

## Special Services director to retire

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

The person who shepherded unprecedented growth in the Farmington Hills recreation system is ready to take a place on the park bench.



Dan Potter

Dan Potter, 60, is retiring as special services director. He'll stay until the end of the year unless a successor is found before then.

Farmington Hills City Council members planned to talk about how the position will be filled during a goals setting session Saturday. Potter has been with the city for 11 years.

"It's a chance to sit back and relax a little bit and look at some other things," Potter said. "I'm not sure we'll sit back in our rocking chairs either."

During Potter's tenure, the city bought what is now William Costick Activities Center and built the voter-approved Farmington Hills Ice Arena, Heritage, Woodland Hills and Founders Sports parks were also opened and San Marino Golf Course was refurbished.

He was merely in the right place at the right time, he said. Voters — who approved the parks millage in November to generate \$17-\$18 million during the next 10 years for parks — deserve the credit for the development.

"It's been a great opportunity to have been involved in these projects," Potter said. "The citizens are the ones who voted the

money in ... We just gave it some guidance here and there to make it happen."

Potter's boss credits him, though, for working with groups and providing clear information that helped the millage receive 72 percent voter approval.

He performed a commendable job overseeing ice arena construction and other projects, said City Manager Daniel Hobbs.

"He's done it under time pressure and not enough money; He's also done handsomely well with the staff constraints he's had," Hobbs said.

City officials will update the job description and look at the organizational structure of the Special Services Department, Hobbs said. The Commission on Children, Youth and Families may be placed under the department's wing.

Potter oversaw the equivalent of 90 full-time employees, which wasn't enough to keep up with the demands of a growing parks and recreation program, Hobbs said. The millage will help.

"It's become a pretty huge enterprise ... That's been part of Dan's challenge is that he's been stretched too thin," Hobbs said.

Potter worked 40 years in municipal government, which included 13 years as Head Park city manager. He was the city's parks and recreation director prior to becoming city manager.

He still resides there with wife Barbara. They have three children and three grandchildren.

Potter will have more time to spend with his grandchildren, though he may still work as a consultant, he said. The retirement is his second.

"We'll see if there's a third," he said.



Work ahead: Newly-named supervisor of the Farmington Hills Senior Adult Division Mary DiManno started with the program as an intern from Madonna University and has gone on to work 15 years. Part of her charge will be to expand activities and to appeal to the "new" senior, the one who has recently turned age 55.

STAFF PHOTO BY MARTIN MITCHELL

## New senior supervisor looks to future

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Her grandmother took her there and she never left. Now she's running the joint.

Mary DiManno, 47, has been named as senior adult supervisor for Farmington Hills Senior Adult Division at the William Costick Activities Center. The division serves an estimated 3,000 seniors a year. DiManno succeeds Loretta Conway, who retired in December.

The Farmington Hills resident has been drawn to the facility for nearly 15 years, which started when her grandmother Cessie (whom friends called "Josephine") died at 96.

Her grandmother — who only spoke Italian — found the Hills senior program to be a source of comfort and friendship. DiManno wanted to know why.

"I started to volunteer because I wanted to see what drew her here," said DiManno, who was a cosmetologist at the time working in

■ 'She's grown with the program.'

Dan Potter  
—Farmington Hills Special Services director

the family salon DiManno's on 10 Mile and Orchard Lake.

DiManno went on to earn her degree in gerontology from Madonna University and, subsequently, a master's in health administrative services from University of Detroit Mercy.

Her work with Farmington Hills seniors has run the gamut of providing advice on nutrition and exercise to sharing her own story about surviving colon-related cancer. DiManno served in the No. 2 position as senior adult coordinator.

When the city bought the Mercy Center, DiManno was instrumental in helping start

the kitchen operation. The kitchen area at the center serves 500 to 600 meals a day, including 200 for Farmington and Farmington Hills seniors as part of the Meals on Wheels program.

Mercy Services for the Aging — serving western Oakland County — also contracts food service from the facility, accounting for the other 300 or so meals.

Her being named to the post has more to do than just adhering to orderly succession.

"She's grown with the program," said Dan Potter, Farmington Hills Special Services director. "She has excellent knowledge of the existing program and she has some new ideas ... We're very excited."

One charge will be to incorporate programs geared for the new senior, the person who has recently turned 55 and is likely more active.

