



Dressed for the day: Sisters Brooke (right) and Whitney Miller and their dog Malcomb sport costumes for the Halloween fest.



Scary scene: Downtown Farmington is full of people celebrating Halloween. They include Dave Pence wheeling his daughter Lucy.

Happy Halloween

Festivalgoers have frightfully good time

BY LARRY O'CONNOR

Staff Writer
Jason told an axe or Freddie Kruger bearing his claw-like nails wouldn't have made Farmington Halloween Fest organizers jumpy.

Any weatherman predicting rain Saturday would have. Unlike last year's inaugural event, there were no showers this time. The fright fest took one Frankenstein step forward in its second year.

Farmington Downtown Development Authority Director Judy Downey said 1,500 kids went trick-or-treating Saturday morning. Another 250 people were lined up for each free film showing at the Civic Theatre.

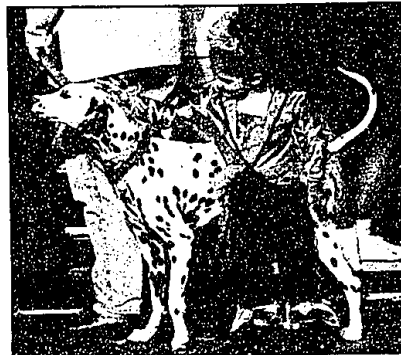
"The great Indian chief that

looks over Halloween events must have been smiling over us this year," Downey said. "It was just a wonderful time."

The purpose of the daylong event is to bring people downtown. That it did. The Basketball Court had kids pouring through its new sportswear business on Grand River. They shot free throws for discounts on merchandise.

They also cleaned up on the sweet stuff. "It went pretty well," said owner Carl Thomas. "Boy, we started with a thousand pieces of candy and by 11:30 (a.m.) we were out. We had to go out and get more."

"We had to refill twice."



Counting the spots: Above, Samantha Haddad, a Farmington Hills 3-year-old, has a pat and a kind word for a Dalmatian. At left, in case you can't tell, Alexandra Grossi is dressed as a hippie, while her brother E.J. Grossi is a punk rocker.

City DDA banking on loan for improvement projects

BY LARRY O'CONNOR

Staff Writer
The Farmington Downtown Development Authority will borrow \$100,000 to pay for capital improvement projects in the bank by Dec. 31 to comply with a new law, which allows the recapture of tax increment finance revenue (TIF) from school property taxes.

Public Act 280 enables cities and DDAs to collect TIF revenue for only those projects already under way. Construction contracts have to be signed and the money available by the cutoff date to qualify.

The DDA board approved and sent out bids for streetscape improvement projects on Grand River and Liberty and the removal of

a house for a picnic area on Orchard Street.

"It's all a timing issue," said City Manager Frank Laubhoff. "We have to have this done by the end of the year."

Proposal A cut off \$125,000 in TIF revenue to the DDA. To make it up, the DDA levied a 9.5-mill special assessment on downtown businesses.

The special assessment will be lowered accordingly if the city can capture additional TIF revenue, DDA officials said.

The DDA expects to collect \$69,000 from local school taxes. That's roughly half the money generated in the Central Business District by the 18 mills levied for local schools.

More TIF revenue will allow the DDA to make good on its

promise to downtown business owners for streetscape improvements, Laubhoff said.

The money would likely have to be borrowed from an outside source. The city cannot lend it because Proposal A limited assessment growth, Laubhoff said.

The DDA gave final approval to the three projects at a special meeting Oct. 19.

The house on Orchard Street will be demolished and the land renovated. A sheltered picnic area with a berm will be put in, DDA Director Judy Downey said.

The area can be converted for parking if needed, she added. Cost of the project is \$33,000.

"Right now there's parking there that's under-utilized," Downey said.

Development authority OKs 3.5-percent raise for director

BY LARRY O'CONNOR

Staff Writer
The Farmington Downtown Development Authority approved a 3.5-percent raise for its director, Judy Downey.

Downey also receives an additional \$1,100 a year as part of a salary schedule approved for the position. The adjustments bring her annual salary to \$36,620.

The board unanimously passed the increase.

"As a director, I think Judy has done an outstanding job for this board and this city," said DDA board member Robert Heinrich. Added board member Ron Olney: "You've certainly be-

"As a director, I think Judy has done an outstanding job for this board and this city."

Robert Heinrich
DDA board member

come a fixture in the community."

Downey, 57, was hired as DDA director in October 1992. She worked in a similar position in Lapeer.

Since her arrival, several promotions have been added, including this past Saturday's Halloween Fest. She's also started a

farmer's market on Saturdays in the Farmington Crossings parking lot and has been involved in recruiting new businesses downtown.

The 3.5-percent cost of living increase is a similar one given to other city employees, City Manager Frank Laubhoff said. He also told the board before it voted that any increase should be based on performance.

Last year, the DDA approved a starting salary of \$32,000 for the director's position, with \$1,100 increases annually for three years.

"I appreciate the support," Downey said. "I enjoy the job very much. . . . It's a very nice community."



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