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Youngsters can keep on sledding

By Casey Hens
staff writer

Sledding will be allowed this winter on Shawwassee Hill — with some modifications — after residents and some local officials said Tuesday they wanted to retain a slice of small-town Farmington.

"Please don't take this hill away," pleaded resident Debbie Cornwell, echoing the sentiments of about 30 others attending a joint meeting of the Farmington City Council and Farmington Board of Education.

"Farmington is unique — please try to keep it that way," said "People think it's corny when I

say 'Leave it to Beaver,' but that's what Farmington's all about."

Most residents called for better supervision on the hill. Only one woman spoke against the hill, complaining of noise when people use the hill late at night and saying she is "afraid somebody is going to be killed."

ALTHOUGH THEY agreed to a number of safety modifications to the hill, owned by Farmington Public Schools, school and city officials remain concerned about liability issues and warned the situation remains ripe for a large lawsuit. Officials from both panels agreed the ice

"People think it's corny when I say 'Leave it to Beaver,' but that's what Farmington's all about."

— Debbie Cornwell

rink at the base of the hill at Shawwassee and Farmington roads would have to be moved to a different location because of safety concerns.

"I feel the liability question is a real issue," said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman. "Multi-

million dollar judgments are not unusual — when they hit a small community, we're talking about a real dilemma."

Deadman said, however, the city would "do whatever we can to assist" the district in its decision to keep the hill open.

School board President Susan Rennels listed several things the district will attempt to do for the coming winter season:

- Discontinue flooding an area at the bottom of the hill which was used as a skating rink.

- Physically modify the hill, where possible, to make it safe. This includes patching holes and continuing to put fences and straw bales at the bottom to prevent sledders from sliding onto Farmington Road.

- Adjust traffic patterns on the hill to allow an area for sledders to carry their sleds back to the top.

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Moving ahead

Renovation of
Oak Hill center
set to begin

By Casey Hens
staff writer

A \$3 million renovation and building addition project will begin at Oak Hill Care Center this month, as the operations of the Farmington facility prepare to become the new owners.

"It's been a long time coming . . . for these changes at Oak Hill," said Paul Wright, administrator of the 153-patient skilled nursing care facility at Grand River and Gill since May.

Ground was broken Monday for the improvement project, which will include a 10,600-square-foot expansion of the building's northwest wing, the refurbishing of patient rooms and hallways, the expansion of laundry and kitchen areas, and improved ventilator and intercom equipment and landscaping.

Another part of the project is the demolition of the unused Oak Hill annex next to the Quaker Cemetery. The lot, which is zoned for residential use, will subsequently be sold and the 16 nursing care beds that were once there will be moved to the main facility.

The project is expected to begin in mid-November and will take between nine and 12 months.

ALSO UNDER WAY is the purchase of Oak Hill by the Massachusetts-based Greenery Rehabilitation



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

The atmosphere was festive Monday during groundbreaking ceremonies for a \$3 million expansion and renovation at Oak Hill Care Center in Farmington. Enjoying the ceremonies are resident Hazel Crain, a member of the Oak Hill Residents Council,

Group, which has had a subsidiary operating the facility since February, when the company was hired by a court-appointed real estate trust. An agreement to acquire was signed in October, and closing on

sale of the business will occur before the end of the year, said spokeswoman Karen Galvin.

Farmington city manager Robert Deadman spoke highly of former owner Dr. Edwin Blumberg and the

facility, which was state of the art when it opened 24 years ago. It has "served the community well over the years," he said.

This will provide a needed upgrading. This is a plus — it will en-

sure its existence."

The Oak Hill facility had fallen into disrepair over the past year, and has been plagued by problems such

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Hills chief: Traffic incident handled properly

By Casey Hens
staff writer

Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer is strongly denying charges that one of his officers left a woman motorist stranded on a busy freeway interchange after impounding her car last column.

The Oct. 29 column by Detroit Free Press writer Susan Watson that makes the allegations is not only inaccurate, he said, but unfairly sheds a bad light on the Farmington Hills community.

"I'm very upset about this. I'm very disturbed," Dwyer said. "It's a distorted, one-

sided news story she printed. It's just not accurate."

