

Vote
These candidates stand out

This campaign season has truly been a tale of two cities. In Farmington, there are three candidates running uncontested for three open seats. In contrast, Farmington Hills has a highly competitive and contentious race for the city's first directly elected mayor. There are also five people running for three open seats on the Hills city council.

On Tuesday, Nov. 7, voters will make important decisions as to who shall lead their respective communities.

The Farmington Observer staff has reviewed the qualifications of those seeking office in Tuesday's mayoral and city council races. We offer these recommendations to voters.

FARMINGTON HILLS MAYOR ALDO VAGNOZZI — If anything is to be gleaned from this contentious mayoral campaign, there is no substitute for leadership.

Aldo Vagnozzi has demonstrated these qualities during the past few months — not to mention during his impeccable service as a council member, which included a term as mayor. We hope residents agree and vote for Vagnozzi as the city's first directly elected mayor.

Vagnozzi has taken strong stands on those issues that are relevant to residents of Farmington Hills. Most notably, he's come out in support of the public safety millage.

He also has a firm grasp on budget matters and redevelopment concerns facing the city.

More so, Vagnozzi is a tenacious advocate for residents. He has proven record of talking on Metrovision officials over rate increases, Detroit Edison concerning frequent power outages, and the Department of Natural Resources regarding treated effluent going into Seeley drain.

At the same time, Vagnozzi has always been an amiable sort who can defuse tense situations with a hearty laugh or a self-deprecating joke. Many times he's been the lone voice of opposition — one only need to refer to the divisive Timbercrest issue — and yet has maintained a collegial relationship with other council members and city officials.

He's the type of person who can build consensus and coalitions. With his wisdom and geniality, Vagnozzi will make a fine ambassador for the city of Farmington Hills.

FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL VICKI BARNETT — We've always been impressed with her verve and understanding of the issues — whether they be at the state, local or school level. Vicki Barnett will bring a passionate and informed voice to city council. Hopefully, voters will concur.

Barnett has a great deal of political savvy and insight — no doubt honed through her unsuccessful run for state Senate a year ago. She was more than prophetic in calling attention to revenue sharing cuts to cities during her vigorous campaign against state Sen. Dave Honigman, R-West Bloomfield.

Throughout this campaign, she's consistently demonstrated similar understanding of issues facing Farmington Hills.

Her work at the grass-roots level, though, is particularly encouraging.

She led a statewide petition drive to preserve state funding for public schools in 1993. She also worked on former state Sen. Jack Faxon's Committee to Increase Voter Participation. Barnett has also been involved at the PTA level.

Barnett's made a pledge to put residents and their concerns first. We believe she will.

TERRY SEVER — A steadfast and informed opinion on city council, he merits another term.

Sever has survived in the tumultuous nature of council politics, and for good reason. He's consistently proven himself politically astute on city matters.

More importantly, Sever has an unwavering respect for the system and those who have elected him. He's supported taking matters to the voters when necessary, in particular, the direct election of mayor and the public safety millage request on the ballot Nov. 7.

He was a driving force behind the bond issue for the new Farmington Hills Ice Arena, which voters overwhelmingly passed. He was also involved in council's purchase of a wing at the Mercy Center for an activity center and improvements at Founders Sports Park.

We didn't agree with his — or the other five council members' — for that matter — yes vote on the Timbercrest project. He negotiated with developers and held out against an all-night grocery store and restaurant.

We admire his innovative approach to problem solving.

NANCY BATES — Another incumbent who's proven herself as a capable and conscientious member of city council.

Bates has been a tireless proponent of family and quality of life issues. She's backed up this commitment through her involvement on the city's Commission on Children, Youth and Families and other similar-minded organizations.

She was a driving force behind getting a grant for a well-needed decentralized teen center and a staunch supporter of Special Olympics. Her civic-mindedness is an added plus on council.

FARMINGTON HILLS PUBLIC SAFETY MILLAGE

We reiterate our endorsement of the city's request for a 1-mill tax increase to upgrade the police and fire departments. Proponents of the millage have presented their case persuasively and intelligently without playing on residents' fears or sense of security.

Hills police officers and fire fighters serve a larger area than Southfield, Ann Arbor and Dearborn with fewer personnel. A tax-increase makes sense.

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL

We're disappointed only three people are running. Nonetheless, the city will be well served by those three candidates.

JO ANNE McSHANE — A committed and congenial council member, she has proven herself as an accessible and willing listener to residents' concerns.

McShane has been a particularly strong advocate for seniors and those who live in the historical district.

