

# Regular term 10 vying for 4 Hills council seats

**R**EQUESTS TO vote absentee in the Farmington Hills City Council election on Tuesday, Nov. 7 "are pouring in like crazy," city clerk Kathryn Dorman reports.

Dorman hired four part-time workers to complement her regular staff of 10 to process AV ballot applications last week. Ballots will be mailed beginning this week.

By last Friday, Dorman had received at least 3,000 applications.

"Everyday stacks are in our mail," she said.

Ten candidates are seeking regular terms and three are vying for the remaining two years of a vacancy on the city council.

Five of the seven non-partisan council seats are up for grabs this fall. Incumbent Jody Soronen is not seeking re-election.

In the regular race are incumbents Ben Marks, Aldo Vagnozzi and Philip Arnold. Challenging them are Jonathan Grant, Vernon Kielpinski, Lawrence Lichtman, Ronald Oliverio, Albert Rosen, Bettye Stines and George Sarkisian.

Among these 10, voters can vote for up to four. The top three vote-getters in the Nov. 7 election will carry four-year terms; the next highest finisher will serve a two-year term.

**NANCY BATES** and **Herbert Linder** are challenging incumbent Paul Sowerby in the race to fill the remaining two years of former councilman Joe Alkateeb's four-year term (see facing page).

The next candidate to be named is 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 25, in the Farmington Hills City Hall council chambers, 31555 11 Mile. The Council of Homeowners of Farmington Hills is hosting the night.

- Grant, 37, owns Reliance Forms & Supplies, Farmington Hills.
- Kielpinski, 35, is a janitor at the Mid-Eleven Shopping Center, Farmington Hills.
- Rosen, 68, is English department head at Chadsey High, Detroit.
- Lichtman, 31, is an attorney with offices in Bloomfield Hills.
- Vagnozzi, 63, is a financial consultant at Aaron Publication, Detroit.

- Arnold, 50, is manager, profit and volume analysis, for Ford Motor Co. casting division.
- Marks, 66, is general partner in Farmington Hills Office Development Co.
- Oliverio, 34, is first vice president-investments at First of Michigan Corp., Southfield.
- Stines, no age given, is a music teacher in Detroit.
- Sarkisian, 37, is a layout technician, experimental engineer, for Ford Motor Co.

**ABSENTEE BALLOT** applications are available at the city clerk's office in city hall, 31555 11 Mile, or by calling 473-9560.

To make voting easier for senior residents, the city automatically mails an application to any registered voter who is at least 60.

The 1987 council election drew 2,200 absentee voters. But ballot applications were not automatically mailed to seniors that year.

## Ben Marks regular term incumbent

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

Yes, the city administration has done a tremendous job in bringing forward the most important road improvements. The money has been wisely spent as it has allowed for improvements in all the major need areas of the city. As the people's representative on council, I have supported these expenditures, but the citizens are to be congratulated for approving the bond issue in 1986. We have a way to go before we can satisfy all the needs and I am acutely aware that the residents of Farmington Hills are adamant on this issue.

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

The voters alone should determine the length of any council member's term.

The citizens elect the members of council. They have the power, the right, the responsibility to choose their elected officials, to serve as long as the voters dictate. I see no need to take that right away from them.

**3. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

Every three years. The council can always review a contract if there is an overriding interest in doing so.

**4. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

The men and women who have agreed to serve on our boards and commissions have shown sensitivity to the residents while complying with the ordinances that govern them. In many instances, the courts have intervened in spite of the decision by the council. Planning commission and the zoning board of

appeals, and we have had to live with them.

On the whole, our community is still one of the best places to live in the Detroit metro area, and that is the result of good planning. Providing a good tax base to furnish us with services and support our schools; forces, medical offices, and other conveniences for home and family; residential opportunities for a variety of needs; and trying to fit all this in and preserve our character, is the aim of this council. Seldom is the master plan not followed, and in the most recent case, the planning commission upgraded a section to single-family.

**5. At what cost should city council meetings be cablecast, given the projected startup cost of \$80,000?**

At this time, with the many projects that need to be attended to, cablecasting of the council meetings would be an extravagance. Other cities have been funded through their cable companies. The citizens to date have not demanded this service. However, when these services are available I believe we can revisit the question.

## Philip Arnold regular term incumbent

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

Very wisely. The original program provided an additional \$2 million of funding from developers and/or the state for a total of \$9 million in construction. At this time, it appears that we will leverage an amount of \$34 million resulting in over \$10 million of improved roads. All the gravel mile roads have been paved as promised and many smaller projects, such as intersection improvements, are being completed.

