

Council to discuss Community Center flap

The Community Center of Farmington-Farmington Hills, and a controversial ban on its use of speakers and microphones, will be the focus of a special Farmington Hills City Council meeting at 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 15.

Mayor Jean Fox is expected to provide council members with a memo of ideas she has concerning the dilemma the center finds itself in

with outdoor concerts and the ban established by the planning commission Nov. 16.

Fox believes her ideas will be satisfactory to both sides of the issues, she said.

"IT'S VERY emotional on both sides," councilwoman Nancy Bates said. "I think we have a community problem I believe is a crisis."

Bates hopes to see a "win-win" sit-

uation for both sides of the center's noise issue, she said.

"I think what's really important here is how we handled each other in Farmington Hills," she said.

Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi cautioned council members that they should be careful about overstepping their boundaries in helping the community center solve its problems.

"I think we ought to be very clear

here on what our role is," he said, referring to interfering in the planning commission's one-year ban on the center's speakers and microphones at outdoor activities.

CENTER EXECUTIVE director Dorothy Pfaff is awaiting trial on a disturbing the peace charge stemming from a resident's complaint about the noise level of an Aug. 23

outdoor concert.

City attorney Paul Bibeau told council members he believed the ticket was issued properly to Pfaff, rather than the center's board of directors, because "she is supposed to have control" at the outdoor concerts.

Center officials, meanwhile, say they're grappling with the financial effects of the planning commission's

ban. The outdoor concerts heralded the center's new role as a cultural center, designed to keep it financially afloat.

If the center fails financially, it could fall to the city of Farmington Hills. The center's deed states that the center would first go to the Farmington Community Library. If library trustees don't want the center, it automatically falls to the city.

Judge's bid to deputize court officer still in limbo

Continued from Page 1

A letter to Harris was mailed from the sheriff's office Jan. 2, Aldrich confirmed.

But Harris responded: "It hasn't been returned to me. It certainly hasn't been denied. I'm sure it isn't any big deal."

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clarification

A comment from Scott Chesley in Monday's Observer referred to the sale of the family business in 1972, not to his father's death.

"The sad part, quite literally, my father worked himself to death. In a lot of ways, it (the business sale) really was a blessing," Scott Chesley said.

His father died in 1974.

An item in Monday's Farmington

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ability, capacity and know-how to put handcuffs on anybody and put him into a holding cell."

MITCHELL WAS at work at the courthouse the week of Oct. 16, but his hiring was not finalized until late November, Harris told the Observer. Harris then made a request to Oakland County to have Mitchell deputized, which would have allowed him full powers of a deputy, including carrying a gun.

Mitchell had served the city for 19 years as a public safety officer before a requesting disability retirement. In July 1988, Mitchell was granted a permanent disability from his public safety job, according to minutes from the city of Farmington's Retirement Board of Trustees.

"All three of the examining physicians found Mr. Mitchell unfit for continued duty in law enforcement due to a severe stress disorder," the minutes stated. The minutes labeled him "permanently disabled."

The retirement board accepted the results of three physicians' exams and granted the disability request.

HARRIS HAD said he is aware of Mitchell's disability retirement, that the jobs of a police officer and a deputized court officer were unrelated, and that he did not believe Mitchell's background would cause any problem.

When contacted, Mitchell called the disability retirement issue "kind

of personal. Why should I divulge anything?" he said.

He added that "as far as I know, they (Oakland County) did deputize me," but that the county sent the paperwork through to the city instead of the court. City officials said they received no such paperwork from the county. Aldrich said any paperwork sent on the matter from her office was directed to Harris.

FARMINGTON CITY manager Robert Deadman said last fall that no one at the court contacted the city for an employment reference on Mitchell. "The judge will have to

make his own evaluation," said Deadman. "We weren't asked for our advice. He'll have to evaluate the man's ability to be a court officer."

Neither her nor public safety director Frank Lauhoff would comment on Mitchell's previous relationship with the city or his new position in the court, which handles all district cases for the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Hills Police Chief William Dwyer and District Judge Margaret Schaeffer, chief judge of the 47th District Court, also declined comment when asked about Mitchell's hiring.

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