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Hills council expresses surprise

Holko defends after-hours security business

By STEVE BARNABY and RON GARBENSKI

Four Farmington Hills city councilmembers have expressed surprise upon learning last week that Police Chief Ronald Holko operates a private security agency based in Southfield.

In a telephone poll taken by the Farmington Observer & Eccentric, Mayor Keith Deacon and councilmembers Jan Dahan, Fred Lichtman and Joseph Smith said they were unaware that Holko was in the private security business.

The Observer & Eccentric learned last week that Holko is the owner of R.N. Security Incorporated. The company was issued its license by the Michigan State Police on March 31 and was incorporated on May 28.

"I see no conflict of time commitment in this," said Deacon. "I don't think it's a well-advised move. He is paid by the Farmington Hills community. This is something that should be researched."

Mrs. Smith said she became aware of the operation last week from a police officer working in another Oakland County police agency.

"My question is why didn't he come to the city council and inform us before he decided to do this?" she said.

"I'm sure that he has the right to make his own kind of investment and I don't want to pass sentence. I would just like to hear from him just what all this is about."

"Running that kind of business seems like it would take a tremendous amount of time. I wonder how much this would take him away from his work as police chief?" she said.

MRS. DOLAN EXPRESSED SIMILAR sentiments, saying that although the council doesn't have any control over such matters, she wondered if Holko's involvement in his own agency would take away from his police work in Farmington Hills.

"I think we pay him enough and being police chief is a fulltime job. After all he is the top police officer in the community," she said. "Although she is unaware that Holko is operating a security

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—Ronald Holko

agency at the time, she does recall City Manager George Majors mentioning the possibility of Holko going into such a business venture "in passing."

"I don't recall when it was, sometime during our agency reorganization. I think he brought up the possibility of such a move by Holko," she said.

Lichtman also was curious about how much time Holko spent working at his private security agency. "I just wonder when he's managing it. The question is

what is fulltime. I think we'll just have to sit down and talk to Mr. Holko about this," said Lichtman.

Councilwoman Joan Dudley said she was aware that Holko ran the agency, saying that Majors informed the council.

Councilmen Earl Oppenheimer and Bob McConnell were unavailable for comment. Majors also was out of town and unavailable for comment.

Holko defends his right to operate a private security agency, saying that 36 other

police chiefs throughout Michigan run similar operations. He also said that he informed Majors that he was going to open the agency.

"IT'S NOT ILLEGAL and I'm not using any city personnel on department time. There isn't any conflict of interest," he said.

Officials from the Michigan State Police concur with Holko's assessment, saying that as long as his private agency doesn't operate within Farmington Hills, he has the right to operate it.

Under the licensing agreement Holko is disallowed from working on private agency matters during city time and he can't solicit business in Farmington Hills.

"The reason for this understanding is the potential of conflict for Holko," according to State Police Sgt. Gary Powell, of the State Police Licensing Bureau.

"If we find out that he is doing business within his police chief related community, than this division would have to present the matter to the state police director," he said.

There is nothing in state statutes which prohibits a police chief from operating a security company, he said.

Holko said he has gone into the private security business for financial security.

"I have left three departments, so I don't have any real retirement built up. I have been here five years now and have about five more years to go before I can qualify for any type of pension from the Hills," he said.

"I don't plan on leaving Farmington Hills. I have too much to do here, yet, I'll work here as long as they want me and I'll attempt to build this department to the quality that I want it."

He denies that the private business will take away from his job as the Hills police chief.

"All I do is sign the checks. I set up the security system, told my man what I wanted to do and he runs it. He's an ex-cop and knows what he's doing," said Holko. Holko's police officer, who worked in Detroit's 13th precinct

City officers claim new guidelines pose problems

By RON GARBENSKI

A show-cause hearing will be held Wednesday in Oakland County Circuit Court to determine whether Farmington Public Safety Department reserves can perform police and fire duties normally handled by full-time officers.

The hearing stems from a suit filed July 7 by the Farmington Public Safety Department Officers Association. It attempts to stop the reserves from riding alone as patrol without a regular in the car, according to Pete Amato, the association's president.

The association seeks a court injunction preventing the department's director and the city from allowing the reserves to answer routine police and fire calls, while on patrol.