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

The charter was very well drafted by the charter commission, as evidenced by the efficiency of our government services. The selection of experienced qualified representatives by the voters should not be limited by the charter. Those who serve poorly will not survive.

**3. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

The city's consultants should be reviewed annually by utilizing a formal system whereby each of the elected/appointed officials as well as administrative managers would complete a standard written evaluation with the results compiled and discussed with that consultant. Even assuming the annual review is satisfactory, the contracts should not exceed one year and should be re-bid every three years to maintain cost control.

**4. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

The master plan and ordinances such as tree protection and buffer-zone requirements are based upon the wishes of our residents. These controls have been applied successfully to create fine residential neighborhoods interspersed with supporting service areas. This results in a diverse, strong tax base resulting in reasonable rates. Because the city is approximately 85 percent developed, our concern must be directed toward the quality of life — less on the traffic, add more open space.

**5. At what cost should city council meetings be cablecast, given the projected startup cost of \$80,000?**

At a very minimal cost. I am not convinced that cablecasting provides our citizens with better government. Perhaps, when the cable contract comes up for renewal, the franchise might pay for the required equipment. If so, I might be supportive assuming annual operating costs are low.

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## George Sarkisian regular term challenger

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

Because we have had such outrageous growth in Farmington Hills the last several years our infrastructure was not equipped to handle the traffic. No matter how many 12 mile widenings or I-696 8-lane superhighways we have, Farmington Hills is always going to have a traffic problem. It is a natural progression — the more roads you have, the more traffic you have; the more development you have, the need for more roads increases. The \$7 million for road improvements is just stopgap money. The cycle won't end.

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

The maximum amount of time a council member should be allowed to serve is two consecutive full terms. If additional service as a council member is desired, one full term should expire between the service times. This prevents dictatorial government.

**3. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

The city's major consultants should be reviewed every two years with two consecutive bad performance reviews resulting in automatic cancellation of contract or appointment with the city. The need for excellence in quality work and honesty, integrity, honesty and morality are priorities.

**4. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

In some of our neighboring communities.

**5. At what cost should city council meetings be cablecast, given the projected startup cost of \$80,000?**

No answer.

**6. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

Annually.

**7. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

Some members of the city council are either too ignorant or too arrogant to realize how angry residents are relating to the issue of rezoning properties to IEO properties in densely populated areas that, if rezoned, could create serious health hazards.

**8. At what cost should city council meetings be cablecast, given the projected startup cost of \$80,000?**

That should be put to the voters in an election and if there is enough interest, by all means.

## Ronald Oliverio regular term challenger

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

Yes, our roads are in good repair, especially compared with the roads

denial areas and compliance with the master land use plan?

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

No answer.

**3. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

Annually.

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## Jonathan Grant regular term challenger

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

We are currently in the third year of that program, having allocated all of the funds. The goals set forth have been accomplished. We have paved all major mile roads and made the planned safety improvements to intersections. The city has been successful in leveraging an additional \$5 million during the same period from the road commission, developers and neighboring communities. Traffic congestion and roads must remain a top priority for Farmington Hills. We must be diligent in working with the county to ensure we receive our fair share of county road funds.

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

No. This should be up to the voters to determine. We have a participatory

government that affords all individuals the opportunity to seek election. If the voters approve of an individual representing them, the voters should be denied the right to limit representation. Controls in this matter stem from increased awareness and involvement on the part of the voters. I would be more inclined to be supportive of a limit on terms of appointed officials.

**3. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

From a performance standpoint, a yearly evaluation of consultants is equally appropriate to yearly evaluations of employee performances. The financial aspects of every consultant's contract, as well as the terms and conditions of the agreement, should be reviewed and increased for bid every three years.

**4. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

No. The voter will deal with that issue at the polls.

**5. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

The planning consultant on a regular basis so he or she can't be bought. The auditor should be reviewed once every three years. A new city attorney is needed.

**6. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

Yes and no. They were too late in

some cases. The Rouge, a wetland was nearly destroyed near Kimberley. We were warned of this by Ann Carlin back in 1988. The city chose not to listen. But we should do what we can to save what we can.

**7. At what cost should city council meetings be cablecast, given the projected startup cost of \$80,000?**

This is something that has been needed. True, not everyone attends city council meetings. Some can't. Plus if they are watching it on TV, they can't participate. I don't believe it would detract from the city council meeting. I can understand some of those on the council not wanting it. It couldn't hurt the public. But it might hurt those in office.

