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14-month controversy

Senior housing finally gets public airing

By LYNN ORR
After 14 months of dissent, Farmington Hills city councilmembers opened the door a little wider to senior citizen multiple dwellings Monday night by directing the planning commission to hold the first public hearing on controversial mid-rise and high-rise zoning.

More than 100 persons crammed the council chambers while six residents spoke to the issue before the council set the public hearing for 8 p.m., Sept. 29 in North Farmington High School.

The city's housing commission presented its report, recommending a public hearing on RCE and RCE-1 zoning ordinances. The RCE zoning allows multiple senior housing with a maximum of 25 feet, while the RCE-1 zoning, calls for housing with a maximum of 60 feet.

"Government housing assistance programs, as currently framed, look to new construction and when dictated by higher land costs, a building configuration higher than the conventional two-story structure," said Tom Czubiak, chairperson of the housing commission.

THE COMMISSION'S report projects a need for about 1,000 subsidized units by 1980, while only 310 presently exist in the city. And working with HUD means working with dwelling over 25 feet in height, Czubiak stressed.

"If the HUD policies are adhered to, the commission believes it's advisable to provide for housing in excess of the 25 foot RCE district," he told the council.

After listening to six residents plead for and against the public hearing on the zoning ordinances, the council voted 6-1 to call for the hearing with Mayor Joan Dudley dissenting.

"I have to say that I don't see the need for the density requirement for senior citizen housing implicit in the RCE-1," Ms. Dudley said. She explained that she was voting against the motion because it incorporated the RCE-1 zoning.

Councilmember Earl Oppenheimer stated he wasn't convinced of the need for the zoning ordinances but was in favor of the public hearings.

"I have doubts in my mind that there are many places in Farmington Hills where I would like to see mid-rises, but I'm not able to say categorically that there's no place in the city where it couldn't be built."

William Twig and Sam Bishop, both members of the Nardineers who originally requested a zoning variance to build multiple senior citizen housing on the property of the Nardin Park Methodist Church property, both spoke for the ordinances.

"I'm not an individual tonight," Twig said. "I'm representing 400 senior citizens who are known as the Nardineers. I believe it's unfortunate that many people have closed their minds in respect to senior citizens."

"It's imperative that we follow through with what was started on July 19, 1976," he said, referring to the impetus behind the senior citizen housing question raised last year

when the Nardineers requested a zoning variance.

Bishop stressed the fact that senior citizen housing should be near shopping, banking, and other facilities.

Calling the council's deliberations "the moment of truth for this council and community," resident Aldo Vagnozzi spoke in favor of the public hearing.

"THESE ARE the people who have built this community and spent a lifetime here and now, because of the economic situation, are being pushed out. The hearings are an obligation that we owe to the Nardineers and the rest of the community."

Senior citizens will have to wait a little longer for subsidized transportation in Farmington Hills.

Although it was expected that city councilmembers would vote on a proposal for senior taxi service, the council asked for a cost analysis of the program and a formal contract with the Northwest Transport Co. before approving the three-month pilot program.

City officials were directed to prepare the contract and cost analysis for next week's meeting.

Farmington Hills recreation director Doug Gaynor proposed the pilot program, utilizing the cab service presently in operation in the City of Farmington. He also supported the proposal to purchase a van for senior transportation, recommended by the Commission, on the Aging, could be considered to augment the total program.

A verbal, rather than written contract, and the lack of detailed cost considerations appeared to be the impetus for the delay.

The taxi-service proposal calls for 24-hour service, seven days a week, at a cost of \$1 for the first senior passenger and 50 cents for each additional passenger. Seniors could be picked up anywhere in Farmington Hills and transported to any point within the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. The city would subsidize the remainder of the transport cost to the cab company. A similar operation has been in operation in the City of Farmington for nearly one year.

For the three-month trial period, Farmington Hills would pay up to \$1,000 a month only in subsidy to the cab company.

"The Northwest Transport Co. will assume the responsibility for any dollar amount in excess of \$1,000 per month," Gaynor said.

Senior adults, who cannot afford the minimal fee due to economic deficiencies, could be completely subsidized by the city, Gaynor said.

Although Gaynor and City Mgr. George Majoros pointed out that detailed projections of cost and number of rides were difficult to attain before

Alex Terzian, Joe Alkateeb, and Robert Anzlov, all members of the Council of Homeowners who have voiced their opposition to mid-rise senior housing, spoke against the public hearing.

Calling the ordinances "precedent-setting," Terzian objected to councilmember Jan Dolan's vote on the basis of bias. Although Terzian did not name Ms. Dolan as he pointed out possible legal and ethical problems with her vote as the sponsor of the ordinance, Ms. Dolan was assured by City Atty. Paul Bibeau that she was within her right to vote.

Alkateeb, a candidate for city council, agreed with Nardineer spokesmen as to a need for senior citizen housing in the city, but expressed his opposition to new zoning.

"WE CANNOT jeopardize the entire future of the community and 56,000 people who pay the taxes and elected the council by opening Pandora's box," Alkateeb said. Cling possible problems with sewers in high density areas, he argued that the council would lose control of multiple building by passing ordinances rather than granting variances.

Anzlov, one of the city council candidates eliminated in the primary, charged that the need for senior citizen housing doesn't justify "dangerous, precedent-setting ordinance."

