



# Farmington Observer

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## Change sought by hams

By Joanne Mallazewski  
staff writer

A petition boasting the signatures of 24 amateur radio operators was presented to Farmington Hills City Council this week. The petitions called for adding antenna towers to the zoning ordinance's list of height exceptions.

Councilmembers voted 4-2 to refer the request, without a recommendation, to the planning commission.

The antenna would be required to comply with city building and electrical codes. Only those towers owned by operators with Federal Communication Commission licenses would fall under the amendment's protection.

If the ordinance is amended, operators will be able to build an antenna to a maximum of 75 feet. At present, ham operator towers are restricted to 25 feet.

The council's referral allows the petitioners to bypass the planning commission's \$400 fee that pays the administrative costs for considering and framing an ordinance amendment.

Councilwomen Jodi Soronen and Joan Dudley voted against the request, arguing the ham radio operators should petition the planning commission themselves.

"I THINK that's a precedent we shouldn't set unless it's compelling, like the Zoning Board of Appeals can't keep up with the requests," Dudley said, referring specifically to waiving the \$400 fee.

Waiving the fee in this case, she said, might make other groups or individuals think that if they first bring their case to the city council they can avoid paying the \$400 fee.

But other councilmembers argued that the ham radio operators paid the fee once before in 1979 when they initially requested the planning commission to amend the ordinance.

But after the planning commission "labored long and hard" over changing the ordinance, "it was promptly shot down" by unanimous vote, said Hal Rowe, director of zoning.

"It primarily was aesthetics on which the denial was based," he added.

"I feel ashamed to stick them for another \$400," said councilwoman Jan Dolan, who added that, unlike other re-

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

## Lucky numbers

Diane Joffe calls the numbers during a Bingo session Tuesday night at the American Legion Hall on Grand River. The numbers are marked on the small balls, like the one in Joffe's right

hand, which are blown up to the caller on a stream of air. For a story on an area Bingo night, see Page 3A.

## 2 restaurants close:

By Tom Daer  
staff writer

City officials, retirees and downtown shoppers will have to find somewhere else to have their coffee and gabfests now that the Farmington Wishing Well, a longtime fixture in the Downtown Center, has closed its doors.

Likewise, area teen-agers will have to search elsewhere if they want to enjoy the pizza, video games and the music played by animated robots that were part of the scene at the recently closed Showbiz Plaza Place on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills.

With the closures, the Farmington area is poorer by two eateries — one

locally owned and long-established, the other just opened and part of a nationwide chain.

The Wishing Well, a closed sign on its door and the final specials of the day ("veal cutlet \$2.29, salad bar \$2.29, soup of the day: chicken noodle") still visible on a sign in the foyer, just couldn't rebound from a fire on Dec. 8, 1980, according to owner John Grzena.

"We had \$100,000 worth of insurance, and there was \$93,000 worth of damage," said Grzena, who was badly burned in the fire of unknown causes, which occurred just before the restaurant was to open. "You think you're covered, but you're not."

"The insurance company depreciated

everything and ended up paying \$53,000, and I had to borrow \$40,000 from the bank to cover the difference and reopen."

"We got a loan at 1 percent above the prime (interest rate), which was a pretty good business loan back then. But the prime at that time was 21 or 22 percent. About the only thing we were able to do was pay the interest on the loan."

Grzena complained that the rent on

his building, the last in a long line of stores in the shopping center, had been more than tripled — from \$478.50 to \$1,531 a month — following the fire.

The center was in the process of being sold to the Detroit Commerce Association headed by Laurence C. Lenchner.

"The previous owner was in the pro-

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

A downtown Farmington landmark for the past nine years, the Wishing Well restaurant has

closed its doors. It was unable to rebound from a 1980 fire.

## Residents speak out on schools

By Tom Daer  
staff writer

Richard Wallace, a member of the Farmington Board of Education, worries that the board will become "consumed, distracted from everyday functions" because of the flurry of recent reports, which have been highly critical of American education.

The criticism started last fall with the issuance of "A Nation at Risk," a well-publicized critique by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. That report claimed that the nation was in jeopardy because of "a rising tide of mediocrity" in education.

"A Nation at Risk" was followed by several other reports with the same basic message.

"My concern when all of this started coming out was that we'd have a knee-jerk reaction," said Wallace, the board treasurer, at Tuesday's curriculum committee meeting. "But fortunately, we have a superintendent who I think is above that kind of feeling."

"We have a good district here. We have a superintendent who can move us forward without getting us bogged down."

That superintendent, Lewis Schulman, recently turned to the community in an attempt to gather opinions and suggestions concerning the critical reports.

To gain this information, Schulman interviewed 41 parents of Farmington public school students from 12 district schools.

All parents were given a summary of the "Nation at Risk" report and asked for comments.

"WHILE NO ONE blamed our schools for 'the rising tide of mediocrity,' many did offer keen, incisive comments about areas that needed attention and review," said Schulman in a report issued at the curriculum meeting.

Schulman said that most parents did not comment on the specific recommendations of "A Nation at Risk" —

for example: four years of English, three years of mathematics and three years of science.

"They did indicate that more should be asked of the students," Schulman said in his report. "... they indicated that schools should be careful not to eliminate the non-academic by excessive academic demands. They felt that we can upgrade education and increase expectations without increasing the dropout rates."

The report continued: "One group of parents made the strong point that, in addition to expectations, we should look to inducements (clubs, etc.), and varied techniques to encourage learning. They urged that, on a long-range basis, such intangibles as self esteem and self worth be considered and valued."

Michigan school districts have always controlled the majority of the curriculum and set their own standards, and many of Schulman's sampling of parents wanted it to remain that way.

"Almost everyone felt that Farmington should determine its own standards, with the state providing guidelines," the superintendent's report said.

ONE PARENT suggested — "with great emphasis," according to Schulman — that what she called "unity in the schools" was needed.

"She complained of the dearth of assemblies in the middle and high schools," the report said. "She seemed to feel that the distinction between private and public schools rested on the ability of the school to develop unifying practices."

The concept of merit pay for qualified teachers found little support among the parents, according to Schulman, but one parent did suggest that a beginning teacher's wages be increased to \$20,000.

All parents supported extracurricular activities, "without reservation," in Schulman's words. "They were con-

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## oral quarrel

## Should service clubs allow women members?

Nationally, this is Jaycee Week. Some service clubs — the Jaycees included — traditionally have closed their memberships to women. Other service clubs with a men-only policy are the Exchange Club, Kiwanis and Rotary.

many people believe that the policy is sexist and should be changed.

Why should the bylaws of male service clubs be changed to allow women to become members?

To answer this question, call us at 477-5498 anytime before 1 p.m. Friday. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please see Monday's Farmington Observer.