What we have here is the city trying to circumvent the law... to perform law enforcement. But the reserve's guidelines issued two weeks ago by Chief Daniel Byrnes may give the reserves authority to respond to routine calls.

"Under the new guidelines, reserves can do police functions. He is putting reserves in their own car and taking them out of the regular's car, eliminating the use of the reserve as a back-up on some shifts."

THE DEPARTMENT doesn't have two-man patrol cars, so when a reserve rides with a regular, he acts as a back-up.

"Many times the reserves have come in handy and they do a good job, but we don't think they should be riding alone," Amato says.

"We want to see the reserves augmenting the regular because the reserve isn't trained the same as a full-time cop," he said.

WHILE AMATO voiced the association's dissatisfaction with the new guidelines set by Byrnes, the director and the suit surprised him.

"I'm caught in the dark," the director explains. "I don't understand what their purpose is and what they are doing. The way I read the guidelines, they don't say what the association alleges they do."

"The only major difference in the new guidelines is that reserves now will be able to ride in patrol cars without the regular

officer there. Two reserves will be assigned to a car and their role is strictly to perform subdivision patrol and act as back-ups for regular patrolmen," Byrnes continues.

As Byrnes interprets the guidelines, that's the only major change.

The guidelines were issued in late June and took effect July 1. It was the first time reserve guidelines had been formalized for the department, according to the director.

"Nothing has really changed. Reserves won't be taking calls or responding to felonies. That's the way it's been done in the past. They will respond to major calls only when they are ordered to do so," he continues.

While Amato says the association doesn't want the reserves to perform everything in an essence, that a regular officer would, it thinks reserves definitely are needed in the community.

SEVERAL TIMES the department has only had two cars on the road and just a female dispatcher in the station. This doesn't happen all the time, but it does happen," Amato explains.

"What happens if we have two emergency runs at the same time? We would have to call in another department for back-up. This is one of our major concerns, yet city officials say the management has the responsibility and right not to bring the shift up to its four-man standard.

"Management says they are playing the odds with having another car on the road, but they don't have to pay overtime."

Normal shift strength is four men and a dispatcher. Three patrol cars are on duty each shift with the command sergeant.

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Battlin' Rocky

Lt. Richard "Rocky" Nawrocki, a Farmington Hills volunteer firefighter, battles a fire which gutted an abandoned house on Colgate Street in Farmington Hills Thursday afternoon. No one was injured in the blaze, fire officials reported. (Staff photo by Craig Newman)

Controversy at Nardineers Village multiplies over rezoning for housing

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

While residents and proponents of the Nardineers Village proposed rezoning over the feasibility of rezoning the site to allow a senior citizen apartment complex, they do agree that there is a need for one.

"I don't see opposition to the rezoning," Alex Terrian, an attorney and a spokesman for Gramercy Court residents, said. "We're willing to do everything to find a place in Farmington Hills which is already zoned for multiples and which they could finance. I'm willing to volunteer my legal services to do so."

The land, zoned for single family residences, is surrounded by subdivisions.

THE NARDINEERS have asked the Farmington Hills City Council to consider their request to rezone the land to permit multiple housing. The Hills Planning Commission turned down the group's request in May.

A public hearing in the council chambers is set July 19.

Residents are afraid that rezoning the land will clear the way for apartment complexes in the area.

"It's a domino effect," Terrian said. "It'll look like Southfield, where the complexes have spanned out the rezoning."

"Rezoning this area, which is surrounded by houses, would be spot or island zoning. The land would have a different zoning from the rest of the area. Even if they grant a special zoning for senior citizens, it's still spot."

The Nardineers and their supporters are requesting the city institute a special zoning for senior citizens apartment complexes, explained the Rev. Meredith Mear-

their property rezoned if the Nardineers were successful.

"They had attempted to rezone their land. There would be no reason to deny the Greek Orthodox Church the zoning," he said.

"There are 28 acres for sale in the Springbrook subdivision. Some of it abuts the Greek Orthodox Church. If the Orthodox Church property is rezoned, that 28 acres will be up for rezoning. The character of that property is no different from the Nardin Park property."

"The Hills Master Plan has other areas rezoned for multiples. Many persons who moved here, myself included, called the city to determine if there was any possibility of changing the zoning in the area. They said there wasn't any possibility. The master plan allowed for single-family residences only."

