

the farmington enterprise & observer

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today's hot line

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bulletin

Because two members were absent Tuesday night, the Farmington Board of Education put off for one week the decision on whether to call a special millage election. "We want to make it very obvious a millage election would have unanimous board support," said President Richard Peters. Present board thinking is to ask for 3.5 mills (\$3.50 per \$1,000 SEV) at a March election date still to be decided. Undecided too, is whether millage request should be for one or three years.

what's inside

Who Will Pay?

The City Council has delayed confirming the assessment role to pave Drake Road and might be leaning towards changing the method of financing. The story inside suggests why and gives arguments on both sides.

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4 Area Deaths

There were four deaths over the weekend in the Farmington area, including: the mother of Mrs. Kenneth Perrin; father of Fred and Gary Lichtman; a 75-year-old resident who died from burns in a house fire; and an eight-year-old boy killed on the expressway.

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Raiders Halted

North Farmington's three-game winning streak was halted and the Patriots really raised the roof. For complete details, see today's sport section.

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Flood Chances

The Upper River Rouge has flooded seriously in 1947 and 1968. Could it do so again? Federal and state officials will report tonight.

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City Eyes Six-Year Needs; Maybe Ice Rink In 1972?

The City of Farmington Planning Commission has adopted a six-year capital improvement plan which envisions expending about \$1.7 million in 1972 and almost \$7 million by 1977.

The major 1972 project which planners see is a \$1.2 million skating rink and swimming pool, possibly financed by building authority revenue bonds.

THE SIX-YEAR plan was approved by the commission

and presented to the council Monday night.

The city's master plan requires the commission to adopt a six-year plan each year. The plan is approved only by the commission and is used by the council as a guide to develop the 1972-73 budget and to implement future improvements.

At best, the plan is a guessimate of how best to spend \$7 million should it

become available within the next six years.

Its importance is as an indication from planners of what the community's priorities should be and which direction future growth should take. But like a master plan the capital improvement plan is only a guide.

AMONG THE projects hoped to be undertaken in 1972 are:

Local street improvement, \$340,000; downtown

redevelopment, \$73,000; community park facilities, \$40,000; land acquisition, \$20,000; skating rink and swimming pool, \$1.2 million; remote water meters, \$7,000; sidewalk improvements, \$10,000; carparks for police, \$5,000; street tree planting, \$1,500; and street lighting, \$1,000.

For the six years, \$440,000 is seen as being needed for local street improvements with \$20,000 coming from general obligation bonds and \$300,000

from private contributions.

The \$153,000 cost seen to redevelop the downtown area would all be financed by special assessments against benefactors.

Community park improvements over six years could be \$103,000 with \$20,000 from a federal grant, \$12,000 from a state grant and \$71,000 from city funds.

Other six-year costs given top priority are: remote water meters, total of \$28,000 all from water and sewer fund; \$30,000 for sidewalk improvements, \$24,000 from private contributions and \$6,000 from city general funds; tree planting, \$4,500 all from private contributions; and street lighting, \$3,000 all from city funds.

DOWNTOWN redevelopment costs includes purchase of the Dairy Maid property on Grand River and improvements to the downtown shopping center and more parking on the north side of Grand River.

Community park facilities includes improvement to Drake Road Park with increased baseball lighting, restrooms and parking area. It is hoped 80 per cent of this cost will be financed by state and federal funds.

Other park improvements seen are improved lighting of ball field, more off-street parking, restrooms and a pistol range for the City Park at Shawansee and Power Rds. Federal funds are also anticipated to pay for half the

cost of a lot the city needs for its proposed civic center properties.

The skating rink and swimming pool plans envision an artificial ice-skating rink with seating capacity of 3,500 to be financed with building authority sales or revenue bonds over 30 years.

The skating rink could also be used for community activities such as high school graduation ceremonies, variety shows, circus, antique shows, dog shows or dances. The remote water meter program, recommended by the director of public services, David Jones, will give the city ability to read water meters without entering dwellings of residents.

Program can save man hours for the water department, says Acting City Manager Robert Deadman, and eliminate customer inconvenience. Plans are to install about 550 meters per year over a four-year period.

THIS PAST year the city completed sidewalks in Bel-Aire subdivision at a cost of \$10,000.

For 1972, the city is contemplating construction of sidewalks in Floral Park subdivision for \$10,000 with the city contributing \$2,000 and property owners \$8,000.

By the end of 1974, Deadman projects, sidewalks will be in subdivisions throughout the city.

