

Opinion

33203 Grand River/Farmington, MI 48024 Robert Sklar editor/477-5450

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O&R Thursday, November 5, 1987

Speak out

Don't bypass school forums

THE STAGE is set. In two weeks, the curtains will rise as subgroups of a Farmington Public Schools citizens advisory committee conduct town meetings to do research and gain feedback on redistricting options.

The subgroups, consisting of principals and parents, will spotlight attendance boundaries, building locations and facility uses in the wake of increasing elementary and decreasing high school enrollment.

Sure, superintendent Graham Lewis' administrative staff could draw new boundary lines and decide whether to build a new elementary in western Farmington Hills.

But as we previously underscored, we agree with Lewis' belief that intimately involving residents in the sensitive area of redistricting is in the district's best interest.

Such involvement is a prerequisite to earning public trust. Besides, there's every reason to believe the citizens advisory committee will provide a valuable perspective.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK is great. But for it to be useful, it must be informed. Providing information is the purpose of the three town meetings.

Monday, Nov. 16, high school issues will take center stage at Harrison High School. Two days later at East Middle School, the spotlight moves to middle school issues. Thursday, Nov. 19, elementary issues will dominate debate at Larkshire Elementary. Discussions start at 7 p.m.

Don't fret if you can't attend. Subgroup members will welcome written comments.

Subgroups won't just examine enrollment projections in hopes of eventually assuring equal enrollment at each school at each grade level.

They'll consider ways to equalize learning opportunities throughout the 10,000-student district. They'll explore how pursuit of providing similar classes and facilities to each student might influence attendance boundary changes.

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THE MIDDLE school subgroup also will consider the key question of whether students from one middle school should feed into the same high school, or whether they should be divided among the three high schools.

The elementary subgroup also will study whether to build a new westside school, whether to close a school on the east side, and current and projected transportation costs.

It will take a hard look at current and future attendance boundaries, which have been juggled in recent years to meet a spurt of new young families in Farmington Hills.

Given the potential for straining friendships, dividing neighborhoods, causing long bus rides and disrupting learning patterns, we've long argued that redistricting should not be an annual autumn rite.

SUBGROUP FINDINGS will form the basis for the advisory committee's January recommendations to the school board. The board plans to make a decision by March.

Clearly, the school board is going out of its way to get residents involved at the grass-roots level. That opportunity should be exploited to the fullest.

Show up and speak out. But have a basis for what you're saying.

Don't rely on vague impressions of what might happen or what might work. Don't waste your time and the time of the subgroup members.

Do your homework if you expect the citizens advisory committee and its subgroups to do theirs.

Together . . .

Suburbs can lure tourist dollars

MICHIGAN's stepsister industry, tourism, needs to be put on the front burner through the initiative of suburban business and governmental leaders.

Making travel and convention business a stronger spoke in the economic wheel is simply good sense.

Lansing's interests aren't always in tune with suburban Detroit.

Suburban leaders must form a coalition to aggressively deal with tourism. By working and planning together, the clout can be developed to bring that valuable money being spent in other regions of the country by the Japanese, West Germans, British and Canadians.

Of the 25 million foreign travelers who came to the United States last year, less than 5 million came to the Great Lakes region. Certainly, a valuable source of revenue awaits this suburban area that is so rich in hotels, restaurants, lakes, recreational parks and convention facilities.

THE TIME is far past when we must depend primarily on the auto industry to pay the bills for Michigan. But once again we find ourselves victimized by what many experts predict is an economic turnaround.

As we have come to realize so well, when the economy goes even a little sour, Michigan suffers even more because of its heavy dependence on the auto industry. Already this year, approximately 15,000 auto jobs have disappeared.

In short, tourism creates jobs, 6,000 for every percent increase in that market, and the auto industry loses jobs.

And while state leaders have developed a plan for economic diversification and stability, its proponents still give tourism only a passing nod.

Despite the fact that tourism brings in \$13 billion annually, the state allocates only about \$10 million to make this major industry run.

Suburban leaders must form a coalition to aggressively deal with tourism. By working and planning together, the clout can be developed to bring those valuable dollars being spent in other regions of the country by the Japanese, West Germans, British and Canadians.

• Despite the fact that more than a quarter of a million people are employed in Michigan's travel industry, tourism has been relegated to being a bureau within the commerce department.

• Despite the fact that for every percent increase in travel business, an additional \$125 million in direct travel expenditures and \$10 million in state revenue would be raised, Michigan has spent more for bridges we don't need and research projects the results of which are certainly questionable.

Unfortunately, the suburbs have left it up to the state and city of Detroit interests to launch the marketing efforts and take on the responsibility of building this very important industry.

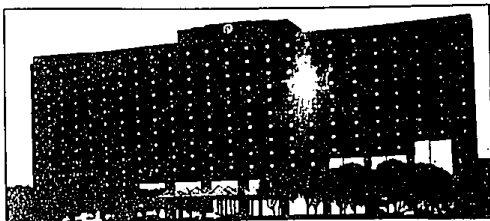
Even worse, suburban efforts have been weak, disorganized and woefully underfunded.

In truth, the suburbs share very little in the planning and execution of major tourism initiatives.

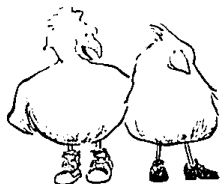
One can only wonder if suburban civic leaders comprehend the significance of developing and monitoring a planned program to cultivate this fertile economic ground.

From the lack of concerted and coordinated effort, we can only doubt it.

