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DPW building 1st project

Hills forms building authority

By WYLIE GERDES
FARMINGTON HILLS—The city has a new tool to finance public buildings.

The city council voted unanimously Monday night to create a building authority with the intent to finance a new department of public works garage. However, the building authority could be used for other municipal projects.

Building authorities, common in many cities in the area, are title-holders of structures. Cities pay rent to the authority to use the structures. Rent, from the city's general tax levy or from revenues, is used to pay off bonds issued by the authority to finance construction.

A new \$600,000 "public service center" on Halstead between I-96 and Twelve Mile will be the first project of the building authority, said city manager George Majoros.

The building should be finished in time to house the city's department of public works vehicles for the winter, Majoros said.

Farmington Hills has several methods it could finance the building, Majoros said. It could pay cash for a building, issue bonds itself, or lease a building from a private developer.

THE ADVANTAGE of the authority, Majoros said, is its speed. A general obligation bond issue for a building would require a vote of residents. Bonds issued by the building authority need not be approved by voters since no special tax levy is needed.

If the building authority handles the public works garage, the city could "rent the facility over a period of years and eventually own it," Majoros said.

Creating the building authority, Mayor Frederick Lichtman said, does not necessarily mean adopting the recommendation for the public works garage. The authority could be used to acquire recreation sites or "almost any type of property or improvement in the city."

The authority, which will have five members, can work only with Farmington Hills, city attorney Joseph T. Brennan told councilmen.

"Primarily, it's a tool for financing public construction," Brennan said.

MOST QUESTIONS from councilmen concerned the building authority's relationship to the council.

After the council voted to create the authority, it tabled a resolution giving notice of the city's intent to lease the as-yet nonexistent building from the building authority.

'I don't think the building authority is going to build cathedrals on speculation.'
 — Mayor Frederick Lichtman

The council agreed to pay \$31,800 to Smith and Andrews construction firm to act as architects and construction managers on the building.

Councilman Keith Deacon questioned why the council was considering such issues when it earlier created a building authority.

The council, Brennan said, could allow the authority to do the planning, or the authority could merely "enter at the last minute" into the project.

THE FIRST MAJOR construction project undertaken by Farmington Hills should be the responsibility of the council, Mayor Frederick Lichtman said. The council should get into all the details of the building and its design.

The building authority, he added, should be "for one purpose and one purpose only—as a financing vehicle."

The final authority should rest with the council, Robert McConnell agreed.

"If it's going to do more than that (financing), let's say so now," the councilman said.

"I just couldn't sleep at night if I turned over the reins on a half a million dollar project when in the long run the buck stops at this council," said councilman Mrs. Joan Dudley.

Brennan replied, "Their principal job will be signing their name a lot."

Lichtman added, "I don't think the building authority is going to build cathedrals on speculation."

Malamute fanciers hold obedience trial

FARMINGTON—The Alaskan Malamute Club of Greater Detroit, Inc. will hold an obedience trial and "B" conformation match Sunday, June 8, at the American Legion Hall Post 346, 31775 Grand River.

Junior handling classes will be offered, but no professional handlers will be allowed in the match.

The match and trials are open to all purebred Alaskan Malamute puppies at least two months old who have not won any major American Kennel Club (AKC) points or who are not champions.

RESIDENTS' RIGHT to vote on the building authority was discussed by the council.

A referendum on the building authority is not necessary, Brennan said in answer to a question from councilman Mrs. Dudley.

However, if residents file petitions calling for a vote, an election must be held, according to articles of incorporation.

He added that residents can petition for a vote on the building authority. Mrs. Dudley said she was worried about not taking any powers away from voters.

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