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Twenty-Five Cents

Low income housing stirs hornet's nest

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

The location of future low-income housing in Farmington Hills has put a crimp in the city's community development program.

A confrontation between Ad Hoc Committee for Citizen Participation members and the city council has resulted in the council setting a public hearing for residents' views on the issue.

The exact date, yet to be set, will be sometime in September.

In a heated council session this week, Massie Kurzeja, member of the Ad Hoc committee, accused the city of violating general regulations by neglecting to inform residents where proposed low-income housing would be built.

An application submitted to the federal government for community development funds indicates that the housing would be built in the southeast section of the city—sections 25, 26, 33 and 35. The area is bounded by Inkster Road on the east, Eight Mile on the south, Orchard Lake Road on the west and Ten Mile on the north.

To be built by 1979, it includes 100 family units, according to city officials.

"Not one resident has been notified about this. Nobody asked me if I wanted it. We were notified about the loans and grants program, but not the low-income housing location," Ms. Kurzeja told the council.

"It's my right as a resident to

demand a public hearing on this issue," she said, threatening to notify the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) if council refused to grant a public hearing.

The application for this year's grant already has been submitted to HUD and approved.

When submitting an application for community development money, the city must also submit a proposal outlining its intent for building low-income housing.

Funds garnered from the program will be used for housing rehabilitation through low-interest loans and grants, drain development and parks.

Some southern residents became disoriented with the program last week when they felt council didn't

answer their question on location of low income housing.

Council conducted a meeting a St. Alexander Church last week to explain the program.

"We got a bad taste in our mouth last Thursday when we asked twice where the housing was to be placed and the question wasn't answered then," according to Delphine Piechowski, also a member of the Ad Hoc committee.

"We had a meeting of our own on Friday because we wanted the question answered," she said.

Mrs. Piechowski denies that the statement made by Ms. Kurzeja was political or that she was used by persons seeking office.

Some persons have speculated that

Ms. Kurzeja was put up to demanding a public hearing by former Councilwoman Joan Dudley.

"We did this on our own. This is our neighborhood and we want it to be a good one," said Mrs. Piechowski, who said many persons in the south end objected to having all low-income housing placed in their neighborhood.

She blamed Councilwoman Joanne Smith, chairwoman of the Ad Hoc committee, for the confusion when she didn't tell members last Thursday where the low-income housing would be placed.

But Mrs. Smith denied this week that there was an attempt to keep secret the locations of low-income housing.

"We are going to face it in an open

hearing. We are going to include the whole city. The target areas can move," said Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Dudley appeared at this week's council session to urge a public hearing and accused the council of telling the public of only the "good" parts of the community development program.

"Federally subsidized low-income housing does cause many concerns among residents," she said.

"The city has done a marvelous job in reporting the good parts of the program, but the stinger to the program is the almighty strings attached—low-income housing," she continued.

She accused Mayor Jan Dolan of signing a federal application without knowing what it said about location of low-income housing.

Despite protests

Planning board OKs towers

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Despite protests from homeowners, the Farmington Hills Planning Commission has come out in favor of tripling the allowable height of ham radio towers from 25 feet to 75 feet.

By a 4-1 vote, the commission last week agreed on the height limit change and sent a proposed ordinance to the city council for consideration.

Under the ordinance, no radio tower could be more than half as tall as the width of the lot on which it was to be erected.

The change was first suggested by members of the city's zoning board, which has reported an increase in appeals of the current height restriction by area ham radio operators who say the 25-foot limit is now longer effective.

Before the vote, several homeowners argued against a change in the height restriction. They said they feared possible increased interference with radio and television reception and a lowering of property values.

But aesthetics was also raised: "The 75-foot limit is pain in the neck for the appearance of the neighborhood and for the price we paid for our homes," said Robert Schultz, a representative of the Farmington Hills Homeowners Association.

"We didn't come to Farmington Hills to live in an area with towers sticking up here and there."

Commissioners Judith Guertin, Edgar Raedle, Fred Hughes and Shirley Stadler voted in favor of the proposal.

Paul Griglio, who cast the lone dissenting vote, explained that he preferred a limit of 65 feet and expected that language in the proposed ordinance on the placement of towers would provoke more zoning appeals by radio operators.

The four other members of the nine-member planning commission were absent.

The ordinance restricts the height of the towers by specifying the setback necessary for the structures. Towers would be limited in height to equal half of the width of the lot, according to City Planning Consultant Claude Coates.

That means a 75-foot tower could only be built on a lot at least 150 feet wide. A 50-foot tower could be built on a lot which is at least 100 feet wide.

In addition, the towers would have to be placed at least 10 feet in back of the main building on the property and five feet away from the side yard line. They would be subject to the building code.

Commissioners tried to keep homeowners from raising the issue of signal interference, contending that such a problem could not be controlled by a local zoning ordinance.

NEVERTHELESS, the subject was raised by the homeowners.

Michael Jones contended that if 50 households on his block were affected by an amateur radio tower, it could cost them about a total of \$1,000 to install filters, all so that a hobby could be pursued.

In addition, a 75-foot high tower in the neighborhood could knock off as much as \$2,000-\$3,000 from a home's market value, he argued.

Robert Schultz, of the Farmington Hills Homeowners Association maintained that the current 25-foot limit was adequate.

OTHER RESIDENTS viewed ham radio as a luxury.