Sometime between 1974-77, the city would like to find \$1 million for major street improvements. These are the

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HERBIE THE HAWK has been presented to Lewis Schulman, Harrison High principal, by students of the school's art department who were active in making the green and gold hawk from wire, sticks and papier mache covered

with down feathers. Herbie, the school's mascot, is five feet long. From left: Helen Naser, Marie Nettleton, Kathy Marski and Schulman. Patsy Kingston was also active in the project. (Evert photo)

Success Attitudes Implanted By Schools' Junior High Committee

When attitudes change, learning takes place and school becomes an exciting place where students want to go. That's what is continuing to happen in Farmington's four junior-high schools.

It started two years ago when teachers and administrators agreed to work out more equitable teaching loads and reorganize the junior high curriculum.

The group discovered that altering schedules, changing the structure, and adding classes does not necessarily result in improvement.

At that time, there also was no organized, systematic procedure for evaluating and implementing changes.

THE JUNIOR high

curriculum committee added parents, students and more teachers to include these directly affected by curriculum improvements.

After many surveys, studies, meetings with consultants and work sessions, the group agreed upon a set of education guidelines which, if implemented, would bring significant improvements.

The committee agreed to gear curriculum to ability levels of each student when physically and financially possible.

Guidelines stressed allowing students to make mistakes without fear of failure, involvement of students in decision-making and setting their own goals.

Students learn, evaluating progress on individual efforts and potential rather than competition with others.

DON KEEN, principal of East Junior High, comments: "More teachers than programs have been affected by the guidelines and the committee study process."

"Teachers are using more freedom in classrooms. They appear more relaxed and feel free to experiment in presenting materials and using innovative teaching techniques."

"The study process, involving all junior high teachers in some form, demonstrated the district's desire and backing for new

and positive ways of improving education.

"Teachers are now coming to me requesting formation of committees to do new things," he adds, "This wasn't happening five years ago."

Junior high principals note changes such as teachers staying after school to help students and teachers successfully encouraging students to help each other (tutor) in class.

"The comprehensive study process is helping teachers to continue developing different attitudes about themselves, about students and schools," says Joseph Nicita, director of secondary education.

"We are convinced that when attitudes of teachers

change, most often the attitudes of students change, and that as the students and parents develop more positive attitudes toward themselves, the achievement level will rise," Nicita adds.

THE JUNIOR high school staff is now examining ways of better assessing student achievement and exploring new reporting methods to parents on their child's progress.

The group is also boosting their own instruction abilities by observing each other teaching, by video-taping and then evaluating their classroom techniques, and by using formal student questionnaires and per-

formance assessment instruments.

"I think we all want to be accountable for the job we do," says Nicita. "There is more communication between the four junior high staffs now than during the past five years."

Alton Bennett, principal of Farmington Junior High, also notes changes since the committee issued its recommendations. "Some of our more inflexible teachers are now more willing to open up, to be more 'human' in the classroom."

He points to increased cooperation between departments and subject areas. "Like typing in an English assign-

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Have Cuts Hurt Junior Highs?

Although many improvements have been made in Farmington junior high schools, things aren't all that certain and there could be trouble ahead.

That's the observation of Joseph Nicita, director of secondary education, Farmington Schools.

"An austerity budget, caused when voters rejected a request for additional operating millage last year, has resulted in cutbacks that are already eroding a sound district educational program."

THE DISTRICT has increased class size this year to accommodate 400 new junior high students with 53 fewer teachers.

Junior high principals agree that in affected classes teachers would be physically unable to give as much individual attention to students.

Certain educational offerings such as art, music and physical education, have been reduced. In some cases, 125 students attend study halls supervised by just one teacher.

Other areas being affected by cutbacks include reduced purchases of library books, reduction of library personnel to assist students, no funds for student educational field trips and lack of needed instructional supplies.

The backlog of supplies are running low and instructional machines such as projectors and tape recorders, many eight years old, are not being properly maintained due to reduced funds.

The district has also reduced maintenance personnel and the principals state maintenance of buildings is being "badly affected."

"Our building has aged three years in 16 weeks,"

says Bob Brown, Power Junior High principal. "The danger in the cutbacks is that you cannot readily see these effects now but they will show up later," adds Nicita.

PERHAPS THE budget cutback effect hardest to measure is staff morale, Nicita says.

Principals agree that another reason that effects of reduced program efforts were not readily apparent is because the staff is "putting out extra effort to maintain a high level of quality education."

"But the willingness to do these things will drop with a drop in morale." Teacher morale and innovative approaches to learning won't continue without renewed evidence of community support, they predict.