

Southfield Township revamps group

By JOE MARIUCCI

Former Beverly Hills Planning Commission Chairman William C. Fearon Jr. last week withdrew from consideration for appointment as Southfield Township administrative coordinator.

The board of trustees subsequently decided that the township doesn't need an administrative coordinator, at least not until new officials take their seats in November. It was also decided, according to Supervisor Theodore Sura, that the inactive citizens advisory committee should be revamped and used to give the township board guidance on key issues.

Sura said the board wants the advisory committee to be non-political, consisting of residents appointed by the village councils of Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms and Franklin.

The committee has been inactive since conducting a study of merging public safety departments in the villages. In an effort to respond to primary campaign criticism of a lack of communication on the part of township officials, the board

has decided to make certain the villages receive agendas and meeting minutes, Sura said.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE coordinator position was also intended to answer that criticism, which Sura now describes as "just election talk."

The post was essentially created for Fearon by Sura, although never approved by the board after he (Fearon) was not reappointed to the village planning commission in July.

The administrative coordinator was to act as a liaison between the Southfield Township Board and the three villages as part of an overall effort to improve communication with the public.

But Fearon said he had second thoughts about the position, which was to have unpaid, after he "had some time to look at it."

"I don't think there's really a need for a coordinator. It's not that large of a community, and communications are not that bad," Fearon said. He also expressed fear

that it might have become a political issue.

Noting that the township board will have at least two, and possibly three new members in November, Fearon said any decision on appointing a liaison should be postponed until then.

"It would be better evaluated after the new members take office," Fearon said. "There may be a fresh new approach to communication then."

One approach being contemplated, Sura said, is to have Trustee Hudson Schaeferle and Trustee-Elect Robert Stansberry serve as liaisons with Franklin and Beverly Hills.

Stansberry is a councilman in Beverly Hills Schaeferle, a Franklin resident and planning commission member, attends most council meetings there.

Top Clerk Eleanor McGee said she was asked to contact Bingham Farms Village Council President Loren Riley "to see if they have someone there" who would be willing to act as liaison with the township.

FEARON, MEANWHILE, said he has no aspirations to hold any political office. He is a trustee candidate in the Aug. 3 election, finishing last in a field of six contenders for two seats.

"The planning board has asked me to serve as a consulting area and I would be happy to do so," Fearon said.

He revealed last week that he had formally withdrawn as a candidate a week before the primary election, although he never made the information public through local news media.

"It was a personal choice I withdrew in favor of support of the existing board,"

Beverly Hills Council President Thomas Kauchek led the opposition to Fearon's appointment to the planning commission to which he was first named in 1969.

Kauchek charged that a still-pending lawsuit filed by Fearon against the village put him in a conflict of interest position.

Fearon denied that, claiming that Kauchek's motive was political. The lawsuit

is a class action matter brought by 18 residents in the Nottingham Forest section of the village because of flooding problems.

"Maybe once the lawsuit is settled, Tom (Kauchek) will mellow," Fearon said.



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