"I know we have a great program; I know Loretta established a great program," DiManno said. "I'm looking forward to expanding it."

### AGENDAS

#### Farmington Hills City Council

City Hall, 474-0115  
7:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 26

#### Agenda items include:

- Recognition of Farmington High School being named a Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School.
- Farmington Hills Year 2000 Plan — 1997 Year End Report.
- Consider approval of

request to establish an industrial development district by Robert Bosch Corp.

■ Consider adoption of resolution to the Federal Communication Commission regarding cable television rates.

■ Consider setting 1998 greens fees for San Marino Golf Course.

■ Presentation on proposed parks and recreation master plan.

## Clarenceville students to pay for summer driver's education

BY MARIE CHESTNEY  
STAFF WRITER

The free ride is over, temporarily at least, for the 60 Clarenceville High School students who will take driver's education this summer.

The Clarenceville Board of Education Thursday voted to charge students \$100 tuition plus a \$20 textbook charge this year for the class. However, the district will pay the fee for students who have a financial hardship and can't afford to pay.

Clarenceville district includes a portion of Farmington Hills.

The district also will monitor this year's program costs, and bring those figures to next year's discussion of the driver's ed program.

The final decision on whether to continue to charge tuition in 1999 won't be made by the school board until that year.

"We can get out next year; it's

a year-to-year commitment," said James Lancaster, assistant superintendent for instruction.

State law now allows Michigan school districts to opt out of the driver education business.

From the start, Clarenceville trustees have said the district should continue to offer the program. The only question, they said, was whether to charge students' tuition, or continue to offer a district-paid program.

If Clarenceville had dropped the program it would, under state law, have had to give each student the \$75 subsidy given to the district by the state. The \$75 would have partially offset the cost of a private driver's education school.

Lancaster estimated the program costs the district at least \$15,000 and possibly another \$2,000 when such indirect costs as administration are figured in. After the \$4,500 reimbursement from the state for 60 students,

the cost drops to \$10,500.

Once the 60 students pay \$7,200 for tuition and textbook, the cost to the district drops even further, to an estimated \$3,300. Lancaster said this figure should increase once administrative costs are figured in.

Trustee Thomas Aldrich opposed charging tuition, casting the lone dissenting vote Thursday. The other five trustees voted in favor of the motion; trustee Gary Casser was absent.

"Some kids don't look forward to much in school; that one thing they do look forward to may be driver's ed," Aldrich said. "Maybe that's what keeps them here. I favor no charge."

The compromise on keeping the program but charging tuition means students will have "sweet equity" in the program, said trustee Gary Garrison. "If something is given to you, you don't take it that seriously."

## Board ponders million dollar questions

BY MARIE CHESTNEY  
STAFF WRITER

Two big decisions now stand between the Clarenceville School District and an unexpected, but welcome, \$1 million.

First, the district must decide by March 2 whether to simply accept the \$1,050,230 take-it-or-leave-it settlement in the so-called Durant case, or sue the state in court to possibly get a bigger settlement.

The second big decision the Board of Education must make is to determine how it will take the second half of the \$1 million from the state, if it decides not to sue.

Will it join the state in issuing bonds and accept the money in 10 annual installments that begin in November 1998?

Or will it spur bonds and rely on the Michigan Legislature to dole out the second \$500,000 over a 16-year period?

If Clarenceville decides to waive further legal action, it expects to receive the first half of the \$1 million settlement — \$525,115 — in November, 1998.

"We have to decide whether to waive the right to

they are offering? It took 17 years to get this settlement; a second suit could take that long."

All money received in the settlement will go into the district's capital project fund, to be used to buy new technology, buses, equipment, exterior windows, lighting, or other capital improvements for the district.

Tattan said many districts will opt to let the state issue bonds for the second half of the settlement rather than rely on the Michigan Legislature to appropriate the money every year for 16 years.

"Can we count on future Legislatures to fund this, or will they default?" he asked.

Clarenceville is one of 472 Michigan school districts that did not join the so-called Durant lawsuit. When the Michigan Supreme Court decided the state owed the 84 suing school districts, it opened the door for the non-suing districts to be compensated also.

Served through the Oakland Schools intermediate district, Clarenceville serves students in Livonia, Redford and Farmington Hills.

The Supreme Court last year ruled the state had shunted the 84 districts on aid for special education and other programs.

It was estimated that the non-plaintiff districts could put in claims that could run up to \$760 million.

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