

City manager questions bond sale

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STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick just doesn't see how the city can sell \$10-\$12 million in bonds for development for long-planned storm drain improvements that include a large by-pass line along Kendallwood Drive to help relieve flooding in the area.

The city has spent nearly \$10 million in improvements to the sanitary sewer system in Kendallwood and Westbrook subdivisions. Officials, however, also have been developing a flood relief program, which includes evaluation of the city master storm drain plan for the area.

The storm drain improvement plan includes a design and analysis of a storm retention basin, a 36-inch diameter by-pass line, surveys of all properties abutting the Minnow Pond Drain, as well as the need for flood protection measures.

According to Costick, the 1992 goal is to continue with storm drain improvements with money the city has collected in the last two years. But Costick has serious doubts about previous plans to sell non-voted bonds for the remaining storm drain plan, including the by-pass. The debt on the bonds would be paid with authorized millage.

"It is my view that the financial and economic situation that now faces the State of Michigan and

its municipalities places in question the available millage funds to the point that the sale of sizable non-voted debt is, in my view, fiscally unwise," according to a letter Costick wrote to the Kendallwood-Westbrook Flood Committee.

"This is not an abandonment of the master storm drain plan for the area," Costick continued. "Rather it is a pay-as-you-go approach to initial improvements that, when completed, will have a positive impact on the potential of in-house flooding."

Some city council members, however, aren't too comfortable with Costick's recommendation. Before they adopted the new 1992-93 city budget Monday night, some made it clear they intend to maintain their commitment to flood-plagued residents.

Councilman Terry Sever said he wants a \$250,000 allocation to self-insure residents in the Kendallwood-Westbrook neighborhoods. "I really feel committed to the people who were affected by flooding," he said. "This allocation would be a hedge on doing less of the project than intended," Sever added.

Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi asked for support of his resolution maintaining the city's intention to meet its 1989 commitment to fix the flooding problem. The resolution also calls for a required two-thirds majority of the council to halt the planned improvements

(to be paid for with bonds), such as the by-pass, in the event that property tax reform later in the year affects the city's financial abilities.

That resolution and expected revisions will be brought before the council again Monday, June 8.

for further discussion.

Mayor Jonathan Grant said he finds it difficult not heeding Costick's recommendation. "I have a broader commitment and that is to be financially prudent with the tax dollars of all taxpayers in this community."

Budget from page 1A

Of the 25 cents, eight cents is spent on debt retirement on existing facilities; 6 cents on park development; four cents on capital improvement; and seven cents on storm drain construction.

While the city's operating budget tops \$30.9 million, with all other funds such as major and local roads, park development and debt service, the full budget reaches approximately \$60 million, Costick said.

When they developed the budget, Costick and department heads were faced with the current property tax assessment freeze and a slowdown in construction, which forced a decrease in revenues from building, engineering and other development fees. A decline in interest rates, as well as less state revenue also affected the new budget.

The proposed \$30.9 million operating budget represents a 2.5 percent increase — compared to a 4.2 cost of living index — over last year's \$28.8 million. To balance the budget, city officials used

\$29.7 million in revenue, including money from property taxes, as well as \$596,981 from the city's fund balance and another \$619,475 from reserves.

Despite tough economic times, the city's state equalized value increased moderately to \$2,420 billion, compared to the 1991 SEV of \$2,352 billion. A good part of the SEV increase resulted from a couple major industrial research buildings that were not fully placed on the tax rolls in June 1990 when the buildings were started. New housing represented a good part of the \$68 million SEV increase.

The additional police officer is the new position in the 1992-93 budget. Salary increases for both union and non-union personnel, including department heads, are scheduled at 4 percent. The proposed budget called for reducing the staff by the equivalent of four full-time positions. With the new officer, that's reduced to three positions.

Summer fun from page 1A

600 people to the downtown each week, with some getting attendance of more than 1,000.

