

Battle lines drawn in recall petition drive

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington Hills

A group of Farmington Hills residents have formed a group to fight the recall of three city councilmembers.

The committee, calling itself Committee to Unite Farmington Hills (CUFH), met Monday to counter the petition drive calling for an election to recall Mayor Jan Dolan, and councilmembers Joanne Smith and Cathy Jones.

The CUFH is co-chaired by Jack Forbes, Patricia Riley and Aldo Vagnozzi.

In a statement released after the meeting CUFH attacked the recall attempt.

"This attempt goes counter to the intent of the recall law, which is to remove public officials who have committed a legal breach of their office and not because of simple disagreement with how they vote on specific issues," says the statement.

The recall battle revolves around recent actions taken by the city council during which Dolan, Jones and Smith supported the concept of following through with the Community Development Block Grant Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The program since has been terminated by a unanimous vote of council. Also at issue is the three councilmembers' support of mid-rise zoning designated for senior citizen housing.

CUFH says the three are being singled out unfairly for their votes. "While we strongly disagree that their actions on these issues are legitimate reasons for recall, we must call attention to the fact that the three women members are being singled out when others on the council also supported these programs," said the CUFH statement.

Councilman Earl Oppertbauer has been a consistent supporter of the mid-rise senior citizen zoning.

"The community development program has been consistently supported by council since its inception. This year all members of the council voted for the program," CUFH said.

"Even the proposal to do a feasibility study to see if the housing requirements could be met was unanimously supported. The only division came on a vote to cancel the program before the feasibility study could be made and that carried 4-3."

Voting for cancellation was Oppertbauer, Joe Abatech, Keith Deacon and Joanne Sorenson.

CUFH claims that all seven councilmembers could be included in the first two charges of the recall petition. Failure to disclose terms and conditions of the application and proposed location of new housing since all voted for the program.

"The charges, of course, aren't true since several public hearings were held at which details of the program

were openly discussed," said CUFH. Recall advocates claim otherwise, saying that the number of low income housing units and location of those sites were "overlooked" when councilmembers discussed the program with residents from the city's south end where the project was targeted.

Under the program, low income housing was to be built in Sections 25, 25.35 and 36.

On the third charge, that the three opposed a referendum on senior citizen housing, the vote was 5-2 and the majority acted on the city attorney's recommendation that such a vote would be illegal, said CUFH.

Con had originally voted against the 69-foot-high mid-rise stipulation last year but supported it this year, saying it already had been put on the books.

"Again we ask why are the three women the targets of recall when other members participated in the same when other members participated in the same decision? There must be other reasons," said CUFH.

"And these apparent other reasons the manipulation of these issues by certain special interests to grab control of city government."

CUFH says a recall election would be a waste of money since all three women will be up for reelection next year.

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Highmeadow principal honored as best of bunch

By ELEANOR S. WRIGHT

Nicholas A. Abid, principal of Highmeadow Elementary School, Farmington Hills, is Michigan's outstanding elementary school principal of the year.

His award presentation climaxed the Boyne Mountain fall conference of Michigan educators Oct. 25-27.

He is the first Region VII principal to be so honored by his colleagues in the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association. There are 14 regions in the state with Oakland County's 28 school districts comprising the bulk of Region VII.

In his letter of nomination of Abid, Lawrence Freedman, assistant superintendent for elementary education in the Farmington School District, summed up the opinions of the many teachers, fellow administrators, parents and community groups who supported his nomination:

"Nicholas Abid," he said, "is a true example of a humanitarian and a professional who believes the role of educator is not confined to just a school building. Rather, his school is truly the entire community."

THE NEW SCHOOL, which he serves this year as principal after 18 years at Farmington's William Grace Elementary School, echoes the sentiments of all who are now offering congratulations. Posters from children at both Highmeadow and William Grace line the halls and a hand-painted sign outside the front door proudly proclaims, "Congratulations, Mr. Abid. You're No. 1." William Grace's faculty joined High Meadow's last week at a reception honoring their principal.

Being number one is an honor that Abid would like to share with educators throughout the state as well as with all those he has worked in the Farmington district or the Van Dyke or Garrettsville districts in which he began his career.

"We have accomplished so much together," he says. "Educational needs are always our first priority as teachers and administrators, but there are secondary needs in terms of the family and community. So, we get involved."

Abid has been involved in many things.

"WE REACHED OUT at William Grace," he continues, "to seek ideas which would help our students grow." Such reaching out produced the upgraded curriculum which the board of education identified as a pilot study and its successes were shared with the rest of the district.

Educational milestones along the way include pre-primary transition rooms which, especially during days of peak enrollment, provided small groupings of students according to reading readiness and helped establish supplemental reading series and multi-levels of spelling.

Commentary report cards, innovation of the Head Start program, supervised construction of a Library Learning Center for Title I Library Audio Visual supplemental services were other programs to be tried and successfully coordinated districtwide.

A PTA rummage sale at William Grace grew into a District Emergency Fund, which Abid still supervises. It provides help to students at all school levels who may need a pair of shoes to

attend school, the fancy trappings for a senior prom, or dental care when a large family lacks enough money.

"A New York visitor to our community who read about the Emergency Fund in your newspaper," he reports, "sent a check for this fund. People care to help children."

