

DDA

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was too late, because the position was already advertised.

"I'm a champion of First Amendment rights, freedom of information, open meetings and now I'm a business owner who really wants a say, or at least know who these people are because it will affect us for at least the next 10 years."

In the meantime, Richards requested to be removed from the process and asked that the DDA board re-advertise the position and begin the process again.

Also, he expected the 10 interviews scheduled before an oral examination board Tuesday to be postponed or canceled.

DDA President Ron Oglesby held an emergency meeting for the executive committee of the DDA board Friday morning, which was attended by Oglesby, Farmington City Manager Frank Laubhoff, Craig Grace, Bob Heinrich and Tom Schultz of the city attorney's office.

"We need to take this before the full board," Oglesby said. "We need to deal with this issue and do it fast."

The full DDA board will meet at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 21 in the Farmington City Council conference room.

The DDA doesn't want to offend anyone who requested confidentiality, Oglesby added.

Richards will request that Burns' request as required legally. "Some of her request has validity and some does not," Richards said. He wouldn't give specifics.

ORIGINAL PROCESS

The DDA board decided by consensus Aug. 13 that interviews of finalists for the executive director position will not be public.

They followed a process suggested and supported by Richards, who works as a consultant for the Michigan Municipal League.

The search/selection committee consists of DDA board members, chair Joyce Cornwell, Bob Heinrich and Suzanne Paul.

"As you know, any interviews conducted by the full board (a quorum present) would constitute a public meeting which is open to the public," Richards wrote in an Aug. 13 memo.

DDA Director Judy Downey, who will retire by the beginning of next year, has held her position for 10 years. The DDA director plans and coordinates activities in the downtown area. The position will pay \$47,000-\$53,000.

Here's how the process was originally set up:

Oral examinations of the "highest credentialed and qualified" candidates for the position were expected to be held Aug. 20. Prior to that, the three-person committee would review the 10 applications for the first time.

"Even if what they are doing this Tuesday doesn't violate the Open Meetings Act, it's bad form to keep all this a secret and puts a bad taste in all the merchants' mouths," Burns said.

In the first phase, an examining board consisting of Richards and two people he

selected for the exam board would administer the oral qualifying examination and assessment. This determines the top three most qualified candidates as finalists.

Terj Arbenowske, assistant to the city manager in Farmington Hills, who has experience in economic development, and Annette Knowles, Allen Park DDA director join Richards on the examining board.

Bill Richards narrowed the number of candidates from 31 to 10.

The one-hour interviews for each of the 10 semi-finalists will be held in one day.

The interviews in the second phase, before the three-person board committee, will be held sometime during the first week in September, followed by their selection of one or possibly two candidates for presentation before the full DDA board.

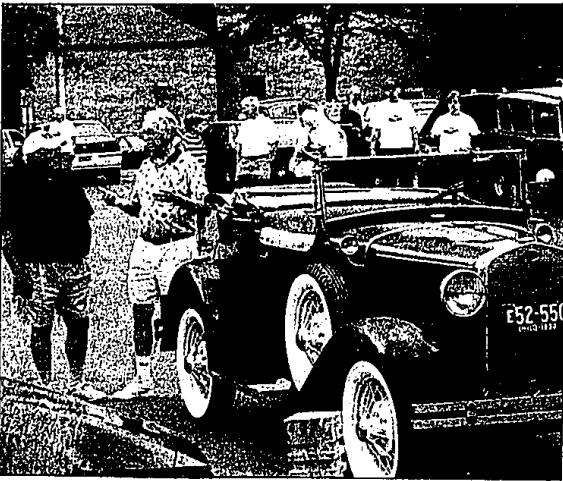
If no candidate is selected, the board could go back to the pool of candidates, or can begin the process again.

The intent is to make an offer of employment in mid-September and the tentative start date for the new director is expected to be Oct. 1, Richards said earlier.

The city also wants to re-apply for a Main Street grant which provides technical assistance.

Richards has repeatedly recommended this process, keeping the selection process private until the final candidate is presented to the board though other DDA groups like Plymouth have held open interviews.

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This beautiful Model A was one of the older vehicles in the cruise.

Bill Bassler / Observer

CRUISE

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different venue. We do it in grand style."

The event was relaxing for Ratkowski, who works hard for those whose passion is classic cars.

"It was a good time to wind

down and enjoy myself that night," Ratkowski said. "There's a lot of neat people out in this sport. Many of the cars were loaded. Those which could have four or five people were loaded. I have no idea of the people count."

Ratkowski is a member of the

Michigan Hot Rod Association and usually participates in the annual Woodward Dream Cruise.

The officers of the Michigan Hot Rod Association brought a car. Representatives from the History Channel also attended.

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