



Farmington Observer

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Neighbors stew over expansion

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Doris Lenz had her reasons for choosing Pickett Street in the city of Farmington back in 1962 when she and a friend decided to build a house in the suburbs.

"We built in Farmington because we felt it had one of the most stringent building codes in the area," said Lenz, a retired school teacher who's been residing in the neat brick house on the block-long street for the past 22 years.

"We bought a tree lot sufficiently removed from Grand River so we wouldn't be bothered by it. And, of course, in 1962 Grand River wasn't the thoroughfare it is now. It was a way to get through Farmington, and there wasn't much to get through Farmington to."

But these days Lenz is doubting the wisdom that led her to Pickett Street on the northern edge of Farmington so many years ago.

She and several of her neighbors are concerned about the planned expansion of the nearby Oak Hill Nursing Home. The expansion, if allowed by the city planning commission, will spoil their pleasant suburban setting with increased noise, traffic and pollution the residents believe.

Oak Hill, on the south side of Grand River between Pickett and Gill Road, was founded in 1905 and is still owned today by Dr. Edwin C. Blumberg, a prominent local physician who owns several Detroit-area nursing homes.

FARMINGTON OFFICIALS say that Blumberg wants to buy six nearby lots for an addition to the nursing home and a parking lot at the southeast corner of Grand River and Pickett.

Additional information about the proposed expansion could not be ob-

tained because Blumberg could not be contacted despite repeated calls to Oak Hill and his practice on Orchard Lake Road.

Oak Hill was expanded in 1977 to include a second story despite objections by residents.

Back on Nov. 28, several residents made their feelings about Oak Hill's latest expansion plans known at a meeting of the Farmington Planning Commission, which is the final authority for the proposal.

Pickett resident Waino Anderson, whose red brick house backs up to the nursing home, said he left the meeting "knowing it was going to pass."

Anderson, who has lived on Pickett since 1968, said he learned at the meeting that the traffic into Oak Hill would go one-way on Pickett and exit onto Gill.

"This would put all the truck and ambulance traffic on our street," he said. "We have a hard-enough time getting out of here as it is. We can never make a left turn on Grand River. We're lucky if we can make a right turn. It's a bad situation."

Anderson and his neighbors also are concerned about their property values, which they say will drop if the expansion is approved.

"Some of us have had appraisals," Anderson said. "I'll probably lose anywhere from 15 to 20 percent."

A DECISION on the expansion had been expected at the planning commission's Jan. 9 meeting, but Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman said the decision would be delayed because it needs more study.

"It looks like it might carry over to the following month," Deadman said, adding that traffic and accident studies

Please turn to Page 2

1984 SUGAR BOWL

Go Blue!

University of Michigan football players from the Observer & Ecclesian will travel to New Orleans this week when the Wolverines battle the Auburn Tigers in the annual Sugar Bowl classic on Monday, Jan. 2.

Vince Bean
Southfield

Dave Hall
Livonia Stevenson

Jeff Cohen
North Farmington

Milt Carthons
Bloomfield Lahser

Brad Cochran
Brother Rice

Rich Hewlett
Plymouth Salem

Graphic by RENEE ENRIGHT

Cities ponder communication fate after breakup

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Although the official break-up of American Telephone and Telegraph is less than a week away, both telephone and local government officials are unable to pin-down its specific effect on city coffers.

"How does divestiture itself raise rates? The answer is, generally it won't," said Dan Spickler, a Michigan Bell spokesman. "There isn't a basic increase."

But Spickler also indicated that customers such as the cities Farmington and Farmington Hills could see a slight increase in the monthly service rate but per message charges could decrease.

On Jan. 1, AT&T officially will relinquish its monopoly of the local call market as part of an out-of-court settlement with the federal government. Under the settlement, local divisions of Michigan Bell will become a part of Ameritech. While Michigan Bell will still provide local call service, long-distance service will be provided by vendors of the customer's choice, such as AT&T, Sprint, MCI or Lexitel.

Even though the planned break-up is fast approaching, complete with an array of rumors about its effect on residential and commercial telephone service and rates, both Spickler and Anna Gabriel, a spokeswoman for AT&T, say there is no urgency in determining which long-distance service should be chosen or whether to buy or lease telephones.

"That lack of urgency as the change occurs is reflected in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

"WE REALLY have not done an analysis," said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman, who says the city's phone bills are now about \$25,000.

