

# Money raised, but Harrison High School sign on hold

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About four years ago, Harrison High School Assistant Principal Dennis Noe tried to get an electronic message board for the school.

He's still trying. Variances granted by the Farmington Hills Zoning Board of Appeals have expired, and now Noe has to start from scratch.

Noe's story — or "saga" as he refers to it — is one of delays and a variety of circumstances. Time was needed to raise \$28,000 for the sign, and the zoning request was later put off until a traffic study linked to a fatal accident in front of the school could be conducted.

This time, Noe hopes the board will reconsider and approve the sign, which was ordered in June 2001.

Changes suggested by the manufacturer included red LED matrix lighting, which Noe believes provides 60 percent less glare than amber lighting; a 90 degree viewing area, rather than the 180 degree viewing area; and a 1.5-foot addition made to the identification panel at the top of the sign, to accommodate the appropriate school name panel.

Noe believes the red color distracts motorists for a shorter period, and they can more quickly focus their attention back on the road.

"This time I would like to lead an army of students, staff, parents and hundreds of letters that precede me to overturn concerns of the board. This is a message board that is right for Harrison High School."

The ZBA has recommended that the committee come back Jan. 22 with a new sign that has amber lighting, Noe said.

"The committee feels it has acted prudently over the last four years in dealing with the board," Noe said. "The committee has downsized, changed location and has changed the lighting for the purpose of having a safe message board, and we do not want to change. The sign is finished and it needs to be put up this spring."

Ronald Bruce, chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals, said



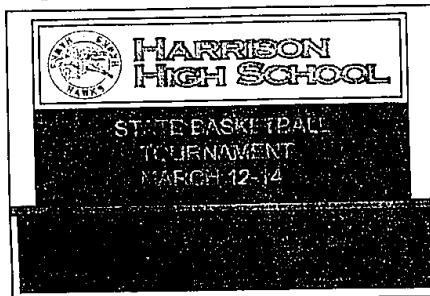
Harrison High School Assistant Principal Dennis Noe

the ZBA believes the red letter sign is too intrusive and too bright. "It's obnoxious," Bruce said. "It's too much of an attention-grabber. We've asked that they come back with other proposals or come back with the original proposal, which we approved."

Ten students have written the ZBA recently about the issue. Bruce said he could detect from the content of those letters that they are misinformed. "The students think we are getting in the way," Bruce said. "We've done our best to help him out. He or someone else has misinformed his students. They don't seem to have the facts. They are incorrect. We feel we have been cooperative."

Noe recalled when he interviewed for his position five years ago after working more than 26 years in a Flushing school district, he didn't even notice Harrison High School when he passed it.

A sign would resolve that iden-



Board decision: Harrison High principal Dennis Noe will be at a zoning board meeting this week to talk about this sign, proposed at the school entrance.

## Hills hosts MLK Day program

The public is invited to attend a special tribute service for the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., conducted by the City of Farmington Hills on Monday.

At 11 a.m. in the council chambers, 31655 W. 11 Mile, will be a welcoming presentation by Mayor Nancy Bates. Coffee, tea and cookies will be served.

The presentations include:

■ "I Have a Dream" speech, read by a Mercy High School student.

■ A historical perspective of the nonviolent movement for social change, including Dr. King's work, discussed by Patrick Plakulich, Ph.D., associate professor of Political Science at Oakland University.

■ The importance of public service and a commitment to serve the community, discussed by Karen Bolsen and

Jim Hall, co-chairs of the Multicultural/Multiracial Committee.

At 12:15 p.m., sandwiches and fruit will be available followed by a video of King giving the "I Have a Dream" speech and other video footage. Closing comments will include information about "Everybody's Ready: Pay It Forward" and what people can do to make a difference in their community.

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blew out," she said. "This year, we were able to purchase mini-flashlights through donations from Busch's, Papa Romano's, Nissan, GMAC, Home Furnishings Dealers of Michigan and First Presbyterian Church."

After the prayers, the group will walk to Nardin Park United Methodist Church, where speakers will recite Abraham

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Dr. King's "I have a dream" speech. Last year's unity candle lighting ceremony will also be a little different, Bolsen said.

"We're going to have the candle lighting by people of different races and cultures in our community," she said, adding adults and children will participate.

Students from Beechview and Gill elementary schools, Dunckel Middle School, and Harrison, Mercy and North Farmington high schools will provide musical and dramatic entertainment, and refreshments will be served.

For more information, call 248-426-4455.

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