"The (audio police) tape shows the officer conveyed her to a place where she could make a phone call. He did not leave her stranded."

Watson could not be reached for comment. Watson's column referred to a Sept. 20 incident in which Detroit resident Reschel Denise Hall, 26, was preparing to enter the I-496 freeway at Orchard Lake Road at 9:27 p.m. when she was stopped for having a burned-out headlight, an equipment violation.

After checking Hall's record, the officer determined her driver's license was suspended

and, according to his report, impounded the car and gave her a ride to a Mobil gas station at the intersection of 12 Mile and Orchard Lake so she could make a phone call.

WATSON SAID in her column the officer left Hall stranded at the entrance ramp to the freeway on Orchard Lake Road and she called it "every female driver's nightmare come true."

Hall said Monday, that was, indeed, her account of the story.

"She (Watson) wrote it according to my version," she said. "I had to turn around and walk

across the top of it (the Orchard Lake freeway bridge). The policeman said he didn't have to drop me off anywhere."

She said she was not aware her license had been suspended because of an unpaid ticket and that the officer did not inform her of that.

Liz Boyd of the Secretary of State's office in Lansing said anyone who does not pay a district court citation is first sent notification by the local court, then is notified by her department by letter if the fee is not paid and the court sends through a license suspension. "Un-

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SPECIAL SECTION
IN TODAY'S ISSUE



Rep. William Broomfield

Broomfield refuses debate — this time

See related editorial, 18A

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

U.S. Rep. William Broomfield had some good news and bad news for his Democratic challenger Walter O. Briggs IV.

The good news is Broomfield, seeking his 18th consecutive term in office, says he will debate his Democratic challenger.

The bad news, at least for Briggs, is that Broomfield won't debate this election — despite a standing offer by the League of Women Voters to



sponsor a televised joint appearance at any time or place.

Although refusing to debate Briggs, Broomfield said a debate between him and the challenger might be "a service to voters."

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DECK THE halls — or the trees of downtown Farmington, anyway. It may seem like rushing the Christmas season a bit, but holiday lights — all 7,500 of them — will be hung on trees along Farmington Road and Grand River Sunday morning.

Residents and business people who would like to help hang the 300 strings should show up at 9 a.m. in the garage of the Heeneey-Sundquist Funeral Home on Farmington Road.

Although the lights are strung now, they won't be switched on until Thanksgiving week, said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, executive director of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority.

"They're strung now, she added, because 'we'd lose people to the hunting season if we did it later.'"

More information on the project may be obtained by calling Strip Sittsamer at 478-7378.

PRAISE THE Lord and pay the invoice. That's the message behind the Bible verses printed on the paperwork at SKF Office World on Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills.

An SKF invoice for Oct. 25 has "Whoever believes on him will never be put to shame" (Romans 10:11) along with the total — \$27.76.

Steve Puernstein, SKF president and a Wilmet resident, said the Bible verses are his idea.

"It's a way of acknowledging to those we do business with that there's more than just me at the helm," said Puernstein, who added that the practice has cost him some business.

"We've lost a couple of customers," he said. "They felt it was inappropriate, but those are narrow views in my estimation. We've gotten positive comments too. Anyway, I'm not going to compromise my beliefs for economics."

RIDING THROUGH the Colonial Car Wash on Nine Mile Road last weekend was a real scary experience — for a good cause.

The car wash was decorated for Halloween with ghosts, goblins and a coffin that opened and closed. Half the proceeds collected over the weekend went to the American Cancer Society.

"Some 1,218 cars were washed during the period and about \$2,800 was raised for the American Cancer Society," said Holly Owen, who owns the car wash with her husband Mark.

A TV news crew showed up Saturday and the car wash was on the 6 p.m. news. "This made it fun for us," Holly Owen said.

HEAR YE! Hear ye! The candidates in the 18th District Congressional election — incumbent Republican William E. Broomfield and Democrat challenger Walter O. Briggs — have been invited to present their views at a Farmington Democratic Club town meeting from 7:30-9 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 1, at the Botaford Inn, 28000 Grand River, Farmington Hills.

Challenger Briggs of Birmingham has promised to be there.

The public is invited to attend.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21800 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.