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Twenty-Five Cents

Council deliberates parks and rec split

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Farmington Editor

Residents of Farmington Hills soon will have their own parks and recreation division if a plan informally endorsed by a majority of city council is implemented within the next month.

The proposal for a parks and recreation division was introduced by Councilwoman Joan Dudley at this week's council session and was endorsed by four of her colleagues.

Dissenting were Mayor Keith Deacon and Councilman Earl Oppenhausser, who supported the concept, but felt discussions should be conducted with the other governmental units which presently are members of the Farmington Area Recreation Commission (FARC).

Presently, Farmington Hills participates in FARC with the City of Farmington, the Farmington School District and the Clarenceville School District.

Under the proposal, Farmington Hills would withdraw its financial support from FARC, leaving the other governmental bodies to go it alone unless they wished to contract services with Farmington Hills.

Farmington Hills provides the majority of funding for the FARC program. But the Hills attorney ruled last year that the commission wasn't legally constituted and should be dissolved when the new budget was established this March.

"It's time for us to take the ball and develop our own division," said Mrs. Dudley.

"The commission (FARC) is great for a rural area, but it does little good where there is a large population," she continued.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also has recommended to Farmington Hills that it implement its own parks and recreation division, according to Mrs. Dudley.

"We can't forget politics. We are going to have to try to get federal monies for the improvements we seek. Those who approve the grants also tell us the way to go," she said.

Besides considering establishing a parks and recreation division, Farmington Hills also is contemplating the purchase of land for parks. At present, the Hills only has one public park.

Oppenhausser warned that Farmington Hills was moving too swiftly, saying the City of Farmington should first be contacted.

"We ought to discuss this in total with the City of Farmington. By acting this way we are taking a step backwards," said Oppenhausser.

CITY MANAGER Robert Deadman, of the City of Farmington, said he would work with Hills City Manager George Majors in making the transition as smoothly as possible. But he said it was doubtful if the City of Farmington would contract with the Hills parks and recreation division for services.

"There is a possibility of setting up our own recreation department. We've done it before. We had our own recreation program for seven or eight years with a part-time director," he said.

Deadman looks with confidence at his city's parks facilities. Presently, the City of Farmington has two parks and uses school facilities within the city limits for programs.

"We have more facilities than they do. We have ball fields, two parks and the senior citizen program is con-

ducted within the city," he said.

He also floated the idea that the City of Farmington could look at other cities besides Farmington Hills for recreational programs.

Farmington Hills City Councilman Fred Lichtman said he didn't see why the City of Farmington should object.

"The only fallout there will be if people see divisions. All those involved should be concerned with the program and forget about parochialism," he said.

"There is no need to pre-empt FARC by establishing our own parks and recreation division. All it would do is increase the effectiveness of the recreation program," he said.

Dudley agreed that problems should be only short-lived.

"It may effect our relationship for the present but not for the long run. We don't want to be anybody's big brother, or mother. But the cities are different and have different needs."

"The City of Farmington has older members in the community and fewer kids. Their objectives are different. Besides, our main obligation is to the residents of our city."



In the action

Doug Howard (foreground) fights for the puck on the City of Farmington ice rink as he joins his buddies for some winter fun. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthner)

Crime hits the skids

Byrnes unveils '76 statistics

Paralleling the trend throughout Oakland County, the City of Farmington experienced a decrease in crime last year, although robberies increased, according to Dan Byrnes, Public Safety Director.

"A lot of the suburbs are seeing an increase in certain areas of crime," Byrnes said. "People are coming from Detroit to commit robberies, which has an impact, but the population is increasing as well, and you're going to get more of the criminal element."

Of the 12 robbery armed cases in Farmington, about half were committed by Detroiters, while the other half were from other areas. Burglaries, however, are largely committed by young adults in the community or surrounding areas, Byrnes said.

In delivering his annual report to the Farmington City Council recently, Byrnes noted that crimes including murder, rape, robbery, aggravated as-

sault, burglary, larceny over \$50 and auto thefts decreased by nine per cent over 1975.

"This is extremely encouraging after a four per cent increase in 1975 over 1974," he said.

Farmington police cleared an average of 31 per cent of their cases in 1976, which is 10 per cent better than the national average, according to Byrnes.

Armed robbery, the only crime showing an increase, rose to 12 cases, double last year's count. Aggravated assaults dropped from 17 to 7; burglaries from 145 to 98; larcenies from 458 to 449 and auto thefts from 37 to 33.

"WE'RE ALSO off 30 per cent in malicious destruction of property," Byrnes said.

Complaints decreased by 11 per cent, and total reported offenses dropped 13 per cent from 1975.

The total number of accidents re-

corded dropped by only two, from 678 in 1975 to 676 in 1976. Two fatal accidents occurred last year, compared to one in 1975.

Byrnes believes the unmarked traffic car now used by the city and the issuance of written rather than oral warnings may be factors in the slight decrease in accidents.

"Written warnings have more of a deterrent value," he said. "The traffic layout in the downtown center has improved."

"The stabilization of accident statistics after several years of increases is, indeed, encouraging and can be attributed largely to a 23 per cent increase in the issuance of citations," he said.

