

LETTERS

Leadership qualities

The first elected mayor is going to bring a new form of leadership to city government. A leader, as compared to a politician, is someone who is willing to take a clear position on controversial issues and explain his or her reasons for doing so, so that voters know what they are getting.

The three mayoral debates revealed a lot about the leadership qualities of the two candidates for mayor. Aldo Vagnozzi was willing to state his positions and give reasons for them as he always has been. Paul Sowerby was impossible to pin down on some very key issues.

For example, on the police and fire millage, Vagnozzi said clearly that he is in favor of it, because it will enable us to catch up on needed services which have not kept pace with growth. In the first debate, Sowerby said he opposes the millage, but in the next debate he waffled, saying that he doesn't oppose the millage but that he's not in favor of it. Sowerby said that, like the rest of us, he'll decide when he enters the voting booth. I want to know Sowerby's point of view before I enter the voting booth.

Another example: on Timbercrest, Vagnozzi has explained his dissenting stand against the development, voicing concerns about too much commercial development in that area and the share of the developer's expenses that the city was paying. Whether or not you agree with Vagnozzi, at least he took a stand and gave logical reasons. I couldn't tell where Sowerby came out on the issue.

Also, on the controversial plans of a developer to put a gigantic regional shopping complex in the Clariview area at the congested corner of Orchard Lake and Northwestern Highway, Vagnozzi stated clearly that he would oppose such a project because it would worsen the already horrendous traffic in that area.

Sowerby said he would just have to wait and see what the developer proposes. At least we know where Vagnozzi stands on an important planning issue that the Planning Commission is dealing with now. (Council candidate Dennis Fitzgerald indicated his support for a shopping mall, based on "residents' support for it; as Vicki Barnett pointed out, about the only residents who support the idea are the ones who want to sell their homes to the developer for windfall profits).

Paul Sowerby recites the tired politician's cliché that he is the "candidate for change." I don't think we need that much change in Farmington Hills; we just need to preserve and improve what we have. Aldo Vagnozzi will tell us how he comes down on the real issues facing city government. To me, that's leadership.

Branko Bojicic, Farmington Hills

He likes Vagnozzi

What office is Mr. Sowerby running for anyway? His campaign literature stated that he was going to provide tax breaks for seniors and reform the educational system.

When did the mayor of Farmington Hills get those powers? I heard the problems of the community were traffic and overdevelopment. The piece also touted Mr. Sowerby on supporting traditional values. I suggest Mr. Sowerby and his crowd read the literature of Aldo Vagnozzi. Aldo addresses the problems of traffic and safer, cleaner streets. You want traditional values? The Vagnozzi family is on the front of his literature. Mr. Vagnozzi is supported locally in Farmington Hills. Maybe Mr. Sowerby should be running for governor instead.

Don't be fooled, elect Aldo Vagnozzi mayor.

Michael Breshgold
Farmington Hills

Vagnozzi's qualified

Whenever I vote for a candidate on the federal, state or local level, I don't expect to agree with him or her 100 percent on issues. What I consider is the candidate's record, intelligence, integrity, experience and dedication to the best interests of the general community, the state of the nation.

I've taken all these qualifications into consideration regarding the candidates running for mayor in Farmington Hills. I believe that Aldo Vagnozzi has proven himself, throughout many years of public service to Farmington Hills in a variety of duties, to be outstandingly qualified to be mayor of this fine city.

Melba Kibildis
Farmington Hills

Officers for Sowerby

The Farmington Hills Police Officers Association is pleased to announce the endorsement of Paul Sowerby for mayor of Farmington Hills.

Since this will be the first mayor directly elected by the citizens of Farmington Hills, the FHPOA feels Paul Sowerby is the best choice to lead the city. After considering numerous issues to be faced by the city, the FHPOA believes Paul's approach to leading city council will be most effective.

Even though the FHPOA may not always agree with Paul on certain issues, we know he will combine the resources of the city with a genuine concern for its citizens and the employees. We believe he has a high degree of integrity, a strong sense of fair play, and a commitment to the community as evidenced by the legal services he has provided to the city's senior citizens. Paul has consistently listened to the association's concerns with respect to public safety issues.

