

from our readers

Resident wins one against city hall

Editor:

After reading Mary Gniwew's article regarding property taxes in the Jan. 15 publication, I am reminded of the necessity to write to you.

Last summer, I made about 10 telephone calls to various persons and departments in the city of Farmington Hills. Over the past few years, the city has been building up the roads in this neighborhood to alleviate muddy and otherwise bad road problems caused primarily by inadequate drainage. Some streets were ditched in addition to several inches of stone and gravel being added.

However, in the particular area in which I reside, it is heavily wooded, and ditching is precluded. I live on a corner, and the corner was built up several inches higher than my yard to drain the road. Of course, this resulted in my yard becoming a small lake after a rain.

I repeatedly requested that the road be graded down to below the level of my yard. It was obvious to me that drainage to the nearest ditches could be best facilitated in this way. The city told me that this solution would not be considered. They suggested that they haul dirt in to my yard and that I grade it myself. I agreed to this and built my yard up to above road grade.

The road on this corner had not been designed by the city to drain to the ditch; it had been designed to drain into my yard. Now that I had built up my yard, the water remained as a small lake in the road. How's that for engineering?

I then decided to call the Farmington Observer to see if they could be of some help. It was near winter by that time. I talked to Mary Gniwew. She sent a photographer to capture the described problem on film and immediately called the city of Farmington Hills. The next morning a road grader was out here grading down the corner and sloping the road away from my yard and hopefully toward the ditch. There has not been enough rain since

then to judge whether or not the water will drain properly, but I suspect there will be significant improvement. They worked all that day trying to grade it properly.

I want to thank Mary for her help in getting down what appeared to me as nearly impossible.

This brings up the subject of property tax relief. My property taxes have been raised approximately 35 percent in the past two years. Both years I appeared for a hearing bringing my case in writing. I was told my complaint would be reviewed and they would let me know. Last year, I specifically requested that they answer my complaint in detail.

They did absolutely nothing except send the usual note that the assessment was not changed. I have my doubts if they actually do review written or oral challenges. I have had no evidence that they do. If this is the case, what good does it do the taxpayer to challenge?

I intensely dislike the feeling of helplessness when dealing with local government in the area of property taxes, roads or anything else. It is apparent to me that some changes need to be made.

So-to-speak, the tail is wagging the dog. Governments are for the people; the people are not to be used by government to perpetuate the bureaucracy and isolate itself and government officials from the needs of the taxpaying public.

There is not only a need to alleviate property taxes on homes. There is a need to abolish homesteaded property taxes altogether. One of the greatest accomplishments a person has in his or her lifetime is to establish a homestead to raise a family in that safe and protected domain.

Because of homesteaded property taxes, it is becoming impossible for many Americans to own their own homes. While mortgage payments are high, the principal and interest can be paid off in

due time. Many if not most mortgage lending institutions require that property taxes and insurance be added to the monthly payment as escrow to protect the lender against loss by tax default to the government and fire.

If there were no property taxes on homes, that money would be spent to buy goods and produce jobs. More people would own their homes. Family life would become more stable.

Older citizens on fixed incomes could be more secure in their old age. They would have money for food and fuel that they are now either deprived of or are dependent upon government agencies for.

America was built upon the premise of free enterprise. Heavy taxation upon the American public takes away their ability to become independent and increases the dependence upon government. For the average American, the imposition of heavy income taxes and homesteaded property taxes are his greatest burdens.

If this money was funneled back into free enterprise by the purchase of

goods and services, the American economy could be stabilized. Government services and departments that are costing the taxpayer so much money would not even be needed.

Government has to be reduced immediately and free enterprise increased. I believe that drastic measures have to be taken or we may soon reach a point of no return. Heavier taxes are going to throw more people out of work and many out of their homes. If taxes become heavier, there will not be enough people working to pay them. Jobs will decrease and free enterprise will go down.

Soon we could have a government with no people working to pay the taxes to support it. The problem seems so obvious. Perhaps it will take letters such as this from the public to their respective congressmen to activate programs to get the government off our backs. One thing is sure. If the public doesn't care enough to speak out, nothing will be done.

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Farmington Hills

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