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programs.
"You don't have to do a big thing. It can be a little thing," Springer said. "... We have such a gathering of strength there (in churches and synagogues) and we don't always use it."
The coalition also will meet up to four times annually "to guide and to update community wide action planning"; "act as liaisons

to respective organization/agency affiliations to support one another's efforts"; "to serve as a clearing house to share and/or to provide resources or trainings on issues relevant to drug and violence initiatives."
Estralee Michaelson, the coalition's executive director and Farmington Public Schools' director of Safe and Drug Free

Schools, said a major focus will be on encouraging people to do whatever they can to help.

"You have some people say 'We're still not a zero tolerance community, so what good is it?'" Michaelson said. "You have to take baby steps ... keep people proactive, and tell them that yes, (they) can make a difference."

Council from page A1

like to have a resource that would familiarize new citizens with the basics.

Dick Carroll recalled how his family took in an exchange student and found months later they weren't communicating nearly as well as everyone thought because of a language barrier. After talking with people at her table, Farmington School Board President Priscilla Brouillette realized while her daughter had traveled to France, she hadn't ever spent time in Detroit.

The conversations proved a point made by MCMR co-chair Jim Hall at the beginning of the meeting: "We've moved past the point of politeness, and we've

begun to discuss the tough issues. People are getting more comfortable sharing our personal stories."

Over and over again, participants used the word "outreach" as they talked about programs they'd like to see continued or launched. Everyone wanted to see the MCMR council expand, with suggestions for outreach into neighborhoods, service groups, international businesses and other communities.

The list of proposals included activities as uncomplicated as "theme breakfasts" with a topic for discussion at the tables to a cultural diversity "expo," which would provide a forum for major

organizations. Groups suggested broadening the scope of diversity to include the disabled community and forge intergenerational bonds.

Keith said the council will include all the ideas recorded in mapping the 2000/2001 program year, but he also encouraged everyone to take them back into their organizations as part of a grassroots effort to improve understanding.

"We have a lot to be thinking about," he said, noting the council would have to be careful not to over-reach. "When we look at this list, we're looking at things we can do and do well for the community, and sustain."

Business from page A1

we want to open this up and encourage volunteerism and community service from professional services and restaurants, not just retailers."

The DFBA was re-formed in February, largely to deal with communication issues relating to the Farmington Area Founders Fest. In April, the members decided to again become a chamber sub-committee - the exact relationship that existed from 1986 until 1996, when the DFBA went dormant.

Now, the hope is for momentum to continue building, and for all segments of the downtown business district to network and work together, Flaherty said.

"It (the meeting) was positive all around," Flaherty continued. "The challenge was put out there to bring their neighbors to the next meeting."

"This has a lot of momentum and we're excited about this moving into the future."

At the next meeting, the DFBA probably will name leaders for task groups and projects, Flaherty said.

Deb Watson, owner of Deb's Crafts in the Village Mall, was also pleased with the first meeting.

"I think it went great," Watson said. "There were a lot of new people who haven't been at our earlier meetings."

The DFBA decided to become a sub-committee, rather than remain an independent entity, in part so that the chamber could handle time-consuming legal matters and paperwork required for an organization to be officially recognized by the state as a nonprofit group. As a sub-committee, the DFBA will have

bylaws and officers, the same setup it had from 1988-1996.

Coffee chats

City Manager Frank Lauhoff attended Wednesday's meeting, as did Judy Downey, executive director of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority.

Downey recently began sending out postcards to DDA members to encourage their participation in monthly informal discussions about downtown issues. Those meetings will be 8-10 a.m. the second Tuesday of each month at Starbucks Coffee, located in the Downtown Farmington Center.

Flaherty said the DDA postcard idea is a good one. "Anything we can do to create dialogue is great."

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