"The city has been able to meet the needs of senior citizens housing within the framework of existing ordinances," he said.

Although a legally defensible position could be made for the RCE zoning, according to planning commissioner David Stader, the RCE-1 zoning holds potential risks. Stader claimed,

"If that happens, we'll hear about it from our senior citizens very quickly," Majoros said.

ALTHOUGH NANCY Bates, chairperson of the Commission on the Aging, expressed full support of the taxi service program, councilmember Robert Amoré questioned why the commission had failed to iron out the "mitty-gritty" of the proposal.

"If we've got to sit here and knock it around, then we're wrong," he said, maintaining that proposal details are the job of the commission.

Ms. Bates replied that the commission hadn't investigated the taxi service as a possible senior transport proposal, since the council had rejected a proposal by Vera Foster, Northwest owner some months ago.

"We are in no way in competition with Mr. Gaynor," she added. "Let's get those seniors where they need to be."

The commission's original proposal to purchase a van, possibly with the help of Jaycee fund-raising, contains areas of concern, according to Gaynor.

Replacement cost of the van; downtime related to preventative maintenance and normal maintenance problems; lack of revenues to anticipate breakdowns; and the limitations inherent in the use of a single van with limited hours and days deserve close study, Gaynor said.

He recommends the van program be considered further, however. The taxi service could be immediately initiated and then evaluated monthly.

The commission reserves the right to evaluate the taxi pilot program at the end of the three-month period, said Ms. Bates.

"If you have an ordinance that allows multiple housing up to 60 feet, how can we possibly defend not having other multiple housing going 60 feet," he argued.

"When the housing commission

came to the planning commission, on your direction, after we received their study and statistics, we unanimously felt there was not sufficient need for an RCE-1 hearing," he told the council.

Cities endorse Sept. 10-17 as Oakway Symphony Week

To kick off its fifth season, Oakway Symphony Orchestra, together with the mayors of Farmington, Farmington Hills, Livonia, Birmingham, and Southfield jointly proclaimed the week of Sept. 10-17 as Oakway Symphony Week.

The event was highlighted by last weekend's performance of the Oakway Chamber Orchestra, featuring excerpts from "Fiddler on the Roof," the first production of the 1977-78 season.

The proclamation recognizes Oakway's impact in the community by providing entertainment and educational opportunity for senior citizens

and students as well as workshops in the public schools; noted support of the Farmington Musicale, the Farmington Arts Commission, the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College and the subscribers and season ticket holders of the community; and noted the efforts of members of the Oakway Board who are residents of the Farmington area.

The proclamation cites the symphony as an integral part of the cultural climate of the Farmington communities. Farmington Mayor John Richardson and Farmington Hills Mayor Joan Dudley endorsed the proclamation.

While the cabs wait



Celebrates 100th birthday

Louis Von Staden, known affectionately as "Papa" in the Farmington Nursing Home celebrates his 100th birthday Sept. 13. Born in San Raphael, Cal., Von Staden practiced law, then served as a judge in southern Indiana before making his home in the De-

troit area. He has been a resident in Farmington for the past three years where he cares for his 70 year old daughter, Nell Epler. (Staff photo by Harry Manthe)

Teacher strike averted as agreement nears

The threat of a teacher work stoppage was averted this week as negotiators reached a tentative agreement for a new two-year contract.

Spokemen for the Farmington Education Association (FEA) and the Farmington Board of Education announced Monday that hard bargaining conducted last week and over the weekend produced the tentative agreement. Teachers received the details of the agreement at an informational meeting last night and are expected to vote on ratification tomorrow or Monday.

School board members will probably take up ratification at Tuesday night's board meeting. Both the FEA and the school board refused to release details of the agreement until the teachers' informational meeting was held. Details of the new contract, subject to ratification by both parties, will be released today. Board President William Gravius and FEA Executive Director Richard Ringstrom both expressed satisfaction with the tentative agreement.

"WE FEEL that the agreement reached is a fair one, recognizing fiscal limitations of the school district, and permits the district to plan its educational priorities ahead for two years," Gravius said. "We're very happy," Ringstrom said Tuesday. "We wanted to avoid a work stoppage, and we did that. A lot

of effort and a lot of hours were put in, and it's a fair settlement for both sides."

Disagreement over class size, salary schedule, fringe benefits and working conditions snagged the settlement of a new contract before the expiration of last year's contract on Aug. 31. Although only 11 of the 23 articles in the previous contract had been

opened for negotiation, failure to reach settlement before the start of school prompted pickets and news releases since Sept. 1.

Last week, the FEA and the school board agreed to an extension of last year's contract subject to 48 hours strike notice. The extension allowed Farmington schools to open on schedule.

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APPLIANCES SOLD IN ONE DAY!

Mrs. George Dixon sold her washer and dryer in just one day when she advertised in the Observer & Eccentric classified section. She found that it's the quick and easy way to clean out extras around the house.

WASHER & DRYER, \$299. Other household items. Call after 5 p.m.

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Raiders take first game

North Farmington punter Mark Thompson receives attention after being injured during last Saturday's football game against Pontiac Northern. Thompson was not seriously injured, and North went on to defeat Northern, 13-12. See story on Page 1, Section C. (Staff photo by Tom Baer)