Paul Sowerby's view of the mayor as a strong leader in the community is the right one to carry the city of Farmington Hills into the future. We strongly urge you to vote for Paul Sowerby for Farmington Hills mayor on Tuesday, Nov. 7.

Wayne Beerbower
FHPOA President

Fitzgerald's positive

The city of Farmington Hills has become a model city blessed with a government based on an extremely competent professional administration overseen by an elected council of dedicated citizens. The electoral selection and dedication of that council has had a great impact on the quality of life in our community. Whether we elect the mayor or the council does, the selection of council member is very important.

In that regard, I'd like my fellow citizens to consider Dennis Fitzgerald as first choice candidate for election to council. As a citizen who has worked with and observed the Parks and Recreation Commission for a decade, and as a member of the Sports Park Advisory Committee, I have observed Mr. Fitzgerald in many public service situations. He's a positive, constructive, conciliatory, common sense leader who

tries to find a way for everybody to win. Mr. Fitzgerald has offered years of public service to us. He knows the system. He was a teacher in our schools. He coached our kids. More important, he is dedicated to all of us, the young, the old, the families. You know what else? His honest, positive nature is downright refreshing. As far as the points out that by voting for Mr. Sowerby we get both candidates. Then again, by voting for Mr. Vagnozzi, perhaps the elected council would have the good sense to appoint the council candidate not elected to Mr. Vagnozzi's seat, assuring us of the experience and good judgement of Mrs. Bates, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Marks and Mr. Sever — all fine candidates.

Public Safety — We already said no to another judge — so now we should hire more radar-toting ticket writers to harass us in our neighborhoods? Not. Too bad the tax increase isn't just for the fire department. Don't we pay enough tax already?

Keith Gallagher
Farmington Hills

Boot Incumbents

I have stayed away from politics since 1989, after donating 12 years of service to this community (1978-89) as a member of city council and as mayor. Now, I have to say I am shocked to have noticed signs around the city supporting a special public safety millage.

It seems that our current city leaders want to dip into our pockets for \$2.7 million per year for the next 10 years to make up for impotent leadership and inept management of our public safety programs. What happened to the five-year plans that we initiated during my year as mayor in 1986? (each department was required to prepare a five year plan and this plan was updated yearly during the budget planning process).

It seems that the "politicians" Mr. Vagnozzi, Mr. Seaver and Mrs. Bates "fell asleep at the switch" on important issues like police and fire but were wide awake putting their political self interests ahead of these essential city services.

I say dump the whole bunch. They do not deserve to be re-elected. Another example of their political tinkering is the change in the charter

from an appointed mayor to an elected mayor. This change should not have occurred since it neither came from the people nor was it needed to fix something that was broken. It was simply to serve the egos of the few.

It is not too late to save Farmington Hills from the arrogance of incumbents that have placed self interest before public interest. We do not need higher taxes — we need to end the terms of those council members who have arrogantly shirked their public trust. Take a good serious look at Dennis Fitzgerald.

Joe Alkateeb
Farmington Hills

Likes Fitzgerald

I am supporting Dennis Fitzgerald for Farmington Hills City Council. Dennis cares deeply about the citizens and youth of Farmington Hills. He has unselfishly served this community in a variety of ways. His dedication to and love for this city cannot be questioned. He is considerably qualified to serve us as a Farmington Hills Council member.

I know Dennis to be extremely supportive of the parents and young athletes associated with the Farmington Soccer Club. He has backed our efforts and the efforts of many city officials to provide and do more for active sports in our community.

Dennis has a lot of drive, he listens well and will hear people out. He is pleasant to work with. We need this on the council. On Nov. 7, I plan on voting for Dennis Fitzgerald. I hope your readers will too.

Tom Faro,
Coach and Player Director,
Farmington Soccer Club.

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number.

Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

State Senate bill opens door for school abuse

The Republican-led state Senate last week passed, on a 21-16 party-line vote, and sent to the House a grab bag of far-reaching changes in the state's School Code.

