

Committee starts study of district's facilities

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A major study of all Farmington Public Schools facilities is under way, with an August deadline looming ever closer.

"Some schools are in a crisis" regarding building space, said Don Cowan, director of student services and operations and chairman of the Facilities Study Task Force appointed recently by superintendent Michael Flanagan. "We're hoping to have a clear picture, as to 'what does this district need?'"

The Farmington school board approved forming the task force Jan. 23, after they set boundaries for the new Hillside Elementary School and realized the opening of the new school wouldn't handle elementary growth problems in the district. Hillside is slated to open this fall.

The study is expected to look at all options for the growing district, which could include another new school, building additions, better use of current building space and other options.

A COMMUNITY meeting to get public feedback on building changes and needs has been scheduled for 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 21, at East Middle School.

In addition to public feedback, Cowan said a planned audit of all school buildings and property will be key to the task force's thrust and recommendations.

The Grand Rapids architectural firm of Greiner & Associates, which designed the new school, and district architect Ron Aten are doing the survey. The survey should show whether additions should be put onto buildings or where other buildings

could be constructed if necessary. "We don't want to put the cart before the horse," Cowan added. "The audit will tell us exactly what we have in the district. We may find we have sufficient space at our current schools."

ALTHOUGH COWAN said he expects most recommendations by August, he also said some long-term proposals may be studied after that date.

The community will be surveyed as part of the study, then subcommittees will research their respective areas and have final reports prepared in mid-June, when they will share their work with each other. Recommendations will then be firming up for final presentation to the school board in August.

Flanagan also called for an interim report to the board, which Cowan expects will be in early May.

Facilities Study Task Force

The Facilities Study Task Force steering committee includes director of student services and operations Don Cowan, assistant superintendent Mary Lou Ankele, director of school/community relations Pamela O'Malley and Gill Elementary parent Cathy Webb.

Subcommittee areas being studied, and their chairpersons, include:

- elementary schools — co-chaired by Woodside principal David Coffin and resident David York.
- middle schools — co-chaired by Warner Middle School assistant principal Roger Gault and resident Kathy Stricker.

- high schools — co-chaired by North Farmington principal Debbie Clarke and resident Laura Myers.

- special education — co-chaired by Farmington Training Center principal Gary Gaffner and resident Joe Loibl.

- ancillary services — co-chaired by district science coordinator Kathy McAdaragh and resident Susan Litowitz. This area includes bilingual programs, Farmington Youth Assistance, career education, staff development, special departments, vocational education, TV-10 student-run cable, food services and media.

- choice schools — co-chaired by Fairview Early Childhood Center principal Mary Lou Sommerville and resident Gerri Slack.

- community-based programs — co-chaired by Terry Leland and resident Bobbi Feldman. This area includes child care, Head Start, preschool, after school activities, senior enrichment and community education programs.
- building/property audit — chaired by district architect Ron Aten.

- demographics — co-chaired by district math/computer coordinator Richard Strauss and resident Bob Beauchamp.

DDA chooses new officers, adopts budget at meeting

During an annual meeting March 6, the Farmington Downtown Development Authority board elected officers and approved a new budget, up 22 percent from the previous year.

Before approving the new 1990-91 budget, the DDA board also amended the 1989-90 budget, increasing it by \$60,998 to accommodate a promotional program approved this year for which most revenues come from the private sector.

Also increased was the capital budget to allow for purchase of a

parcel of property on Orchard Street, on which the DDA has made a purchase offer.

Both budget amendments and proposed new budget must go to the city council for final approval. The DDA fiscal year, as well as the city's, runs from July 1 to June 30.

In the new budget, which totals \$419,071, the bulk of the revenue, or \$357,591, would come from captured values in property taxes in the DDA district, which encompasses much of downtown Farmington.

Other revenue sources include \$17,940 from a two-mill levy from the DDA district, \$5,000 in investment income, \$22,196 from private sources for the promotions project and an operating balance of \$14,044 carried forward.

Part of the DDA expense includes an interest payment to the city of Farmington, which approved \$450,000 in loan money at the start of the project, of which the capital will be paid back in the project's final two years. They have, to date, borrowed \$400,000.

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