The Farmington Community Library's downtown branch kicks off the series with "Read, Rock and Rap" on June 17. The program will include songs, puppets, stories and an introduction to the library's Summer Reading Club. Shows are at 10:30 a.m., 11:45 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Also on the 17th, merchants in the downtown are planning to kick-off the Summer Fun Series with a day of sidewalk sales.

Other events include:

- Farmington Civic Theatre owner and DDA member Greg Holter will offer medicine specials at the theatre each Wednesday at 12:30 p.m. and 2:15 p.m. Special children-oriented movies will be brought in just for the series.

- Wildlife rehabilitators from the Howell Nature Center will come on June 24 to discuss orphaned and injured animals and birds of prey and to share their experiences. Shows are at 10:30 a.m., 11:45 a.m. and 1 p.m.

- Local kids songster Marc Thomas, with his sidekicks Max and Moose will do a participatory concert on July 1, including traditional songs, original music and moose humor all designed to help kids feel good about themselves. Shows are at 10:30 a.m., 11:45 a.m. and 1 p.m.

- On July 8 of Founders Festival week, kids 15 and under can "Shop, Swap and Sell," a popular event returning from last year. It's a place for kids to swap or sell games, books or toys they no longer use. Pre-registration is required for both

10 a.m. and 2 p.m. events. Call 473-7276.

- Doc Robin Steel's Olde Time Medicine Show will take the stage July 15 for three hourly shows beginning at 10:30 a.m. Those attending will take a step back into the Wild West with comedy, ventriloquism and old-fashioned corn.

- Giant puppets come to life under the tent on July 22, when internationally known puppet troupe The Magic Onion performs a musical fairy tale spoof with a beautiful princess, a wicked magician and a very big dragon. Shows at 10:30 a.m., noon and 1:30 p.m.

- Downtown business Fun With Plaster allows you to "Create Your Own Masterpiece" on July 29 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. with a finished project to take home. Fee is \$2 per masterpiece.

- Enchanted Afternoon, a children's musical about the environment will be featured Aug. 5 at 10:30 a.m., 11:45 a.m. and 1 p.m. The cast is a seasoned group of child performers from Paper Bag Productions.

- On Aug. 12, the Mysteries of Science show will offer mind-boggling science tricks using ordinary household items, starring local resident Doug Secher. Three hour-long shows will begin at 10:30 a.m.

- Finishing up the series will be Bernie Stevens and his World of Magic. Stevens will take participants on a trip through fantasy land with various magic tricks. Three hour-long shows begin at 10:30 a.m.

The DDA promoted its series this year through area school districts.

Candle-making popular at 'old-time' festival

The clouds parted just in time to shine on the Community Center of Farmington/Farmington Hills on Sunday.

Area seniors enjoyed the sweet sounds of dulcimers and residents of all ages enjoyed the free popcorn, peanuts, lemonade and penny candy during the Community Center's "1867 Day," held throughout the afternoon. Organizers estimated that between 250 and 300 people attended

the old-time events, designed to dovetail with the city of Farmington's 125th anniversary of its incorporation as a village.

"All around, it was a really successful day," said Bobbi Gelman, community affairs coordinator for the center. The event was underwritten totally by the Target store in Farmington Hills, allowing refreshments and entertainment to be offered to the public at no charge.

"Everybody kept asking, 'How much?'" she added. "They couldn't believe it was free."

Some of the events included the Silver String Dufelmier Society performing; 1800s games for kids; quilting demonstrations of 1800s laundry; a one-room schoolhouse and the most popular event — candle making. Haverhill Farms of Novi also offered pony rides.



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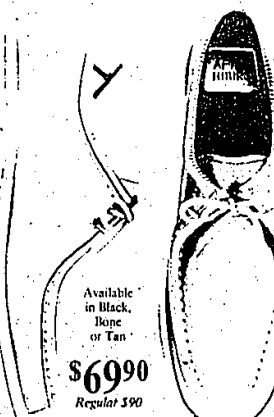
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