

# Farmington Hills candidates grapple with issues

By SUSAN AVERILL

Earl Oppert, mayor of Farmington Hills and candidate for reelection, pushed back his chair and rose to his full height.

"We may not have the smartest mayor and mayor problem in Michigan, but we have the biggest," he said.

Immediately came the matter from Keith Deacon. "Speak for yourself Deacon is Farmington Hills' mayor problem, and had just given his five minute introduction to a sparse audience at the Farmington-West Bloomfield League of Women Voters Candidates' Night Thursday at East Junior High School.

Without smiling, Oppert continued his own introduction.

"We want to give them (the electorate) all the service they want," but lack of money is a limitation, he said.

All six Farmington Hills city council candidates attended the candidates' night, including incumbents Jan Dolan, Earl Oppert, William Ortmann and Keith Deacon. Challengers Joanne Smith and Bernard Christy Jr. also attended.

COMMENTS FROM the candidates ranged from criticizing non-voters, to justifying the upcoming advisory referendum.

Mrs. Smith rapped the present city council for its lack of communication with the public.

"We don't want our city run by a few, like a city club. I'm all for running the agenda in the paper the Thursday before. I think the question and answer (item) in the agenda should be pushed up further."

"It's the responsibility of government to let the people know they are interested in having them attend meetings. It should be more like a town meeting."

"I think the budget should be a little more available," and the Master

(Land Use) Plan should be more strictly followed.

She called the advisory referendum a "phony issue," because residents don't know enough about the issue to make informed judgments. The responsibility of informing them was shirked by the city council, she said.

Another challenger, Bernard Christy, said he took a medical retirement from Chevrolet at age 35.

"However, my medical retirement will not have any effect, should I be elected. I'm very interested, and have a lot of time on my hands, so I thought I'd take a shot on this council seat," the 44-year-old candidate said.

"I DON'T ADVOCATE any big changes of policy. I would like to keep it (the city) low key and low profile," he added.

Deacon, who is ending his first two-year council term, said he would pay more attention to blocking the flow of "urban blight."

"As pressing issues, I think the voters are concerned with the preservation of their single most valuable asset—their home. We can stop the spread of urban blight by enforcing zoning laws. The Master (Land) Use Plan has done a good job of this."

Shopping center ordinances, sign ordinances and burning ordinances should be zealously enforced, he said.

As for the volunteer fire department, Deacon said it has been "listed as one of the best in the state. It should continue as a volunteer fire department," because volunteers are more likely to make a "more conscientious effort than a paid fire department." He said that any human rescue effort should be the domain of the volunteers.

Although Jan Dolan said she doesn't think the city has any real crises, zoning is very important. "We should stick very closely to the Master Plan."

Recreation and responsiveness are also important to her.

"I'm in favor of land acquisition for

recreation. Mothers realize the need for this. Doug Gaynor (city recreation director) is doing a great job with the facilities we have," but they aren't enough, she said.

"THE COUNCIL should stay responsive to the voters—the taxpayers who are living here," she said.

Oppert spoke to the issues of referendums and road bonds.

"You have to realize, this is obviously not a binding referendum. It's to find out what the people think."

People want road improvement, he said, and "we can do this by selling bonds. Paying off the bonds would be less (expensive) than the inflationary spiral will be in the next few years."

Ortmann, in turn, slapped citizens for not voting.

"For some strange reason, you get them down to a city election and they'll say, 'Oh, I forgot.' They should

be interested enough in where they live to go out and vote. I don't know, maybe it's awareness. People are unaware."

Answers to a question about council meeting attendance revealed that Mrs. Dolan had attended "perhaps three or four" before her appointment to the council as Margaret Schaeffer's successor. Mrs. Schaeffer was elected 4th District Judge and left the council.

Christy said he didn't attend the meetings regularly. Mrs. Smith responded that she can now attend them more often than the three times per year she previously averaged.

"I was teaching a class on Monday nights and had to give that up to run for the council."

When asked about the establishment of a human rescue system, Mrs. Smith said, "I'm not interested in an expensive, full scale (system) such as

Southfield has... we aren't ready to pay that much money for it."

CHRISTY AGREED, calling it a "high priority" item, and one that is inevitable. Deacon felt that it was mandatory and Mrs. Dolan said she was studying it. Oppert, also ending his two-year term as councilman, said that it should be "worked into the volunteer fire department."

"There's no way we can afford it, it's above our heads," answered Ortmann, who said the council was still working on it.

When a question was asked about the roads referendum, Mrs. Smith called it "in a way misleading, because the council can sell the bonds without the vote of the people," and many don't understand that.

Ortmann said he favored the referendum because the road system was one of the city's most vital interests

Oppert, who called the advisory road referendum "very helpful for the people who sit on the council," because they don't want to spend a lot of money on something people don't want.

Consolidation between the city of Farmington and the City of Farmington Hills was a low key issue. Most of the candidates agreed that it was desirable only when city services could be matched.

"Basically, I would be in favor of it," said Christy, who added that it would probably cause personnel loss.

Deacon said it would "be an advantage" to Farmington Hills, but that now there is "too much diversity between the levels of services."

MRS. DOLAN called it "a very logical consolidation" and Oppert agreed by saying that certain services are already jointly provided.

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## Police seek white male

West Bloomfield Police are looking for a white male who held up the Little Caesar's Pizzeria at 4200 Orchard Lake Road on Oct. 9.

The owner of the pizzeria was ordered into the cooler while the robber, carrying a single action revolver, took \$150 in bills and change.

Working from a description given by the owner, police say the man is about 28 years of age, with black medium-length hair and a medium build. He is about six foot one and weighs about 170 pounds.

He drove a powder-blue 1966 to 1968 Pontiac and wore a light-weight zippered jacket and red plaid shirt.

Anyone with information as to the whereabouts of this individual should contact the West Bloomfield Police.

## Palette and Brush to hear painter

Members and guests of Palette and Brush Club will meet Tuesday, Oct. 21 at the Greenfield Methodist Church. Johanna Haas, German born watercolorist who has lived in Detroit since 1953, will be the speaker.

Mrs. Haas has a drama degree from the university in Heidelberg, Germany and went on to do her undergraduate and graduate work in watercolor and oil at Wayne State University.

She has also studied under Oskar Kokoschka in Europe and at the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts.



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