

# Shooting inquiry report due next week

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By Bob Sikar  
Staff writer

A board of inquiry review into the fatal shooting of an armed robbery suspect by a Farmington Hills patrolman Feb. 11 is expected to be completed next week, a police spokesman said Monday.

On Wednesday, the board — Deputy Chief Miri Spencer, Lt. Dennis Hochford and officer David Glowacki — began to review police reports and interview witnesses at police headquarters.

"I'll issue written findings to the chief, who'll decide what action to take," Lt. Richard Murphy said. The board is empowered to con-

duct investigations, gather and review facts, and establish responsibility for acts or failure to act. It can present recommendations in the areas of training, policy review and disciplinary action.

Among materials the board will consider is a report by Inspector Thomas Godwin and Sgt. Charles Nebus, who headed the department's investigation of the shooting. Cecil Wilson, 42, of Marshall, Mo., shouted he wanted to die moments before he was shot and killed by a 31-year-old patrolman on a dead-end road flanked by five houses Feb. 11, police said.

Police said the patrolman, a five-year department veteran, feared for his life when the man drove toward him in a 1989 Pontiac Grand Am at 7:35 p.m. on Albion, a dirt road southwest of Grand River and

Middlebelt.

At a press conference the day after the shooting, police Chief William Dwyer said "Based on our preliminary investigation, it's our opinion at this time it was a justifiable shooting."

"The officer feared for his life not only from the accelerating vehicle but because the driver was a suspect in several armed robberies," Dwyer said.

It doesn't appear Wilson had a criminal record, but he was killed with a single shot from the officer's 12-gauge pump shotgun, police said.

The officer, standing outside his patrol car with shotgun in hand, three times ordered Wilson to surrender but fired when he feared the man would drive alongside and either shoot him or pin him against his

But at the press conference, Dwyer said department findings would be presented to the prosecutor for review.

WILSON RENTED the Grand Am from Orson Coe Pontiac in Grand Rapids, where a job as a service dispatcher had been waiting for him all week, police said. Wilson was an automotive service manager by profession, said his wife, Lois.

"Kill me, I want to die," Wilson yelled through the open driver's window moments before he was killed with a single shot from the officer's 12-gauge pump shotgun, police said.

The officer, standing outside his patrol car with shotgun in hand, three times ordered Wilson to surrender but fired when he feared the man would drive alongside and either shoot him or pin him against his

patrol car, police said. The officer never saw Wilson brandish a gun. But he knew the robbery suspect could be armed and he saw the man reaching with his right hand toward the passenger seat, police said.

A loaded black pellet gun, identical in appearance to a 9mm semiautomatic pistol, was found on the passenger seat of Wilson's car, lying next to his outstretched right arm. A knife in a sheath was found on the front floor, police said.

THE FARMINGTON HILLS officer had followed Wilson onto Albion after learning that a car matching Wilson's had been chased but lost by Livonia police.

A Livonia officer, trying to stop Wilson for a traffic signal violation, soon determined the car and driver

matched the descriptions of the getaway car and robber involved in at least seven armed robberies, including a gas station stickup in Livonia the morning of Feb. 11.

Wilson died of a gunshot wound to the chest, the Oakland County Medical Examiner said.

The officer involved in the shooting had never before fired a weapon in the line of duty, Dwyer said. He has been reassigned to administrative duty until the investigation is complete.

"I'm going fine," Murphy said. As in all such cases, the officer will receive counseling in post-trauma shooting, Murphy said. Police believe the pellet gun found in Wilson's car was the weapon he used in the seven robberies. No gun was ever fired during the holdups and no one was hurt.

## clarification

A story in the Thursday, Feb. 16 edition, should have quoted Farmington Hills city councilman Joe Alkateeb as saying: "... the truth — 1-9-88 has suffered a major recent attack on the way to these appointments."

## Trees and sidewalks focus of city policy

By Casey Hans  
Staff writer

The Farmington City Council will decide in March how to separate trees and sidewalks — which are becoming more closely linked every year — and who will foot the bill.

Large trees growing in the city right of way have grown wider until many are touching the sidewalks, or their root systems are causing the sidewalks to raise and buckle. The city has rebuilt sidewalks to go around trees, in some instances.

The council is expected to receive an administrative recommendation in mid-March, then consider who will pay for sidewalks when:

- dead or diseased trees are taken down and the sidewalks are straightened,
- root systems of trees are causing the sidewalks to break regularly, or creating a hazard when the sidewalk has a severe rise due to the roots.

CITY MANAGER Robert Deadman suggested Feb. 20 that the council adopt a policy addressing the first issue, and that the city pay for the straightening of sidewalks due to removal of trees in the right of way.

Councilman Arnold Campbell suggested the city go one step further,

and consider the root systems and other problems that are afflicting city neighborhoods with the large trees. The council then tabled the issues, so they could be considered together.

"I think it's something we should look at," Campbell said.

THE SIDEWALK/TREE issues were raised in early February at a public hearing for sidewalk assessments, when several residents raised concerns about the trees and sidewalks.

Currently, the city's policy is to remove diseased or damaged trees because of safety reasons. Also, in the Bel Aire subdivision, several Chinese Elm and Sycamore trees that had caused problems in the sewer system due to roots have also been removed.

"We will not let people pull down healthy trees in the right-of-way," Deadman added. "Usually, the people will not want to lose the tree." City public services director Earl Billing said the city would face a "large expense" if agreeing to take care of sidewalks damaged by root problems. The city is researching a new product that would retard root growth and help the sidewalk dilemma, Deadman added.

## Final Muirwood vote list

The following information, run in Monday's edition of the Observer, was incomplete. Following is complete information about how Farmington Hills planning commissioners voted on the rezoning recommendation for property at Drake and Grand River.

The motion was to recommend rezoning property west of Muirwood Square from residential to commercial and parking, which would allow an expansion of the shopping center. The motion was called a "reasonable alternative" to the city's master land use plan. Commissioner Jeri VanHouten was absent.

Voting "yes":  
• Joanne Smith: "To add this small amount to our commercial area does not do anything drastic to our master plan."

• Paul Blizman: "It makes sense for the city of Farmington Hills to support the rezoning."

• Lawrence Lichtman: "Frankly, I question whether that (Farmington's opposition) should be a significant point in our consideration."

Voting "no":  
• John Trafelet: "There are problems with sight distance on Grand River... traffic and a change in the master plan which I don't favor."  
• Mary Avery: "This would go a long way to changing the character

of the area around there. It's more than I want to go along with."

• Jon Grant: "I do think a decline in the downtown area would have an impact on the city of Farmington Hills and property values. Grand River and Halsted is a nightmare. This would have an impact there as well."

• Don Millington: "This new planning commissioner questioned occupancy rate of the center, and asked about shopper mix before voting."

• Jack Joynt: "Driving along Grand River, you can differentiate between Farmington and Farmington Hills. It's a good idea. Unfortunately, I'm not sure it's in the right location."

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