

Candidates for manager include Hartsock

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Former Farmington Mayor Bill Hartsock, who resigned from the Farmington City Council when he moved to Farmington Hills earlier this year, is one of four semifinalists for city manager.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauthoff will retire Jan. 3. Hartsock served on the Farmington City Council for more than 28 years.

Candidate interviews begin at 8:30 a.m. on Dec. 7 at Farmington City Hall. The interviews are open to the public. The schedule is:

- 8:30 a.m. — Darrell Fecho, Farmington Hills
- 10 a.m. — Hartsock

12:30 p.m. David M. Murphy, Caro
2 p.m. Vincent D. Pastus, Clare

Officials will begin their deliberations at 3:30 p.m. The city received 53 applications for the post, which will have a salary in the upper \$80,000 range. Lauthoff is paid \$91,500. Frank Gerstenecker, a consultant with the Michigan Municipal League, has assisted with the hiring process. He recently led a search, which ended in Brent Morgan's appointment as Farmington Downtown Development executive director.

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City pays tribute to attorney Donahue

BY JONI HUBBARD
STAFF WRITER

Fighting tears of sadness, Farmington Mayor Jim Mitchell paid tribute Monday night to his late friend and colleague, city attorney John Donahue.

Donahue died unexpectedly Aug. 2, after suffering a heart attack. He was 52.

"It's still hard to believe John's gone," said Mitchell. He talked about Donahue's family; wife Nancy and son J.P. attended the meeting; daughter Keara is a freshman at Notre Dame. J.P. is a sophomore at Detroit Catholic Central. John graduated from both schools and was proud to have his children follow in his footsteps.

"I always found John to be courteous, honorable and fair in his dealings with other attorneys," said Mitchell, who is also an attorney.

In addition to being a noted municipal lawyer who served Farmington and Farmington Hills, as well as the Southeast Oakland and Cable Commission locally, Donahue authored many articles on government and law and was considered an expert on sewer and water issues.

Mitchell said John was also very proud of his wife, Nancy, an accomplished attorney in her own right.

"John was a very generous person and always ready with a kind word," Mitchell said after pausing a moment to compose

himself. "We were very proud to have known John over the years."

As a special memorial, Donahue's name has been added to a plaque recognizing city officials who have passed away. City officials also gave the family a first-of-its-kind plaque, which describes the attorney as "trusted counselor, respected colleague and esteemed friend."

Nancy Donahue expressed the family's appreciation, saying it was John's dream to one day be Farmington's city attorney. The couple moved to the city shortly after they married, bought a house on Oakland and then moved into a bigger home after Keara's birth.

"What attracted us to Farmington in the first place was what attracts most people... the small-town feel of the neighborhoods and the sense of community we all share," she said.

John also believed that the quality of a community reflected the quality of its local government. "He determined Farmington was the place to be because of its top-notch local government."

Nancy noted that John always had the highest praise for city managers Frank Lauthoff and his predecessor Bob Deadman, and felt he learned a great deal from them.

"He respected, he admired and really loved everyone in the city," she said.

Looking for Christmas doll stories

Just about every woman remembers waking up on Christmas morning and finding the doll of her dreams under the tree. Though long discarded or tucked away in a box, this doll still holds a special place in her heart. We're planning to do a story on Christmas dolls, and we want to hear about your favorite. Also, send us a picture

Watch for decorated wreaths downtown

BY JONI HUBBARD
STAFF WRITER

Farmington's downtown merchants breathed a sigh of relief Monday night, as city officials approved their plan to deck Grand River with boughs of evergreen.

Council members approved the Downtown Merchants Association request, despite the

fact that it circumvented a long-established process. City manager Frank Lauthoff explained the process involves making a request through the Downtown Development Authority, which would then forward it to the council. If the activity was deemed appropriate.

Concerns included making sure the decorations were uniform and respectful of the community's diversity, he said.

"We apologize for not following protocol," said Marion Tobkin of Three Oaks Furniture. "We definitely will from now on."

A brief discussion pinpointed the time when wreaths would be taken down as no later than Jan. 3. Lauthoff said the wreaths should be off before city crews begin removing lights and garlands surrounding the lamp post.

Councilwoman JoAnne McShane explained the city's protocol exists because the city has a liability if something should fall and cause an injury. "But your intentions are great," she said.

The project builds on the association's smashing success with business scarecrows, which were attached to lamp

posts from late October through mid-November. More than 50 merchants and organizations participated.

Tobkin and association President Barbara Goins assured officials they would make sure the wreaths were maintained and taken down in a timely manner. Goins said a small group set up patrols to ensure the scarecrows were kept tidy; they anticipate doing the same with the wreaths.

"We had scarecrows down in two days, with cornstalks and all," Tobkin said.

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Pizza party set

Parents and their kids can come and make Christmas ornaments and eat pizza 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 21, at the Costlek Center in Farmington Hills. The cost is \$7 per person. Preregistration is required.

For more information on the recreation department's programs contact the City of Farmington Hills Recreation Division at (248) 473-1800.

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