

# Committee from page A1

...nally remain as they were built in 1972 and 1975, respectively.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauffoff said input from both city councils is key.

"The library recognizes they are a community facility and they want community input, from all levels," Lauffoff said. "They want to make sure it is a solid plan to take this community way into the future."

Papal is hopeful that the third election attempt for library funding since the late 1980s will be the charm. In 1989 and 1993, voters narrowly rejected ballot proposals - both involving a new location for the Hills branch.

Through subsequent public opinion surveys, residents apparently favor the Hills branch - which draws 1,000 to 1,200 people daily - to remain in its current central location. It's not even though Papal said "It's an easy building to add on to."

The current plan is to expand the library to the south, into the existing parking lot. A new parking lot will be built on 2.5 acres just west of the facility. Papal said parking spaces would be

increased from 213 to 360, a must-to-better take care of customers who mostly drive to and from the library.

In downtown Farmington, parking isn't really an issue. Papal said about 600 people visit the branch every day, but many walk there from surrounding homes and businesses.

Papal said whatever money would be earmarked for the Farmington branch would go toward improving heating, ventilation, air conditioning and installing energy efficient windows. New furniture and additional shelving, as well as more book titles, would also be funded by a successful ballot proposal.

Farmington's Lauffoff said he thinks citizens generally understand why the libraries need improvements.

"Most residents acknowledge that the 12 Mile branch, if it is to continue serving the community the way a first-class library should, it needs additional space," Lauffoff said.

And while the Farmington branch can't be expanded, it is in need of repairs. "It was built in 1975 and nothing was ever done to it," Lauffoff said.

# M-5 work spells demolition, relief

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

For a building that faces imminent demolition, there is not a wake but a sale.

"We've got great deals," said Kevin Compton of Globe Furniture, whose structure on Grand River and Halsted will be leveled to make room for intersection improvements. "We'd rather try and sell it than have to move it."

Globe Furniture will close March 14 or 21. The building will be empty by April. No jobs are expected. Instead, employees will move to Globe's five other stores.

Employees like Compton have worked at the store for 15 years. But instead of mourning, they're busy moving furniture out the door.

Demolition of the Globe building starts what will be a two-year construction project to enlarge the M5/Grand River intersection. Work on the long-awaited road project starts in June.

Michigan Department of Transportation oversees the project, which includes upgrading eastbound M5 lanes to maintain westbound traffic on the state road.



Emptying out: Employees at Globe Furniture will likely be moved to other stores after the building is demolished to make way for a new freeway ramp.

Other tasks this summer are:

- A northwest bound off ramp from M5 will be reconstructed.
- A new loop ramp will be built for eastbound Grand River traffic to enter M5 in order to travel northwest.
- Permanent lanes will be built on the freeway under the Grand River bridge.
- The northbound I-275 ramp to southeast M5 will be closed during construction.

To lessen inconvenience to motorists, the city is allowing

work to take place at night and on Sundays. The state is also offering an incentive to a to-be-named contractor to finish the job by summer 1999.

Globe Furniture's demolition will allow for an on-ramp onto M5 from eastbound Grand River. Other improvements at the intersection are: Northwest bound M5 off ramp will merge onto Freedom Road, which will be made a one-way at the intersection; the southeast bound off M5 ramp will be widened; and a

walkway will be put on the northside of the Grand River bridge.

Traffic improvement is needed there, Compton said. "It gets pretty congested here," he said.

Globe Furniture has been a fixture at the intersection. There is some lament with the business closing.

"It's an important showroom to our success," Compton said. Globe will look to reopen somewhere in the Grand River/Novi corridor.

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# Review from page A1

there were 249 cases. In the 18 years charted (1980-97), the '93 total was the high-

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about 34 cases per year since 1993. It permits businesses or their attorneys to preserve their right to appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal, should they so choose.

Only the "protective" category has stayed steady, averaging about 34 cases per year since 1993. It permits businesses or their attorneys to preserve their right to appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal, should they so choose.

Asked why that group's numbers hadn't declined, Sailer said only half-kiddingly, "There are more property tax representatives around today."

Of Monday morning's eight appointments, Sailer said one didn't show. Six other appointments were slated Wednesday evening, the final day for hearings and one of the most popular times for appeals.

In one case Monday, a 42-year city resident making his first appearance before the board merely sought tax clarifications.

In another, the owner of a small office building on Orchard Lake Road sought a rollback of his taxes to the year he bought the building. He said he had a business on one of the two floors, but couldn't find a tenant for the other one and hasn't been able to sell the building the last 18

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months, despite asking less than what he paid for it.

The board took the request under advisement. Chairman Larry Davis said responses typically come within three weeks.

Under Proposal A, increases in the taxable value of property is limited to either the rate of inflation or 5 percent, whichever is less.

The cap in the Farmingtons is currently at about 2.7 percent. However, the average increase in assessed value, or State Equalized Valuation (SEV), for residential properties was 6 percent in Farmington city and 8 percent in the Hills.

The cap, said the Hills' Babb, makes the SEV increases "palatable for most people."

Nevertheless, he was still amazed at the decrease in appeals: "It's unheard-of for me to go into appeal week and have the kind of open gaps I've got," he said Monday.

"It was almost spooky last week," he said. As late as Friday, he still had most of Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons open, plus some Wednesday night slots.

"I kept waiting, wondering 'What's going on here?'"

In the "old days," he said, "we literally had them two to three deep at the counter" signing for appointments and "appeal week" usually lasted about 3½ weeks, even with two boards of review.

Then Proposal A hit in 1992 and personal appeals in the Hills dropped from about 700 to about 130 last year, he said.

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