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# Society Eyes National Recognition

The City of Farmington may become a national historic site by the end of 1970. That hope was expressed by the Historical Preservation Committee, chaired by Paul Schreiber, in its annual report recently issued to the city council.

LAST YEAR, the historians hired Louis Gilson as special historical researcher for this one project.

Since last fall, Gilson has been documenting by valid and legal authority the historical background of buildings, sites and features which the committee feels constitute the origins and heritage of the city.

Presently, Gilson is about half finished with the documentation needed to qualify for a national historic site.

Schreiber says the nature of the research is necessarily slow because valid and acceptable information is often difficult to obtain.

Little known documents and materials, he explained, in unexpected places often must be carefully gone over and many hours of work frequently are necessary to get one vital point of information.

GILSON ALSO is presently taking pictures and taking tape recorded statements from persons with valid knowledge of the city's origins.

"It is to be recalled at this point that what we are doing is something that has never before been done in Farmington," says Schreiber.

At the beginning of 1969, the committee began working with its sister organization (the Farmington Historical Society) to determine which buildings, sites and features should be considered a community heritage worth identifying as giving the city a special character of its own.

Both groups identified an area which is the original site of the first settlement and a cluster of buildings in the 1820s and defined it as the "Old City."

WITHIN THE OLD CITY there still stand most of the houses which exemplify period architecture and construction features as early as 1840.

Also in the Old City is the intersection of the Shawansee Orchard Lake Indian trails; the building at 2325 Farmington Rd. housing the first post office; site of the first mill pond and saw mill; and sites of the first churches, schools and tavern.

Outside the Old City are some of the most historically important buildings and sites in the city, the report states. Among them are two dam sites, the Warner mansion, the Quaker Cemetery and Meeting House, Mrs. Ben's Gossop, Robert Van Every and Harley Walters.

In addition to Schreiber, Carvell, Phene and Mrs. Kurth, other committee members are: V.O. Bates; Sandra Colyer, secretary; and Dr. John Richardson.

the upcoming Farmington Founders Festival.

The historians also plan to design plaques, markers and certificates for sites which have been researched.

During the year, the committee lost an important member when Russell Milligen died. Members resigning last year were: Mrs. W.J. Embury, Mrs. Ben Gossop, Robert Van Every and Harley Walters.

THE HISTORICAL Preservation Committee also hopes to publish a walking historical tour guide to distribute during

## New Post Office Location Protested

Continued from Page 1A

doors and all-hours semi-truck delivery.

"This post office, on the small, confined site, would be worse than a used car lot for vehicular movement and noise."

A LETTER from Stenson, read into the record, stated: "It would only be fair to pass on a few recourse actions that have been actively discussed not only in the Alta Loma Subdivision but city-wide."

"Some have suggested a county prosecutor investigation of the land transaction relating to the city-owned property adjacent the Huron Hunt & Fish Club."

"Others recommend a boycott of Farmington redevelopment and downtown stores. Recall of officials supporting rezoning would be drastic, yet, some say, the only way to correct a bad situation."

Stenson challenged the council to avoid "any infringement on the investments, open space, services, quiet and safety of the Farmington community."

MRS. HARRIET DART, president of the Farmington Citizens Association (FCA), read a history of the zoning of the property in question and said:

"The R-1 zoning stood until last spring when the Huron Valley Hunt Club property was rezoned from R-1 to ERO (Educational Research Office). We feel that this spot zoning was done simply to break the solid R-1 zoning and to set the pattern for changes in the total area."

She was critical of what she described as "the sudden desire to rezone to office and R-6 apparently so that a few people can make a maximum profit."

"Despite the statements of proponents of the rezoning, there is no question in the minds of residents that apartment and office complexes on this land will detract from

their property value and result in monetary loss to them."

"Residents of the city appear to agree that 3,500 (apartment) units within the city or on its borders are more than adequate for a city of this size."

"We contend that speculators cannot continue to build expensive luxury apartments and fill them up," Mrs. Dart continued. "As each new complex is built, the older complexes become more obsolete, with vacancies and deterioration."

Mrs. Dart questioned the need for a new post office and added "it is illogical and wasteful to even consider a new post office until the question of incorporation, annexation and cityhood for the township is settled."

"In closing, we want to remind the council that it is no secret that residents are generally appalled at the changes in the appearance of the city during the past few years' careless commercial development."

"With one rash decision you councilmen can destroy more beauty in the city than can ever be put back by a tree planting program or Beautification Committee."

"Once the natural beauty of this spot is gone, it can never be put together again."

DINAN EXPLAINED that the U.S. Government's real estate division asked for an option on the city-owned property west of Farmington Rd. for a post office.

After appraisals were made, the government took its option (which expires June 30, 1970) on the city-owned land and a small triangle owned by Kelly with frontage on Farmington Rd.

Mayor Wilbur Brotherton objected to charges of secrecy and stated the transaction on the option was a matter of public record and was never kept quiet.

Dinan added a real estate agent from the federal government spent six months in Farmington looking for a location. He took an option on

Grand River property which fell through, he added.

Dinan added the city has been offered \$38,000 for its property by the federal government.

Brotherton said the city-owned land has been lying fallow. "In my judgment, a post office would be a good purpose for it." He added his mind has not been made up, but he will decide on what is good for the entire community.

"I'll vote according to what I feel are the best interests of the City of Farmington," said Yoder, "and not what's in the best interest of a small group of people."

DINAN POINTED OUT the present post office is a building of 7,000 square feet resting on 1.5 acres. The new site would be four acres and contain a building of 37,000 square feet.

"I'd feel personally unhappy if the government decided to move the post office out of the City of Farmington," commented Brotherton. "I'm sure a lot of city residents would be upset if they had to drive two miles elsewhere to go to the post office."

"Let us understand that we are sitting here and faced with increased cost of doing business as a city," said Councilman John Allen.

The property in question represents a total valuation of \$7 million-plus, he said. "We'll be cautious with what we do because we'll need more revenue from someplace."

Councilman Fred Siebert said he was upset that "there has been several inferences made of collusion on the city's part and this is a very distasteful thing and certainly not the case. We are not trying to bail anyone out."

Councilman John Richardson added that Kelly's apartment alone would provide \$13,500 in revenue from the city's nine mills.

When Gilson finishes his research, his findings will be translated on forms for submission to the Michigan Historical Commission.

The Michigan Historical Commission will certify those forms and send them on to the National Park Service.

Once this final step is taken, the City of Farmington will become an official national historic site.

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