Like most products of the legislative process, the bill was a mixture of the sensible and the outright dangerous.

On the sensible side, Senate Bill 679 would lengthen the school year from 180 to 185 days by adding one school day to the calendar for each of 15 years beginning in 1997.

It stands to reason: The more days in school, the more kids learn. The school year has been set at 180 days since the farming families insisted on having the kids out of school to help in the fields during summer. It's time for a change.

It also got rid of the archaic distinctions between "classes" of school districts and provided for more uniform treatment.

Considering the dangerous public policy embodied in the rest of the bill, I suppose we should be grateful for small favors.

The Senate bill opened the door for hundreds more charter schools (officially public school academies or PSAs) by voting to remove the old cap of 75.

PSAs are specialized schools operating under a charter granted by a university or community college, having their own boards and collecting \$5,300 per pupil in general tax money, the same as any other public school.

Sen. Gary Peters, D-Bloomfield Township, saw the point of the exercise: "We're allowing private schools to convert to state charter schools and drain the school aid fund. All the charter schools in Oakland County were previously private schools."

Ever since the Michigan Constitution prohibited spending public tax money on private and religious schools, it has been a right-wing objective to send kids to religious schools and get the rest of us to help pay the bill. The original argument for charter schools was that they might help provoke reform in an otherwise sluggish and monopolistic public school system. But it's now clear that school reform is nothing more than a stalking horse for parochialism.

Equally troubling was the Senate's decision to drop the state-mandated core curriculum that was the centerpiece of school reform legislation adopted with bipartisan support in 1993.



PHILIP POWER

It stands to reason: The more days in school, the more kids learn. The school year has been set at 180 days since the farming families insisted on having the kids out of school to help in the fields during summer. It's time for a change.

The majority rhetoric focused on shifting control to parents and away from teachers. "It isn't accountability to the state but accountability to parents," said Senate majority leader Dick Posthumus, R-Alio.

Opponents pointed out that granting authority to local schools merely opened the door to inferior schooling. "We do not believe quality education in Michigan should be a local option," said Sen. Ken DeBeussart, D-New Baltimore.

Behind this argument, of course, is the simple reality that the same people who want the public to pay for religious schools also want their children to be taught creationism instead of evolution and biblical explanations instead of science.

The business community, which at long last is getting its act together to support a common core curriculum that stresses employability skills, needs to focus on the House, where the GOP has a narrow 56-54 majority. So, too, do parents want public schools to improve by reforming them from within, not by burning them down and rebuilding from the ashes.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His Touch-Tone voice mail number is (313) 953-3047, Ext. 1881.

You're Closer to Your MBA Than You Think!

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY will bring you closer to earning your MBA degree by bringing it's MBA program closer to you. Beginning January 4th, Oakland University will introduce a new site for you to pursue your MBA—the Oakland University Center-Birmingham—located at Groves High School. Classes will be held in the evening and Saturday mornings to accommodate the working professional. Admission standards, tuition and fees are the same as our main campus in Rochester.

MBA PROGRAM Our main campus in Rochester offers eight concentrations as part of the MBA program: Accounting, Business Economics, Finance, Human Resources Management, Management Information Systems, Marketing, International Business and Production/Operations Management.

Selected electives from the listing above will be offered at the Oakland University Center-Birmingham as part of the MBA degree program.

All graduate and undergraduate business programs at Oakland University are accredited by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business.

FOR MORE INFORMATION Please call:

MBA Program, Birmingham: (810) 988-6906.

Fax: (810) 647-2285. Send Internet E-mail to: mjriley@oakland.edu

MBA Program, Rochester: (810) 370-3287.

Fax: (810) 370-4275. Send Internet E-mail to: terry@oakland.edu (undergraduate)

slclark@oakland.edu (MBA Program)

Web Site: http://sba_server.sba.oakland.edu/nba/nba.htm



JOIN US FOR AN OPEN HOUSE AT THE OAKLAND UNIVERSITY CENTER-BIRMINGHAM, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1995, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM