

Farthington Observer

Volume 94 Number 90

Monday, August 22, 1983

Farthington, Michigan

38 Pages

Twenty-five cents

New drain should solve old problems

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Next year at this time, basement flooding should be a nightmare of the past for many Farthington homeowners now that work has started on the long-awaited "Old Town" drain improvements.

Construction on more than \$500,000 worth of improvements began about two weeks ago along Slocum, which will serve as a path for a drainage outlet spilling into a larger line on Grand River, according to City Manager Robert Deadman.

Improvements are designed to separate a combined storm and sanitary sewer system, built in the 1930s, that serves close to one-fourth of the city's residents.

Flooded basements have been a recurring problem in an area west of Farthington Road to Gill and north to Alta Loma to Siliwassee. But homes on Liberty, Alta Loma, State, Orchard and Cass bear the brunt of flooding when storms hit because they are located in low spots.

Some streets in the construction area are expected to be closed during the day, but at least one lane will be opened at night. Concrete streets, such as Slocum and State, will be repaved so residents may have to stay off those for a few days after the concrete is laid.

ALTHOUGH THE improvements will alleviate flooding problems, some basements may flood if a storm hits because the old storm drain system won't be disconnected until the new one is operating.

The project's costs will be divided almost equally between the city and homeowners who live within the 98-

acre problem area, Deadman said. City-owned property lies within that area, he added.

In April, Farthington City Council established an assessment district for homeowners in the flooding area. The city council also authorized the sale of general obligation bonds to pay the city's share of costs.

In determining which residents will pay an assessment for the drain improvements, city officials divided the problem area into two districts.

Homeowners in District A will receive immediate benefit from the project and also pay the greatest share of homeowners' costs. District B homeowners will only receive a future benefit from the improvements but will pay a lesser charge.

District A's boundaries are Alta Loma on the south, Wilmarth on the west, Oakland on the north and Farthington Road on the east. District B covers homeowners in an area bounded by Oakland on the south, Gill on the west, Siliwassee on the north and Farthington Road on the east.

By awarding the construction bid to M.D. Taddie & Co. of Ypsilanti, city officials were able to reduce costs, Deadman said.

IN DISTRICT A, costs dropped from an original estimate of about 16 cents per square foot to 13 cents a square foot. In District B, costs dropped from about 15 cents per square foot to about four cents. Homeowners will pay for the improvements over 15 years.

Commercial property in the flooding area will be assessed at twice residential property because engineers have determined that commercial property contributes at least twice as much storm run-off as households.



A child rides his bike along dusty, congested Slocum Street under which the Old Town Drain will soon flow, relieving flooding problems for many Farthington residents.

Teachers' performance studied by task force



Norene Daly explains her task force on education from a Madonna College classroom.

By Diane Gale
staff writer

Many students in teaching programs have the lowest academic scores in the college, according to Dr. Norene Daly, who chaired a committee of educators across the nation.

Daly, a Farthington Hills resident, teaches in and heads the teacher's education program at Madonna College. She chaired a National Task Force on Shortage Surplus and Quality Issues in Teacher Education, sponsored by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

The caliber of teaching programs and graduating teachers isn't meeting the grade, she said. But she looks to the future optimistically. If the business and education communities effect change.

"The criticism that those who are currently entering the teaching profession are among the least academically able and have the lowest Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, is justified," she said.

"Those who criticize teachers must realize that teachers, in addition to

'The criticism that those who are currently entering the teaching profession are among the least academically able and have the lowest Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, is justified.'

— Norene Daly
educator

being perceived as low in status by the public, must deal with poor working conditions, student and parental apathy, violence in the schools, and low pay," she said.

Enrollments in the education field are declining, because student interest is dropping "in a career which offers limited employment opportunities and rewards," according to the task force report.

BECAUSE OF a teacher shortage since the 1960s, which the task force projects to last in some classes through the 1990s, schools were pressured into graduating quantities of teachers without emphasizing the quality of the education, according to Daly.

Michigan, however, hasn't experienced a shortage in teachers, and often "exports" them to other states that have lower supplies.

The average teacher in Michigan is 41 years old, and has been teaching for about 20 years.

"These are people that didn't have a strong training, because they were training people at a faster rate," Daly said. "I'm one of those people, and they didn't have the standards that they have now."

For a teacher to be retrained, Daly said.

"Many do want to be retrained, and it's up to the local school districts to become police chief in the village of Clinton."

The task force recommendations are as follows:

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To enforce Hills ordinance

Wanted: House downsizing 'experts'

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

If you want a say in the style and size

of homes to be built in Farthington Hills' subdivisions, city officials would like to hear from you. Under a new Farthington Hills single-

family construction ordinance, a builder's plans for a new single-family house may be nixed if certain design and size standards are not met.

It's not the end of the line for the builder, however, who may then appeal to a board of residents who will hear the builder's side of the story.

The new ordinance is expected to ease homeowners' worries about downsizing — building smaller houses of lesser quality in unfinished subdivisions having larger, more expensive homes. And it forces developers and builders to construct new houses that are compatible with existing homes in the neighborhood.

After several months of debate between city officials, homeowners and builders, Farthington Hills City Council unanimously adopted the ordinance Aug. 15.

Under the new regulations, a building permit will not be issued for a single family house unless the city's director of public services, designated as the reviewing officer, determines the proposed house would be in compliance with the new ordinance's size and architectural standards.

If the building permit is denied, the builder may appeal the decision to the One Family Residential Review Board.

"We're going to attempt to build up a pool of qualified citizens," said William Costick, assistant city manager, about the review board.

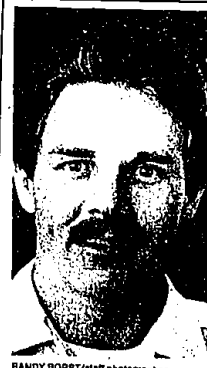
According to the ordinance, the city council will appoint three builders, three residents and three attorneys. Each time a builder appeals the denial of a building permit, three (a builder, an attorney and a resident) of the members will be called to take turns serving as the board.

Because the new ordinance goes into effect in early September, the city council would like interested residents, builders and attorneys — who must live within the city limits — to submit a brief resume and list of interests to the city manager's office no later than Sept. 2.

After reviewing the residents' applications, the city council will appoint nine members.

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City officer promoted



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Thomas Cox, new shift commander of Farthington's Public Safety Department: "As commander, I'm in charge of a group of public safety officers, one dispatcher and routine and daily operations."

Thomas Cox, a 14-year veteran of Farthington's Public Safety Department, was recently promoted to shift commander.

The 33-year-old Farthington resident was promoted Aug. 1 from a public safety patrol officer to commander following successful ratings in a battery of written, oral and performance evaluations.

Cox replaces Marvin (Chip) Snyder, who left the department in the spring to become police chief in the village of Clinton.

"As commander, I'm in charge of a group of public safety officers, one dispatcher and routine and daily operations," said Cox.

"He is responsible for the shift," said Frank Lauboff, public safety deputy director, who announced Cox's promotion.

Cox is married and has two children.