

Aglow

New lighting is approved for city hall

In keeping with the Downtown Development Authority plan to light up downtown, Farmington city officials have approved new lighting for the municipal building on Liberty Street.

In his presentation to the city council Monday, City Manager Robert Deadman said the building currently has a mishmash of different types of lights, and some "that don't work at all."

"The exterior lighting of prominent and public buildings plays a major role in creating downtown atmosphere," he said. "This follows part of the DDA scheme of highlight-

ing exterior lighting at night."

The city will spend \$4,900 from the general fund's buildings and grounds account to install 11 high-pressure sodium fixtures, all with underground wiring. Current electrical costs of about \$1,712 per year will be reduced by \$440, according to Deadman. Wattage will also be taken from 2,120 watts to 1,070 watts.

The city currently has a mixture of incandescent mercury vapor and high pressure sodium.

The council waived the bid pro-

cess and awarded the lighting contract to Commercial Light and Power Co. of Plymouth — the same company that provided electrical service downtown during the recent Farmington Founders Festival.

Although the vote was unanimous in favor of the lighting program, Councilman Richard Tupper voiced concern about electrical costs.

"I can't see lighting up the building after midnight," he said.

Deadman said it would cost the city more to run additional electri-

cal timers to turn off the lights than it would to leave the lights burning.

Besides giving general lighting on all sides of the building, the new lighting program will specifically illuminate handicapped ramps, city hall signs, the city hall parking lot, entryways and the plantings at the building's front.

This is the first all-encompassing lighting program the city has undertaken for the municipal building, which was constructed in 1962, Deadman said. Previously, improvements were made on a light-by-light basis.

DDA adopts plan; moves ahead

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City money is sought to start the project with a "big bang," according to Wazany. Cost estimates for the first phase are \$439,000-\$489,000. It would be paid for with the city loan and captured revenues from the first year of TIFA.

Revenues from a seven-year TIFA would generate \$77,000 in year one, \$110,000 in year two, \$140,000 in year three, \$174,000 in year four, \$210,000 in year five, \$250,000 in year six and \$450,000 in year seven, according to Wazany.

Based on the annual estimates for each phase of work, the annual costs would either equal the revenues or would be less. Additional revenues from the captured dollars in the multi-year plan would be used to pay back city coffers.

THE DOLLARS figured in various phases "have been factored up for a slight inflation factor," Wazany told the board.

Although the city council has not

discussed the potential loan, Deadman said "every indication is that council is receptive" to the downtown revitalization. If the council were to charge the DDA interest on the loan, Deadman said it probably would be no more than the rate at which the city borrows money.

Phase I of the project would concentrate on streetscape improvements, including all-new patterned concrete sidewalks. New plantings giving the downtown 160 total trees and the introduction of 108 new pedestrian lights with bishop's crook-style posts and Victorian-style globes are also part of the plan.

This phase will concentrate in an area bounded by Warner on the east, Thomas and Oakland on the north, Oakland on the west and Alta Loma on the south.

Also discussed for Phase I is a well-defined walkway drawing the south and north sides of Grand River together. DDA member Larry Lenchner asked the city planner to take care that such a walkway not

turn into a "white elephant."

In Phase II, patterned landscaping and lighting in the Farmington Downtown Center parking lot would be addressed, which Wazany called "one of the biggest denuded spots" in the city. Phase III would concentrate on the city hall parking lot and on Thomas and Warner streets, which would involve pedestrian walkways. Phase IV involves improvements along Grove Street and along Grand River east of Grove. Phase V looks at an area south of Orchard and Alta Loma streets.

THE DDA plans to use the 2-mill tax increase within the DDA district to generate the needed \$15,000 per year for maintenance on the improvements.

It was suggested by several board

members that if full- or part-time administration were needed, the cost be shared by several groups.

"There's no reason the director can't be paid for out of several sources," Donner said. "If stalling is for promotional purposes, perhaps the people who benefit should pay for it."

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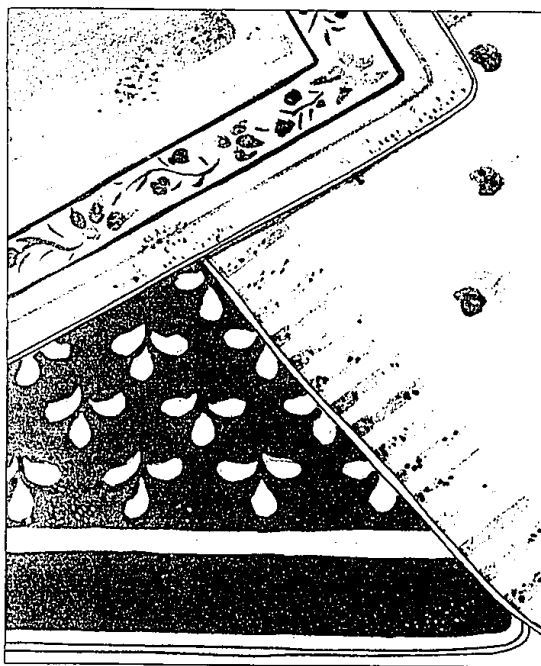
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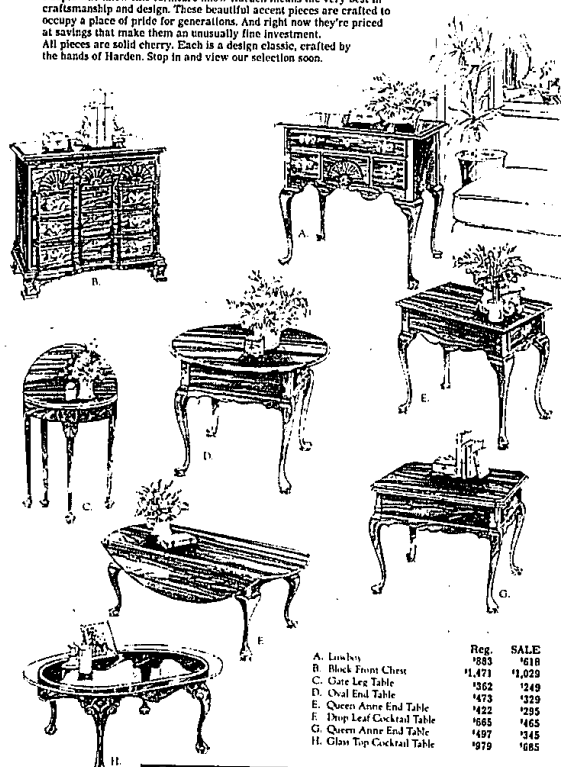
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