New ethics code undergoes fine-tuning

By Joanne Maliszewski stall writer

Farmington Hills resident Luella Hempel wants a citizens committee to develop a financial disclosure form and campaign ethles code to accompany the city's first municipal code of ethics.

And Mayor-Elect Jean Fox doesn't think that's a bad idea for the new

year.
"Let them (residents) have the in-

"Let them (residents) have the in-put and have it brought into us for 'our input or fine-tuning." Fox said. "Take the council out of this thing." Hempel was one of a handful of residents who served as watchdogs as the city's first code of thics was drafted by a committee of city offi-cials.

drafted by a committee of city offi-cials.
"This issue should not be swept un-der the rug as other issues have been." Hempel said in a letter real publicly Monday night.
She urged residents' participation before a campaign ethics code is de-veloped, not when the code is almost orthic as was done with the code

But some council members

"I think there are times when it's "I think there are times when it's wise to get citizens Involved in committees," said councilman Lawrence (Lichtman. Unfortunately, he continued, it's "fashionable to have the city bouncil punt and abdicate authority on things."

THE ELECTION polls are the best means for the public to "deal" with a council member or candidate they believe is not behaving ethically in a campalgn.

in a campaign.

The adoption of the ethics code was not without debate Monday. The first complaint came from resident Masha Silver, also a committee watchdog. She urged the council to delay the code's adoption, pending

completion of a financial disclosure form and campaign eithics code to accompany the document.

"We feel you haven't got before you a completed document. I see no reason to rush. I see no reason to rush. I see no reason to burry up and ennet a code now," Sliver said, who agreed with creation of a citizens committee to complete the additional material. But council members preferred to adopt the code date to include a financial disclosure form.

"If we wait until we get all these

disclosure form.
"If we wait until we get all these approved or adopted, we won't have the basic code," councilman Aldo Vagnozi sald.
The proposed code addresses the need for full financial disclosure but

without reference to a disclosure form. City officials and employees also are required to file a complete disclosure statement on an annual basis for doing business with the

city.

The ethics code committee last week agreed to have City Manager William Costick draft a financial disclosure form and present it to the city council later at a study session.

THE NEW code applies to elected officials, city employees, board and commission members and consultants. It is designed to be preventive in nature rather than punitue.

The code addresses gratuities, preferential treatment, use of information, disclosure, outside business

dealings, doing business with the city, suppression of public information and use of city property.

Control of the city of th

'We feel you haven't got before you a completed document. I see no reason to rush. I see no reason to hurry up and enact a code now.

Masha Silver

moving the provision, calling it down without it." The accompanying integrity re-Vagnozzi and Silver argued to keep it in the code. Keeping it in the code is the provision of the code is the provision of the code is the code in the code in the code is the code in the code in the code is the code in the code in the code is the code in the code is the code in the co

Ethics code won't cover campaign contributions

By Joanne Maliszowski stalf writer

The new Farmington Hills ethics code will not apply to contributions made to candidates' political campaigns.

paigns.
"I don't want any exemptions on
the conflict of interest," said councliman Aldo Vagnozzi, who unsuccessfuly tried to have an exemption
for political contributions in the code
deleted.

Contributions from developers are escalating with each city council election and possibly can have an effect on how a council member votes.
"I think this is a large loophole,"
Vagnozzi added.
Incoming Mayor Jean Fox agreed.

"This is one of the things the public is most interested in us taking a strong stand on."

Both council members were concerned that by exempting political contributions, there is no way to monitor the amount of influence a contribution, such as a developer, has on a council member.

"It means you cannot question a possible conflict of interest," Vag-nozzi said. "If you leave it in, we have no recourse on that kind of in-fluence buying."

WHEN CANDIDATES fall to file state required pre-election cam-paign reports, the public and other city council members have no idea the amount of contributions and the

possibility of being under the influence of a heavy contributor.

But Vagnozzi and Fox stood alone, concilman Lawrence Lichtman Councilman Lawrence Lichtman preferred leaving the exemption in the ethics code to serve as "legislative history." The exemption clarifies the parameters of the code, he said.

Councilman Ben Marks, who failed to file the pre-election campalgn finance statement, admitted he received contributions from developers/bulders, many of whom he's known during his career as a builder. He said he did not file the pre-election statement because his committee treasurer was out of town and missed the deadline.

Study team mulls future of library

In the wake of voter defeat of bonding and miliage proposals Nov. 7, the Farmington Community Library set up a study commit-tee to discuss acute overcrowding and space shortage at the Farm-ington Hills branch.

The committee met for the first time Friday.

thme Friday.

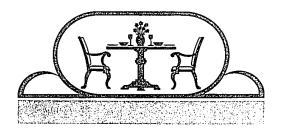
Earlier, the library board —
represented by president Charlotte
Yaverski, vice president Robert
Plummer and trustee Ernest
Sauter — requested that the committee Include city officials in the
two-branch library district.

Representing Farmington were Mayor Shirley Richardson, Mayor Pro Tem Ratph Yoder and city manager Robert Deadman.

Farmington Hills officials in-cluded Mayor Terry Sever, Mayor Fro Tem Jean Fox, councilman Jonathan Grant and city manager William Costlek. Grant and Jody Seronen repre-sented the Citizens to Support the Library Campaign Committee. "While the study committee had frank discussions about the conti-nues solution arothers ever incord

frank discussions about the contin-ning spatial probleme sepretenced by the library, no decisions were reached." Yaverski said Library trustees will be examin-ning both short- and long-term or-tions to resolve space needs at the main branch on 12 Mile Road. On Nov. 7 voters defeated a bond issue to build a new, larger main branch and a library operating tax of up to 1.5 mills.

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