

# Hills mayoral candidates trade barbs

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Mayor Nancy Bates said challenger Ron Oliverio "needs to start putting up or shutting up when it comes to unethical behavior."

This was after Oliverio charged Bates was "blatantly unethical" for criticizing his criticism of The Farmington Youth and Family Services program.

"That's one of the reasons we need to change administrations," said Oliverio, adding that Farmington Hills "is not the city of a small clique of people."

Bates said mayoral leadership "recognizes the ability to get along with other people," and ticked off a list of prominent supporters.

Welcome to the Farmington Hills mayoral candidate forum, sponsored Friday by the Farmington Area Republican Club.

In the 40-minute debate at the City Hall chambers, the candidates answered a range of questions and summarized why they are running Nov. 6.

Bates and 94 percent of Farmington Hills residents surveyed said there was a good or very good quality of life, and that they feel safe. "That sounds to me like a city where citizens think the community is on the

right track," she said.

Bates read off a list of endorsements, from elected officials including U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, R-Bloomington, and Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson.

While Bates touted the success of youth and family services programs as a national model — she was invited to Washington to describe the program to a congressional committee — Oliverio questioned the level of participation and the program's true impact on heading off juvenile delinquency.

Saying he spotted 12 or 13 kids at a recent visit to a program center, Oliverio said, "You've got kids enrolled that are not going." He called for an independent audit. "Every one of us is for kids, but who is it for?" he asked.

Bates said her background as an aide in Lansing and her work

with legislators helped the city win noise reduction work along I-275 sought by residents. Bates also listed her work to initiate the Farmington-Farmington Hills Community Foundation, and her work with Detroit Edison to improve service in the community. "There have been no millage increases in the city the last six years," she added.

Bates rejected the charge, saying the land buy was a benefit as it maintained green space and kept land out of the hands of developers, whose commercial development would have boosted traffic. "It's land the community wanted for a long time," she said.

Saying traffic is bad now and getting worse, Oliverio said the city administration should be anticipating a problem, not constantly reacting to crisis.

Asked to address the 14 Mile Road-Northwestern Highway Triad project, Bates said that after seven years of looking, the city has found a developer with a suitable plan. Oliverio said a commission of residents from the area should be established to review traffic, environment and density concerns.

—Candidate photos by staff photographer Bill Breuer



Nancy Bates



Ron Oliverio

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