A dental health program continues in the elementary school system here today because he had the time to serve on a committee to assess its value. With Farmington resident, Dr. James Russell, DDS, he helped establish the Florida Committee which annually, at a nominal fee to parents, provides hygienic treatment and a fluoride coating of teeth for all elementary children who desire this service.

He serves on the Advisory Board of St. Vincent's Sarah Fischer Home, which sends many students to the public schools. He has been a Boy Scout merit badge counselor, the principals' representative to the PTA Council, and a team captain in the Goodfellow's Christmas basket project.

"School people, in general," he says, "are the servants of the community. If you see a need, you fill it."

Cement shortage hampers paving

If you delayed having a sidewalk or driveway poured this fall, Lady Luck was with you.

If you didn't, look at it this way—you won't have as much snow to shovel this winter.

A cement shortage has caused work delays and headaches for some Farmington area concrete contractors. As one Farmington Hills contractor put it: "When people don't get a job

done... they get rather perturbed about it."

Contractors are rushing to get their work completed before consistently freezing temperatures end the paving season.

Public works projects in Farmington and Farmington Hills have been affected by the shortage. A paving project at Nine Mile and Habstead in Farmington Hills may not be com-

pleted before winter and the parking lot for the 47th District Court building at Ten Mile and Power Road in Farmington doesn't have any curbing because the contractor can't get cement.

Cement manufacturers can't meet this year's increasing demand, according to area contractors. The cement that is available is being allocated on a priority basis, causing some contractors to delay completing paving jobs.

Cement is the paste ingredient of concrete, which is also composed of sand, coarse gravel aggregate and water. Although many call it cement, streets, sidewalks and basements are made of concrete.

STRIKES EARLIER this year at Metcalf and Dundee Cement companies and a plant breakdown at Peeries Cement Co. are the main reasons for the shortage. The three companies are among the top five metropolitan area suppliers of cement.

A Detroit area construction industry spokesman said last week that government pollution regulations and a smaller profit margin for manufacturers over the past 20 years have also led to the shortage.

Manufacturers invested heavily in current plants in the late 1950s, he said, but consumption never met expectations. Many antiquated cement

plants, particularly in Ohio, were closed in recent years, the spokesman said, as manufacturers were faced with installing expensive pollution control equipment and less return on their investment.

INCREASED BUILDING this year led to an "unprecedented amount of demand" throughout the metropolitan area, said Laird Peters, owner of L.W. Peters Co. in Farmington.

Most suppliers raised their cement prices anywhere from five to 10 percent in the last year, Peters said. An Oakland County ready-mix concrete dealer said the cement shortage has led to the largest concrete price jump in five years.

Farmington City Mgr. Robert Deadman said a recent bid on concrete removal and replacement was double some bids from a year ago. Deadman said he has found asphalt prices are also increasing due to the cement shortage. While cement manufacturers can't meet demand, "the asphalt industry finds it convenient to raise their prices," he said.

THE SHORTAGE "slows down what we're doing," said Peters. "It's hard to maintain a schedule." Peters does both residential and commercial paving.

While Peters hasn't rejected any (Continued on page 4A)



Nick's kids

Nick Abid, a Farmington School District principal, some of the students at his school. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Hills supervisors join the Teamsters

City department supervisors in Farmington Hills voted 13-2 Monday to join Teamsters Local 214.

The union will represent 13 supervisors—from every city department except police—on six city streets. Department heads and executive secretaries to the city manager, director of public services and police chief will not be in the union.

Farmington Hills police officers are also represented by Local 214, but will remain in a separate unit. The police officers unit is currently negotiating a new pact with the city.

Teamster business representative Walter Sacharczyk said earlier this week that he hopes bargaining for the supervisors and secretaries can begin within a month. He said the union expects an initial contract to be reached within six months to a year.

The union organizing drive among the supervisors began after the city council established a five per cent salary increase limit in May for about 18 non-union employees.

John Waid, city supervisor of building operations, said the union was "the only alternative we had" after the council "ignored" a letter from the employees protesting the salary limit. Acting City Mgr. Floyd Calms said annual salaries of those who voted in the union election ranged from \$9,500 for secretaries to over \$20,000 for some supervisors.

Calms said it "remains to be seen" whether the city will stick to its earlier decision on supervisors' salaries. While the city administration will

negotiate with the new Teamster unit, the council has the last word on the city's bargaining positions, he said.

Mayor Jan Dolan said she assumes the council will maintain its stand. "Only time will tell on that," she said, adding that the council hasn't discussed the issue since the union election.

Mayor Dolan was not surprised by the vote. "I know some of the people," she said. "Anytime you don't give people everything they want, that's (a union) always a possibility."

SACHARCZYK said the union's salary demands would be based on a composite of what Local 214 members have in other cities. The local is comprised exclusively of public employees.

Of the 19 employees eligible, two didn't vote in the union election. The Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC), which supervised the election, challenged one ballot and declared another "spoiled."

OTHER CITY employees represented by unions include inspectors, typists and clerks, who are members of AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees). Police department supervisors belong to a command officers association.

Recently, hourly wage employees in the public works department voted 8-8 against joining AFSCME. Farmington Hills has 225 full-time employees.



Banker's delight

Sae Wilbert, 23, is the manager for the new Michigan National of Farmington. One of the youngest bank managers in Michigan, she takes her leisure time with her horse Yo-Yo. To read more of Miss Wilbert, turn to the business page.

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