The increase in citations are a result of the assignment of the unmarked traffic car during hours when accidents occur most often.

Fires rose by 14 per cent, from 38 in 1975 to 66 in 1976, while fire runs increased 15 per cent, from 103 in 1975 to 119 in 1976.

"Of the 119 fire runs this year, 44 per cent, the same percentage as in 1975, were either smoke investigation, no fire, false alarms, or unfounded."

"Forty-eight per cent of the fires were out on arrival; 13 per cent were extinguished by patrol; and in 39 per cent of the cases the pumper was utilized," Byrnes noted.

Fire losses amounted to \$84,648 in 1976, up from \$75,850 in 1975.

"The cross-training of department reserves in fire suppression has resulted in a 75 per cent increase in manpower in fire fighting situations," Byrnes noted. Reserve officers are training for both departments presently, contributing 4,377 hours to the community last year.

"Our reserve command officers are also active at the present time in encouraging legislation making 100 hours of training for all reserve offi-

cers mandatory state-wide," Byrnes said.

A new 1,250 gallons per minute pumper increased the total pumping capacity from 1,750 to 3,000 gallons of water per minute, a 71 per cent increase.

All department officers and reserves received specialized training in crime prevention last spring previously limited to five members of the department. Four officers were enrolled in a basic emergency medical technician training course conducted at Botsford Hospital.

"UPON THE COMPLETION of three months of training, these men were certified as basic EMTs and have greatly increased the department's ability to deliver more effective emergency medical services," Byrnes added.

Although the Citizens Band base station was installed Dec. 13 in the communications room, Byrnes believes the short operation time has already proved to be a positive advantage for the department.

"We're averaging 90 calls a month, 60-65 per cent of which are referred to other agencies," he said. "Three days after we started, we made an arrest as a result of a CB call."

The base station monitors CB emergency channel nine, and patrol cars may begin monitoring channel 19. Most calls, Byrnes said, reported accidents, snow and ice conditions, non-functioning traffic signals and stranded motorists.

The Public Safety Department employs 28 persons, including police officers, road personnel, investigative, clerical officers and dispatchers.

Last time due to sickness was the only area that showed a substantial increase. Byrnes attributed the 700 hour increase to a high number of flu cases last winter and an auto accident that kept one man off duty for three months.



A lonesome figure

This ambitious loner decided he would take advantage of the weather while other Farmington-area residents huddled in their homes. (Staff photo)

NHS orientation set for parents of sophs

North Farmington High School will host an orientation program for parents of students entering their sophomore year next fall in all Farmington high schools.

Scheduled between 9-10 a.m. during the week of Feb. 21-25, the program will include a short tour of the high school as well as a chance to discuss high school procedures with teachers

and counselors.

Parents whose children will be entering one of the high schools next year, including those students who now attend private schools, are urged to attend.

For further information and/or to make an appointment, call 626-2511 or 626-2540.

Ten Mile is eyed as court facility

Farmington City Council approved a feasibility study in conjunction with Farmington Hills to determine if Ten Mile Elementary School could conceivably be converted to a court facility.

Farmington will add \$120 to \$380 approved by Farmington Hills to conduct the study by architect John Allen who designed Ten Mile School.

Judges Michael Hand and Margaret Schaefer of the 47th District Court urged the city council to approve the study.

"We would like to see this money appropriated," Judge Hand said, although he had reservations about converting the school to a court facility.

"Farmington, which is supposed to be the most affluent area in Oakland County, hasn't taken the funds to build a suitable court building," he said.

Terming the two separate facilities in Farmington, one located in the Farmington municipal center on Grand River near Farmington Road and one in the Farmington Hills municipal center on Eleven Mile and Orchard Lake Road, a "waste of manpower and time," Hand suggested the feasibility study be carefully considered.

"After you take a school building and adapt it, it's still a school building that doesn't really belong to you," he said. "We need a law enforcement complex that's worthwhile in a community of 70,000-80,000 people."

PRESENTLY the two judges switch locations every two months, but encounter problems in locating files and assigning cases.

Judge Schaefer explained that the

court situation today is in violation of rule 926 of the Michigan Supreme Court, which states that civil and criminal actions must be assigned by lot when they are commenced.

"We can violate this on a temporary basis, but not permanently," she said.

Mayor John Richardson questioned whether the feasibility study should be conducted before the board of education has expressed an interest in leasing the building.

Helen Prutow, school board trustee, commented that the board has expressed an interest in selling or renting facilities, but added that she could not speak for the entire board on the specific question.

Converting Ten Mile School would require air conditioning, updating of toilet facilities in accordance with state codes, and architectural redesign to include two court rooms, jury rooms, detention rooms, and clerks offices.

Bond School, which presently houses adult education facilities, also may be available, according to Lewis Schulman, school superintendent.

"WE'RE STILL in the talking stages," Schulman said, "but we're considering moving adult education to Ten Mile. The board will have to decide how to use the schools so we don't diminish the savings we're attempting to accrue."

Ten Mile Elementary School was built in 1949, with additions in 1952 and 1958. Bond Elementary, built in 1926, had several additions built in 1949, 1952, 1958 and 1965.

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