But about \$5,000 of that total bill is payment on a lease-purchase agreement with Michigan Bell for the city's telephone equipment.

"We do have a contract with Michigan Bell now that we purchase some equipment over a period of years," he said. "In the end we will become the owners of the phone system."

Farmington Hills, on the other hand, leases its sophisticated "dimension" system, which offers conference calls and a computerized switchboard.

"We have not had any in-depth discussions," said William Cook, assistant city manager, though adding city officials "have been talking for some time about exploring the best system."

Farmington Hills has budgeted \$82,000 for this year's total phone bill. In 1981-82, city officials paid approximately \$74,000 for telephone service, which also includes alarm equipment on the city's utility fire stations, as well as police dispatch equipment.

Both city's officials say they have not been notified what effect the Jan. 1 break-up will have on their telephone service and rates. But Deadman said he has "heard of increases from 25 percent all the way up to 100 percent."

When asked to confirm rumors of increases or to specify what charges are likely to be, both Spickler and Gabriel said it is almost impossible to do so at this point.

"It is very iffy at this point what will happen," Spickler said, pointing to several pending actions from the Michigan Public Service Commission, Federal Communications Commission and the U.S. Congress.

THE FIRST FACTOR affecting future phone rates is an 11.8 percent surcharge on bills that "remains in effect until the Michigan Public Service Commission issues a final rate order" on a \$182 million rate increase, Spickler said. When the MPSC issues its rate order, expected sometime in early 1984, customers no longer will have to pay the surcharges — a percentage which

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Please turn to Page 4



Dorothy Savage operates the main switchboard at Farmington Hills City Hall.

Council to be sworn in

Joan Dudley and Joe Alkatceeb, Farmington Hills City Council members-elect, are scheduled to be sworn into office during a special meeting at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 3.

Following the swearing-in, the council will reorganize itself with the election of mayor and mayor pro tem. A majority vote of the council is required for the election of both officers.

Kelley bears down on air service

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

If you are one of approximately 2,500 Detroit-area holiday travelers who purchased tickets on Air America — the planeless, Dearborn-based airline — you still may get off the ground.

Air America Inc. and Traveler's Choice, a Farmington Hills subsidiary of Elliott Travel Service, reached an agreement with Attorney General Frank Kelley assuring that Air America's customer payments will be protected and alternate transportation will be guaranteed. The agreement also requires Air America to modify its advertising.

The agreement is the result of

threatened action by the attorney general's office against Air America and Traveler's Choice because the airline "does not have the authority from the Civil Aeronautics Board and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to operate as an airline and is unlikely to receive approval in time for its first scheduled flights during the holiday season.

"The process could take as long as 60 days," Kelley said, indicating Air America does not have any planes, a prerequisite for FAA certification.

"The FAA must review the completed application, test aircraft crews and inspect the aircraft."

Air America owner Perry Christy said Thursday he expects to receive

full certification within the next three weeks. He said he has lost a quarter-million dollars because of the delay.

Meanwhile, Christy assured that passengers will be provided alternate transportation on the days they were scheduled to fly Air America.

According to the agreement, to be filed in Ingham County Circuit Court, Air America and Traveler's Choice will:

- Furnish Kelley with a list of ticket purchasers for flights scheduled between Dec. 23 and Jan. 3.
- Place all customer payments in an escrow account or provide a bond adequate to protect the ticket purchasers.

- Modify advertising to let customers know that "all passengers' funds will be placed in an escrow account until your transportation is guaranteed."
- Advise Kelley weekly of the verification of substitute or alternate air carriers until Air America is certified.
- Provide customers with a full refund without penalty if alternate transportation is not guaranteed by five days before a scheduled flight.

If the agreement is violated, Kelley is authorized to enforce the terms in court and ask for a maximum \$25,000 penalty against the airline.

what's inside

- Community Calendar . . . 4B
 - Inside Angles 3A
 - MM Memories/Obituaries . . . 2A
 - Shopping Cart . . . Section B
 - Sports Section C
 - Suburban Life 5B
- NEWSLINES . . . 477-5450
CLASSIFIED ADS . 591-900
HOME DELIVERY . 591-0500

"WILL RECOMMEND YOUR CLASSIFIEDS"

L. White was pleased with results of the MICHIGAN Observer & Ecclesian classified ad placed to sell a snow thrower. 2 dozen calls the 1st day! Response was phenomenal, unbelievable!

Remember...

One call does it all!

644-1070

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