

Township Board Endorses Charter

FARMINGTON

The Farmington Township Board Monday night adopted a resolution encouraging residents to support the proposed charter for the City of Farmington Hills at the May 8 election.

A resolution presented by Trustee Carl Oppenheimer states "the board encourages residents to study and vote for the proposed charter."

Residents will be asked at the special election May 8: "Shall the proposed charter for the City of Farmington Hills, as drafted by the Charter Commission, elected May 16, 1972, be adopted?"

Voters will also cast ballots for seven council members for the proposed city.



Winery Deserves Second Chance

By DAN MCCOSH

If a cookie company can push the idea in a national ad campaign that elves are doing the baking, what could the owners of the old LaSalle Winery claim?

The whole mood of the building hulking empty on Grand River in Farmington speaks of gnomes and elves - down there in the cellar, mixing in vats, adding a touch of this, a pinch of that.

The Romanesque building is laced inside with grottos, passageways and caverns.

The deviousness of the interior was enough to move the Farmington fire-police dept. recently to conduct a training exercise in the place, hopefully to keep their men from unwinding hose down some blind passageway or dropping down an uncapped pit in the event one of the recurring fires gets out of control.

The winemakers are gone and aren't likely to return. They were priced out of the market by an obscure "barrel tax" imposed, no doubt, by a legislature trying to figure out how it could get a little dough without offending a group as large as, say, cigarette smokers.

What remains is the building, a huge, hulking thing with plywood dangling from the windows like bandage patches.

Not that it doesn't have charm.

It started life as a railway terminal when corporations sought an image of stability that implied they had been around at least a couple of hundred years.

It was proper then to make your business look like a Roman emperor was the major stockholder. Today, with the brick weathered and vines covering the walls, the old building looks grown into the soil.

A couple of years ago, Larry Mayer, the florist who created a bit of Victorian gingerbread out of an old gas station in downtown Farmington, had an idea for a "mini-mall" in the old building.

The site along the river and the old building were both attractive. The idea was to convert the rabbit warrens inside the old building into a complex of shop, restaurants, possibly even a theater.

Mayer figured then it would take nearly \$3 million for the whole project, but was stopped by the asking price of Chamberlain Co., owners of the property.

Now he admits to a waning enthusiasm for the idea, if for no other reason than mulling it over for two years makes the problems seem larger than his will power.

Which is too bad.

It is the kind of idea that demands creativity, money, and a bit of a gamble. If it worked, it could be a showplace, with modern commerce revitalizing that whole end of town.

The funny thing is turning the site over to the usual commercial developers might not work either.

The foot-thick walls, industrial construction and structural steel in the place bring memories of the weeks they pounded away at the old grain elevators downtown trying to clear them away for the new Detroit riverfront project.

So the 2½ acre "shopping center" boys probably won't be too fast grabbing up the property.

One can't help feel that if somebody like Mayer doesn't wade into a solution, the old building is going to be caught in one of those real estate economic limboes for years.

While Farmington lives with it, looks at it and wonders about the future, the old place only looks good from one perspective.

That's on the tax-loss sheets of the New York owners.



ALEMEDA SCHOOL presented the spring music program, featuring the musical play "You're..."

A Good Man, Charlie Brown." Doug Fouts (left) and James Lockhart participated. (Everett photo)

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Rice Gets Templar Post

Gilbert A. Rice, who lives on Beacontree in Farmington, was elected Senior Warden of the Detroit Commandery No. 1 Knights Templar at their recent annual meeting.

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Model	Size	Inside	Overall (Roof)	Door	Area	Cap.				
		Wide	Deep	High	Wide	Deep	High	Opening	Sq. Ft.	Cu. Ft.
7803	8'x4'	5'6"	3'6"	5'3"	4'10"	3'3"	5'3"	2'4"x6'0"	15.75	81.5

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