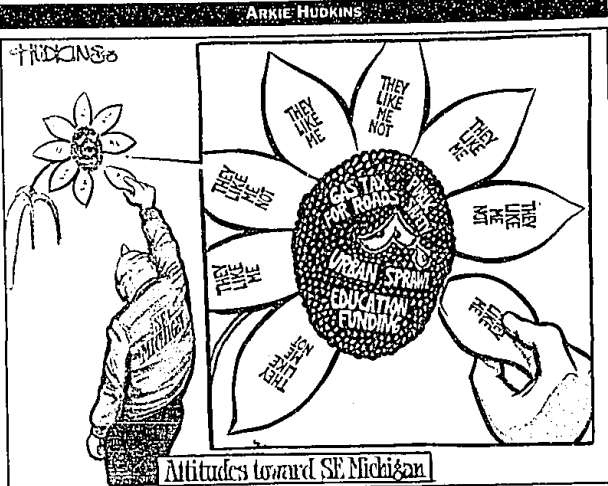
Also, McShane isn't afraid to ask questions, particularly during perfunctory council proceedings. Her common sense inquisitiveness serves residents' interests well.

BILL HARTSOCK — Has provided a moderate voice and, now with the retirement of Richard Tupper, a sense of history.

Hartsock has listened intently to residents and business owners on ordinance variances and other issues. If there was a solution to be reached, Hartsock has often been the architect. His leadership is an asset to the city.

JAMES MITCHELL — He brings an extensive list of community involvement activities, including experience on the Planning Commission.

Mitchell's knowledge of city codes and ordinances will be particularly helpful as council continually delves into redevelopment issues. His background as an attorney and businessman will only enhance an already well-rounded perspective on city council.



LETTERS

Supports millage

I've been a resident of Farmington Hills for approximately 25 years. It has always been a great community. Apparently, that must be a consensus of opinion, since this city has shown tremendous, prosperous residential, commercial and industrial growth.

But along with this growth comes potential problems. As a concerned citizen, I learned that our police and fire departments are experiencing "growing pains."

We apparently need additional police officers to adequately patrol the larger populated areas. The fire department has reached a stage where it should have a centrally located 24-hour manned fire station, required paid firemen in addition to its volunteers.

With greater staff, the fire and police departments' response times should be vastly improved for the benefit of the community. With a population of approximately 80,000, our tax rates are still less than neighboring communities with larger staffs and more amenities.

Please vote yes for the Public Safety millage, Nov. 7. Sam Ross, Farmington Hills

Silly season indeed

On Aug. 31, you wrote an editorial, "Has the Silly Season Begun?" I have to apologize to you. I felt your editorial invited and incited trouble to sell newspapers. You stated: "Farmington Hills will certainly be well served with all the slate of candidates."

You chided against childish behavior, whispering campaigns, yanking signs and divide and conquer tactics of candidate versus candidate. "Show commitment and stay grown," were your words of wisdom.

Mea Culpa, Mr. Editor. After many years of community involvement, I am disgusted and disappointed. I am supporting an incumbent and a "New kid on the block." I have signed cards, passed literature, placed signs and intend on working the polls. I feel that I am personally making a commitment to my community and am backing these individuals for what I feel are sound, educated reasons.

Many citizens sit at home with no cable television, no local newspaper delivery and no ballot mailed to them unless they are over 60. The lawn sign is the most beneficial and unobtrusive way to campaign. A sign doesn't whisper, gossip, complain, spread rumors, litter, stuff boxes, ring your doorbell and pit candidate against candidate.

Mr. Editor you loosely used your own rhetoric to a song. How about a '60s song? "Where have all the flowers gone?" Let's substitute signs for flowers. The gardener seems to be an uninformed maverick supporter who wishes to abuse and confuse an incumbent and completely negate the existence of a brand new challenger to local politics.

These maverick gardeners do their weeding of signs in the dark, spread a little m — excuse me fertilizer, and the next morning another candidate sign appears. I know the wise, informed Farmington Hills voter knows the difference between a rose, a weed and a thorn. It's time to plow, Mr. Editor, and clear the field. Vote Nov. 7th.

Judy Antishin Farmington Hills

Increase needed?

Do we really need a millage increase for police and fire protection in Farmington Hills?

I am not sure about the police, but I question the need for the fire department. More than 50 percent of the fire calls are medically related, and I am not convinced that the fire department should be making medical runs.

We have a very good EMS service in Farmington Hills and most people don't realize that when 9-1-1 is called for medical reasons that both the EMS and the fire rescue team are sent and many times the police arrive. Also, 9-1-1 could ask more questions and send only the services needed.

I can understand all of the services arriving if the call is the result of violence, but I have a good friend who called 9-1-1 recently for medical help and both the EMS and fire rescue answered the call. Both arrived within minutes of each other, but only one was needed and only one could do anything.

I know people have written letters favoring the millage increase, but I do not like to see a

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

With these Farmington city council candidates running unopposed, will you still vote in Tuesday's election? We asked this question at the Downtown Branch of the Farmington Community Library.



'Yes, I intend to vote. It's my civic duty and I'm going to share my civic responsibility.' John Yagerlauer Farmington



'Yes, I feel I need to know more about the people who are running and learn about the job descriptions.' Eleanor Poets Farmington



'I haven't paid any attention. I have no opinion. I just vote in national elections.' Geri Grala Farmington



'Oh yes, sure. Because the length of term is determined.' Nan Reid Farmington

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