington has really changed, and is being perceived as a place that's nice to come to."

Frank Lauhoff
—Farmington city manager

many people now must walk across parking lots or in the streets, he explained.

"We want to improve the core of the city so that it is not just a place for cars but a place for people," Grissim added.

Several other of the schematic suggestions included:

- Enclosing a gazebo at the east end of the downtown district, beautifying it so that those who visit it will not see only the adjacent parking lot.

- Creating turnarounds at Thomas-Warner and Thomas-School. "We could have flowers, shady trees or pieces of sculpture in the middle," Grissim said.

- "Wouldn't that be tremendous?"

- Building a plaza (complete with fountain) near City Hall, at Grand River-Liberty. A small retaining wall would be erected to block traffic noise.

Grissim's presentation was praised by Councilwoman JoAnne McShane, particularly

because of its emphasis on landscaping.

"You've tied it all together" with trees, shrubs and grass, McShane said. "Whenever we can green our environment and create areas that are user-friendly to people, and allow them to have a few minutes of peace, it's our challenge to do that."

Mayor Mary Bush told Grissim "It's nice to know what we could do and it's certainly not impossible."

But Bush stressed that feasibility of the plan boils down to "dollars and cents, like everything else in life."

The plan, assembled by a DDA subcommittee, is still being finalized and probably won't return for city approval until at least February, until after the DDA finalizes its 1998-99 budget, said City Manager Frank

Lauhoff.

Between now and then, Lauhoff said the DDA and Grissim, Metz Inc. will probably blend in ideas from the "visioning" process being done by the city and Wayne State University.

"It's very exciting," Lauhoff said after the meeting. "The next 10 years will be very dramatic for the downtown area. It's evidenced by some of the new tenants ... Farmington has really changed, and is being perceived as a place that's nice to come to."

Among those tenants is Starbucks Coffee, which is expected to early next year move into the Downtown Farmington Center, taking over the space now occupied by Farmington Center Florist and a vacant storefront next door.

Although main principals involved in negotiations still refuse to acknowledge that Starbucks is definitely coming to town, the owner of Farmington Center Florist, Linda Trzinski, Thursday said she has been told she will this week sign a release form finalizing her move to another part of the shopping center. The florist will likely take over the former H&R Block office, probably in January, she said.

School would serve at-risk kids

By MARIE CHESTNEY

STAFF WRITER

Plans are under way to launch an alternative middle school for at-risk seventh- and eighth-graders in southwest Oakland County.

If the school opens next year as planned, up to 10 students from the Clarenceville School District — which serves a portion of Farmington Hills — could attend.

"These kids need an option so they can be successful in high school," said Superintendent Tom Tattan.

The approximately \$70,000

Clarenceville receives from the state for the 10 students would go with them to the new school. Clarenceville would reimburse the school out of its per-pupil foundation grant.

Once a site is leased, the school could open in the fall, 1998. Students attending the school would be the "most severely" at risk for not completing high school, students with social, behavioral or academic problems, Tattan said.

Students could return to Clarenceville as ninth-graders, he said.

Farmington is among the other school districts involved.

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by Herbert M. Gardner, D.D.S. & Martha P. Zinderman, R.N., D.D.S.

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