**8. At what cost should city council meetings be cablecast, given the projected startup cost of \$80,000?**

I strongly favor cablecasting all city council meetings. The cost should be spread over the life of the equipment, which would make the annual cost only a fraction of the \$80,000. I would also ask the cable company to assume some of the cost;

## Vernon Kielpinski regular term challenger

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

No. The city haphazardly sets out. With all the work they have done, what about all the potholes in subdivisions or road improvements needed in subs?

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

Yes.

**3. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

Every two years, immediately after the council election.

**4. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

Yes, council members' terms should be limited by charter to give others the opportunity to serve the public and to bring new ideas to the policy-making board.

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## Aldo Vagnozzi regular term incumbent

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

Yes. Unfortunately the road improvement needs exceed the money available from the bond issue. This is why I have recommended that the state adopt legislation that will require development proponents to pay road impact fees.

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

No. I believe that the length of service in any political office should be determined either by the voters or the office holder. Personally, I do not believe in holding an office for long periods of time, but to impose an arbitrary limit in the charter would deprive the voters of the right to make this determination.

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**4. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

More emphasis should be given to the environmental aspect of proposed development plans. The master land use plan should be used as a guide only. Preservation of residential areas and natural areas should be primary in the city's goals. Whenever feasible, the city should buy property suitable for nature preserves, also wetlands and woodlands should be managed well.

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## Bettye Stines regular term challenger

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

Road improvements are a continuous and ongoing need, to my knowledge, the city is adhering to the proposed plan.

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

The voters alone should determine the length of any city council member's term.

**3. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

The city's major consultants should be reviewed annually to evaluate the individual's performance and to make suggestions for improvements. The council should take the opportunity to learn more about each consultant at the annual review.

**4. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

The length of any city council member's term.

**5. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

The city's major consultants should be reviewed by the city council every one to two years. The city's major consultants must have some assurance that they are not subject to an unduly short tenure, since they obviously must establish certain internal policies and staffing levels that will enable them to adequately serve the city. The city must weigh the prior cost and quality of services provided against the availability of competing services.

**6. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

As a former zoning board of

appeals chairman and as a present member of the planning commission, I believe these bodies do a generally good job in dealing with these issues. The present city council has not done as well. As a member of the ad hoc committee on toxic hazardous materials, I am committed to the city-representative sensitive to environmental concerns.

**7. At what cost should city council meetings be cablecast, given the projected startup cost of \$80,000?**

It was naive and lacking in business savvy for the city council not to negotiate free cablecasting of city council meetings as part of the original cable franchise contract. I believe the city should pay for the cost of the cablecasting of council meetings. Residents should be disturbed by the present council's inability to suggest enterprising and fiscally responsible alternatives to the previously considered proposal, which entailed exorbitant startup costs.

**8. At what cost should city council meetings be cablecast, given the projected startup cost of \$80,000?**

What are some of the policies for a comparable environment area for a comparable environment area? Without such hard figures, the question is open-ended.

## Larry Lichtman regular term challenger

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

As a planning commissioner, I am sensitive to the issue of road improvements not being confused with other issues that contribute to heavy traffic. For the most part, the city has done a competent job of road improvement, but has done a somewhat less satisfactory job in making and implementing good planning decisions. The city has undergone growth that cannot be denied, but must instead be addressed in a realistic and progressive fashion.

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

The voters alone should determine

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## Albert Rosen regular term challenger

**1. Is the city wisely spending the \$7 million bond issue for road improvements that voters approved in 1987?**

Wise? This key word hinges upon subjectivity. Let me peruse all the data and check out the construction schedule. From such an empirical basis can I give an unqualified answer.

**2. Should the number of terms a council member may serve be limited by charter?**

No. I don't think that a constitutional roadblock of this kind is beneficial. Let the people answer with their vote.

**3. How often should the city's major consultants — the planning consultant, the auditor, the city attorney — be reviewed?**

Once a year without fail. Our present lack of review and accountability is evidence that all should be reviewed annually.

**4. Do you feel the city has its finger on the community's pulse as it reviews planning and zoning requests for environmental impact, commercial encroachment on residential areas and compliance with the master land use plan?**

No, the fact that a number of homeowner groups have taken umbrage with city decisions on environmental impact and commercial encroachment on residential areas, as well as virtually elastic compliance with the master land use plan, seems to indicate it is immaterial to the city whether the community has a pulse or not.

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