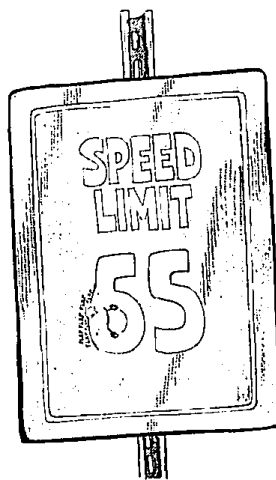
Oakland and Wayne counties have a growing number of hotels. One recently opened hotel is the Radisson Plaza at Town Center in Southfield (picture is of scale model).



MICHIGAN



"JUNIOR'S SUCH A PRANKSTER. HE LIKES TO HOVER IN FRONT OF THE 5 IN URBAN AREAS TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE A 6. THAT CAUSES THOSE RED LIGHTS TO FLASH ON TOP OF POLICE CARS. THAT CAUSES GREAT ANTICIPATION AMONGST ALL OF THE DRIVERS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA."



Tap council hopefuls for Hills board seats

THE ULTIMATE decision makers, the voters, have spoken.

Next Monday, the four winners from this Tuesday's Farmington Hills City Council election will be sworn in.

But that doesn't mean the five losers should be cast aside and forgotten.

Let's put them to work.

Much was made this past year about a lack of applicants the mayor could draw from to fill seats on Farmington Hills' 20 boards and commissions.

It's easy to say the mayor should have no trouble filling the seats when drawing from a pool of 68,000 residents, many well educated and widely experienced.

BUT THIS is the same city that historically generates few applicants for the largely unpaid positions.

Applicant names have come in with greater regularity since news coverage about vacant positions began to spread the word.

Still, where else than among the other council contenders could you so readily find dedicated residents,



Bob Sklar

eagerly willing to serve their community?

A March council resolution authorized the mayor to query residents serving on more than one board or commission about which they would prefer to serve on after the earliest expiration of one of their terms.

The idea is "to use a broader spectrum of citizens . . . thereby, utilizing a greater amount of talent and ability . . ." according to the resolution.

I DIDN'T agree with that resolution because I felt overlap could be accomplished through mayoral diligence in recommending appointments. That would leave open the option of letting the same person

wear two hats if circumstances warranted.

I thought limiting the number of consecutive terms would prevent a concentration but still let well-qualified folks share their insight with the community when there's a dearth of applicants for a specialized position.

I didn't understand the "one person-one position" premise when the roles of the boards and commissions vary so much and some meet only infrequently. There's not much room for empire building, particularly since the council has final say over much board and commission action.

But given the council approved the resolution and the mayor must search even harder to turn up qualified appointees, why not look to the other council candidates?

Surely, two or three more from among them would be qualified to fill board or commission seats that open in the coming year.

Let's query them and include their names among other board or commission applicants. If they ran for the city council, it's likely they'd leap at the chance to serve Farmington Hills in another capacity.

Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. None can be returned. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. Letters should be limited to 300 words in most cases. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

Keep ticketing city speeders

To the editor:

Ho, ho, the police are doing something about the speeding in downtown Farmington on Grand River.

As a longtime resident, it is becoming impossible to get out onto Grand River from any side street.

No one pays any attention to the speed limits. Drivers come roaring through from Halsted and never slow down. Let's make Farmington known for speed control and maybe speeders will go away.

Keep up the good work. More tickets to speeders!

M. Theobald,
Farmington

New trial is my right

To the editor:

This letter is in regard to an article by Observer staff writer Casey Hans.

On March 3, 1987, I was convicted of assault with intent to commit murder in the fall 1985 shooting of a security guard at a Farmington Hills arcade.

Sgt. Charles Nebus of the Farmington Hills Police Department said, "I would be very disappointed if we had to try the case again. I would feel very bad for the victim and his family to have to endure the

trauma of another trial."

When Nebus says "another trial," he is referring to a possible retrial in my behalf, the reason being, I wish to exercise my constitutional right to a fair trial by jury.

To rebut the comments made by Sgt. Nebus, I will say that I would very definitely be disappointed if I were not granted a new trial and that I find it very traumatic to have to endure the degenerative, immoral lifestyle of prison, as I am not guilty of this crime.

I am currently housed in the Michigan Department of Corrections and any further delay in this matter will only serve to prejudice me and my right to a fair trial.

Paul Deber,
Livonia

Community wins thanks

To the editor:

Thanks to all you wonderful merchants and business people of the Farmington area for all the great door prizes you donated for the handicapped children.

Your generosity and kindness made this party a big success. Also a thank you to the Elks brothers and Vivians for caring and sharing.

God Bless each and everyone of you.

May your children and grandchildren be blessed with good health always. This was held at the Farmington Elks Lodge.

Bonnie Musselman,
Farmington

Nice article most helpful

To the editor:

Thank you for publishing the nice article about Sister Ignatius and the benefit which was given in honor of her 80th birthday.

I was delighted with the coverage and I am sure that the publicity was most helpful in making it a successful event.

There was a nice turnout, which, of course, provides the Sisters of Mercy in Farmington Hills with a substantial base to invest for their scholarship fund. They are most dedicated women and do a great job of training young women.

You were most gracious in responding to my request. I am sure that Sister Ignatius deeply appreciates your interest. Thank you for everything.

Willingness appreciated

To the editor:

Thank you for the article on learning disabilities, which appeared in the Oct. 12 issue of the Farmington Observer.

We appreciate your willingness to help educate the public in this area.

Diane Sands, publicity,
Michigan Association
for Children with
Learning Disabilities

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