

Moslems make bid for school house

By Teri Bansa
staff writer

A small group of American Moslems of Indian and Pakistani descent have made a \$50,000 offer for the Clarenceville School District's Westbrook Elementary School in Farmington Hills.

The investors, who plan to incorporate as a non-profit organization soon, would renovate the closed school building on Osmus Street for use as a nursery school and cultural center with future plans to start a full-time parochial school there, said the group's spokesman, Syed S. Mohiuddin, a Ford Motor Co. engineer from Canton Township.

Their plans also include splitting off the northern two acres of the six-acre plot and building a condominium project on it, he added.

The Clarenceville district draws students from parts of Livonia, Farmington Hills and Redford Township.

"I have some dreams about this area," Mohiuddin said Thursday, prior to appearing before the Clarenceville School Board that night. "There's some six acres of land there and it's just being wasted."

WESTBROOK has been boarded up and used as a storage site by the district since it was closed due to declining enrollment in June 1974.

District Superintendent Michael Shiber said negotiations between the school district and Mohiuddin have been going on for the past two months and the latest offer is more in line with the district's own property appraisal of the site.

On Thursday night, school board members reviewing the offer to purchase the land called on the district's lawyers to enter final discussions to settle "some minor items the board is not completely in agreement on," said Ed Saliz, the district's assistant superintendent of business. Some of those details, as found in the group's proposal, include who should pay the cost of preparing the building's furnace for start-up (the cost could be a couple thousand dollars, Saliz said) and the investors' proposal that interest payments be waived on \$25,000 of the selling price.

According to Shiber, this is the first "tangible" offer the district has had in some time for the property. If the building and property is sold, the payments would be received directly into the district's debt retirement fund, paying off approximately one-third of it. Currently, Clarenceville levies 2.5 mills (representing \$1 per \$1,000 in assessed valuation) for debt.

Mohiuddin said his group is interested in developing a religious school and

a place of worship that's centrally located to the members, many of whom live in western Wayne County. Mohiuddin, himself, worships at the American Moslem Society's mosque in Dearborn.

Mohiuddin said he represents 12 members but that if the deal is approved it might give him the "moral boost" to expand membership. Right now, he described the members as of mostly Indian and Pakistani descent who are now American citizens. He said the group also has members who were born in this country.

He said their intent is to educate their children according to religious customs.

"WHAT WE'D like to do is educate ourselves and keep the heritage in our children," he said.

"The way we hear/read and see on television the crime problem slowly creeping into the public schools — permissive sex — this is all shameful for us. We shudder when we think our children can fall victim to these crimes."

But he said those plans would only develop in stages. He said he recognizes the building has been deteriorating and needs renovation and that would be done over time. At first, though, they

would open a nursery-day care center in the useable parts of the building and renovate the rest in time.

As for the residential project, they

would construct a 16-unit complex with parking facilities. Currently, the land is zoned for single-family use. If they are unsuccessful in convincing Farmington

Hills officials to change the zoning to RC2, then they'll switch to an alternate plan and sell off the land into seven or eight single-family plots, he said.

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Libraries sponsor programs for kids

Both branches of the Farmington Community Library will celebrate National Library Week with special programs for children this week.

At the Farmington branch, preschoolers are invited to a "Pooh Party" from 2-2:45 p.m. Tuesday featuring stories and songs about bears, a Winnie the Pooh film, and refreshments. Participants are asked to bring their favorite stuffed bear.

From 10:30-11:30 a.m. on Saturday, elementary school children are invited to "Soup and Popcorn," featuring films about Robert Newton Peck's popular book character, Soup, and a popcorn snack. Registration for either of the above should be made by calling 474-7770.

At the Farmington Hills branch, preschoolers through second graders are invited to a "Pooh Party" from 10:30-11:30 a.m. on Saturday. "Soup and Popcorn" will be offered for grades three and up that afternoon from 2-3 p.m. Registration may be made by calling 555-0300.

All students in kindergarten through eighth grade are invited to enter a folklore trivia contest. Entry forms are available at either branch; all entries must be submitted by Saturday. One grand prize will be awarded for the winning entry selected from all correct entries. Consolation prizes will be awarded for all correct entries not selected.

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