"I bought my home and paid a lot of money for it," Terrian said. "There aren't any reasons for changing the plan. The Nardineers want the rezoning because they're getting the land cheap from the church."

Rev. Moshauer and Bruce Robinson of Robinson Reports, an independent real estate market research firm, said the site was chosen because it is within walking

distance of banks, stores, restaurants, churches, and food stores.

The Michigan State Development Authority (MSDA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) require senior citizen apartments to be within walking distance of these conveniences before the apartments are given federal or state funds, Robinson explained.

The Nardineer Village project would be privately funded but it meets state and federal funding requirements. There is a shopping center across the street from the church.

"You have to be careful about the attitudes of this age group," said Robinson. His organization has researched the needs in housing for the elderly in Nevada, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

"If they can't take care of their financial concerns on schedule, they become anxious," he explained.

"JUST BECAUSE they're elderly, doesn't mean they can't be mixed with other people," Robinson said. "They like their peers, but they like to relate to their grandchildren."

The trend is toward elderly housing in communities with all types of life styles.

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Board regrouping shows allegiances

In a move that revealed the potential allegiances of Farmington School Board members, Anne Struble was elected president of the policy making body by a 43 vote.

Mrs. Struble edged out Mr. Merryros for the top board position as she gained support for her nomination from Trustees Michael Spence, Emma Malman, and the newly elected board member Helen Prutow. She also voted for herself.

Trustees William Grivas and Gary Lichtman backed Ross in the losing effort.

Mrs. Struble, who acted as last year's board vice president, takes over the reins as board moderator from former trustee and president, William Corbin.

Grivas was elected vice president. Spence was nominated secretary and Lichtman chosen treasurer.

The soft-spoken Mrs. Struble was backed by those members of the board who thought it proper to follow tradition and elect the previous year's vice president to the top post.

In nominating Mrs. Struble for the position, Mrs. Malman said "I feel she has demonstrated over the past two years her ability to provide leadership. I have worked with her on several committees and have found that she has brought to gether diverse opinions in a productive way."

While the more conservative board members wanted to get Struble nominated to the presidency, Grivas expressed his desire to have Ross elected president.

"As all of us on the board know, Dr. Ross has been an excellent and very knowledgeable board member," Grivas, the newly elected vice president said.

"He's well informed and has the ability to run the board the way it should."

Ross was also nominated by Grivas as secretary, but lost by the same vote.

Mrs. Struble's term as board president expires next June and she will be up for reelection to the board in 1978. She is her first term on the board. She lives at 2885 Shawansee in Farmington.

Prior to the reorganization of the board, Ross and Mrs. Prutow were sworn in as new board members following the June election.

Ross, an incumbent, and Prutow edged out Corbin, Bud Prickett and Larry Lichtman for a four-year term on the board.

The board also presented outgoing trustee Corbin with a certificate of appreciation for his dedication and service to the board during the past four years.



ANNE STRUBLE

See site plan on page 4

The zoning code was revised in 1974, he said.

"We put senior citizen housing into the multiple zoning section of the code."

"A special purpose zoning for seniors wouldn't protect adjacent property," he added. "Even if a special zoning was passed, theoretically, multiples are multiples."

The city of Southfield has a special zoning for senior citizen housing, said Robert McMahon, of the Southern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

"It has special requirements. The buildings can only be so high, there have to be a certain number of parking spaces," he explained.

A builder who is denied a zoning change to build an apartment complex near a senior citizen apartment could sue the city, arguing that an apartment by any other name is still a multiple, Rome said.

McMahon believes that such a suit wouldn't necessarily win in court.

"Chances are the court might take into consideration that the situation is unique and that the seniors have special needs," he said.

"I'm not objecting to senior citizens' homes in Farmington Hills," Terrian said. "Everyone in Gramercy Court is in favor of them if they are needed. There is a need for them."

He said that the Greek Orthodox Church south of Gramercy Court also would get

inside PULL-OUT & SAVE!

In today's O&E, you'll find a pull-out sale section for the Livonia Mall's Summer Sidewalk Sale. Pull out the pages and get to save money and fun on the fun at Livonia Mall. You'll find the pull-out pages in section A.

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