

Ban a financial blow to center

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"What kind of concerts are left to us? Symphonic groups? What about the soul level? Will that be acceptable? We can't be constantly second-guessed. How can you plan over a year's time. What about nifty kids? What do we do about contracts (with performers) we've already signed? We are going to lose money and good will."

Outdoor concerts heralded the center's new role as a community cultural arts center. Competition from other community agencies — now offering programming and classes traditionally offered by the center — forced the center into the new role to stay financially afloat.

"In my opinion, it has outlived its useful purpose," Farmington Road resident Donald Stolberg said.

It's not just the \$60,000 band shell, he added, but the fact that the center can no longer offer the same programs offered by other agencies.

Center officials believe they cannot return to

former days when they were in direct competition with other agencies offering similar programming.

"The cultural arts niche is the one we've identified and put our efforts into other directions the community center can take and still be of value to the community," said John Donohue, board member and attorney.

The cultural arts route was recommended in a study by Southfield-based Plante & Moran, CPAs.

CENTER OFFICIALS said they're receiving conflicting messages from Farmington Hills officials. On the one hand, the planning commission established restrictions that make staying financially afloat tenuous. On the other hand, city officials have made it clear they do not want to take over the center should it fail financially, Donohue said.

The center's deed states that should the center fail, it will fall to the Farmington Community Library. If the library board chooses not to take

it, it becomes the responsibility of Farmington Hills.

City manager William Costick said he doesn't believe that the planning commission's decisions contradict efforts to ensure that the center does not fall to the city. The planning commission is involved with land use issues, which he believes is the category in which the noise complaints fall.

"We try to do as many things as we can to enhance the center's viability," said David Call, assistant city manager.

Among those items is city-financed snow removal and lawn cutting. The city also waived building, review and inspection fees for construction of the new band shell, Call said.

The city's efforts, Call continued, do not hurt the center's non-profit status. In-kind services are offered on a non-priority basis as opposed to outright cash contributions.

"If the center goes bottoms up, the city is going to end up with it. That's a financial burden on the community. And we'd have to do it with general tax dollars," Call said.

Hillel helps hospital celebrate Hanukkah

Tradition. Family. Religious observances. Festive celebrations. What better place to celebrate century-old Hanukkah traditions than at Michigan's only Jewish-sponsored hospital, with singing children, festive foods and merriment?

The Sinai Hospital Guild highlighted the celebration of this Jewish festival with its fifth annual Latke Party, featuring a tour of artworks created by the students of the Hillel Day School, Farmington Hills, and a luncheon hosted in the northwest Detroit hospital's Zuckerman Dining Room.

About 600 guests were expected to attend the party Sunday, Dec. 17. The 100-voice Hillel Youth Choir, sang in two performances immediately following the party.

"This is a joyous occasion through which we affirm our cultural and religious traditions," said Bobbie Blitz, Guild president.

The Latke Party featured a traditional Chanukah meal, with a potato pancake, or latke, served with accompaniments.

"The party is our way of thanking the Hillel children, whose 400 works of art have brightened our lobbies and cheered our patients, guests and employees since late November. It also continues our bonding with Hillel," said event chairman Sue Shlom, of West Bloomfield.

Also known as the "Festival of Lights," Hanukkah commemorates the miracle of the temple candelabra, or menorah, when a one-day supply of oil for the temple's perpetual flame burned miraculously for eight days. The significance of oil is carried over in the consumption of fried foods, such as latkes and doughnuts.

Sound rule leaves board in quandary

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Community center officials intend to abide by Farmington Hills planning commission's restrictions and sound amplification ban. But they aren't sure exactly how to do that.

In response to a request from center officials, the planning commission Dec. 7 reiterated its motion that gave special use approval to allow

an outdoor theater in a residential zone. The motion also lists conditions that the Community Center of Farmington-Farmington Hills must follow.

"I don't think the resolution was responsive to our request for clarification," said John Donohue, center board member and attorney. "We're still in a muddle."

The only option that center officials now have is to comply as best as they can and wait to see what happens, Donohue said.

In a letter to planning commissioners before the Dec. 7 meeting, Donohue asked for clarification to avoid misunderstanding.

He said he "personally suspects" that misunderstanding and failed communications following commissioners' initial approval of the outdoor theater "led to the imposition of these new conditions and the formulation of the dim view of the center, which the planning commission presently holds."

'I don't think the resolution was responsive to our request for clarification,' said John Donohue, center board member and attorney. 'We're still in a muddle.'

the center. They are concerned that regardless of an amplification ban, neighbors will continue to complain.

"It remains to be seen if that constitutes a nuisance. I guess we just have to wait and see," said Donald Stolberg, Farmington Road resident.

"We have no problem with them operating so long as they don't create a nuisance."

OTHER CONDITIONS applied by commissioners include outside lighting, entrance and exit gates, fencing, the need for a theater license, and review of the special use approval in September 1990.

If any violations are issued to the community center before September 1990, the issue will be returned to the planning commission for immediate review, according to the resolution.

Council candidates spent little

Seven candidates for three seats on the Farmington City Council in November spent little money on their campaigns, with winning challenger JoAnne McShane spending the most at \$1,697.

The other candidates — Arnold Campbell, Richard Tupper, Shirley Richardson, John Kenney, Robert Walker and Joanne Fellenberg — raised and spent less than \$1,000 each and filed election spending waivers with the Oakland County Elections Office Dec. 7.

Incumbent Richardson was the top vote-getter in November, followed by Tupper. Both got four-year terms. McShane came in third, winning a two-year term and ousting incumbent Campbell.

McShane received most of her financial support from the 44 people attending a fund-raising dinner at Marco's Restaurant on Oct. 3. Outstanding loans, debts and obligations total \$238, with \$179 owed to McShane for a loan and \$59 to the Wyndham Hotel.

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BUT AFTER reviewing commissioners' latest resolution, Donohue said there is still some doubt about the extent of the restrictions.

The first condition, for example, prohibits sound amplification for any program. To ensure enforce-

ment, all outside outlets used for sound amplification outside the main building will be removed or rendered inoperable.

But center officials are still uncertain whether they will ensure neighbors' or planning commissioners' wrath if children loudly playing at day camp — without microphones and speakers, constitute a violation of the commission's conditions.

"That just means no sound amplification," Donohue said.

Center officials admit they would have preferred that planning commissioners provide a decibel level to limit sound — such outdoor concerts and children at day camp — from

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