"Ham radio is a toy of a few privileged people who want to spend their time this way," said Al Carter, of Farmington Hills.

"The towers are ugly," he said. Although engineers have testified in previous meetings about the safety of ham radio towers, David Livingstone saw their opinion as one-sided.

"The experts who have been brought in are anything but unbiased experts. They were brought in for a specific purpose—to accomplish the height change. I can't see why the city commission would listen to a small number of people," said Livingstone.

Ham radio operators rallied around their activity.

"Amateur radio is more than a hobby; more than a toy. It's a public service," said Leonard Nathanson.

Ham operators take part in emergency watches, police searches, help the Red Cross and transfer phone calls from military men posted overseas, amateurs said.

Arguing that the present 25-foot restriction was inadequate, amateur radio operators suggested that the higher towers would make interference with television equipment less frequent.

ALTHOUGH they conceded that a tower could be considered to be ugly, they pointed out that some homes in the area could also be considered unsightly.

Sunday in the Park

Capping off this year's Farmington Founders Festival is the popular Sunday in the Park, in which Farmington and Farmington Hills residents are invited to enjoy an afternoon in the City Park located on Shiloh, west of Power Road.

The day begins at 10 a.m. with the bike celebration. Bicyclists of all ages gather at three locations—the Grand River Drive-In, Drake Park, and Oakland Community College—to bike to the park with an arrival time scheduled for noon. The following schedule includes activities planned for the day:

- Farmington versus Farmington Hills city councils' softball game from 1-2 p.m. on the baseball diamond.
 - Coins in the Sand: 2 p.m. in the sandbox, for preschoolers ages 2-3.
 - Frisbees: 2 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for adolescents, ages 10-15.
 - Wheelbarrow races: 2 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for parents and children.
 - Sack races: 2:15 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for teenagers ages 16-20.
 - Shoe scramble: 2:15 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for youngsters ages 4-5.
 - Sack races: 2:30 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for adults.
 - Bean bags: 2:30 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for preschoolers ages 2-3.
 - Sack races: 2:45 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for adolescents ages 10-15.
 - Sack races: 2:45 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for youngsters ages 6-9.
 - Coins in the sand: 2:45 p.m. in the sandbox for youngsters ages 4-5.
 - Frisbees: 3 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for youngsters ages 6-9.
 - Pie eating contest: 3 p.m. in the Showmobile for adolescents ages 10-15.
 - Orange exchange: 3 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for teenagers ages 16-20.
 - Orange exchange: 3:15 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for adults.
 - Three-legged race: 3:15 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for parents and children.
 - Pie eating contest: 3:30 p.m. in the Showmobile for youngsters ages 6-9.
 - Tug-O-War: 3:30 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for those age 10 and older.
 - Peanut hunt: 3:30 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for preschoolers ages 2-3.
 - Macaroni race: 3:45 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for families.
 - Nail driving race: 3:45 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for families.
 - Sack rack: 4 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for youngsters ages 4-5.
 - Balance relay: 4 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for teenagers ages 16-20.
 - Water balloons: 4:15 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for couples.
 - Balance relay: 4:15 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for families.
 - Last straw relay: 4:30 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for families.
 - Water balloons: 4:30 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for teenagers ages 16-20.
 - Sore toe race: 4:45 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for youngsters ages 6-9.
 - Sore toe race: 4:45 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for adolescents ages 10-15.
 - Shoe kick: 5 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for ladies.
 - Bubble gum blowing: 5 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for all ages.
 - Sore toe race: 5:15 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for men.
 - Shoe scramble: 5:15 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for families.
 - Duck race relay: 5:30 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for families.
 - Back to back race: 5:30 p.m. on diamond No. 2 for couples.
 - Wheelbarrow race: 5:45 p.m. on diamond No. 1 for parents and children.
- Tiger baseball star Jason Thompson also will be on hand for autographs in the late afternoon.

Postal flap agitates area workers

By LYNN ORR

It may be business as usual down at the Farmington Post Office, but the threat of a postal workers' strike still looms on the horizon.

One postal clerk, who also is an officer of the Farmington local, believes the national membership will reject the proposed contract.

"We don't think they should have settled," says Robert Brown, vice-president of the Farmington local of the American Postal Workers Union, citing the 30-15 split decision recommending ratification by the national executive board.

Asked to predict if the membership would ratify the contract, Brown replied, "I don't think so. If we don't, we'll have to renegotiate. Technically, we're working without a contract right now. And there's a lot of talk about going out on strike in support of the people who got fired."

CURRENTLY, "It's business as usual," says Dan Dever, manager of customer relations who is in charge of the Farmington Post Office while Postmaster Kenneth Harris is on vacation.

We've got good employees at the Farmington Post Office. These are level-headed people. They're looking at the whole picture and looking at what's good for them."

Inflation down the road is the postal workers' concern, Dever says. Brown agrees. But a wildcat strike (unauthorized by the national union) is suicidal, Brown maintains.

The Farmington postal workers, along with the rest of the nation's postal employees, received a letter from the U.S. Postmaster General Benjamin Bailar outlining the possible ramifications of a wildcat strike.

Loss of job and retirement benefits, and a maximum one-year prison sentence and/or \$1,000 fine may be faced by those who participate in such endeavors, the postmaster said. And postal workers in San Francisco and New York, who walked off the job this week, are facing those problems now.

"We would go out if a national strike is called, and we would honor the picket lines from other picket units, though," Brown predicts.

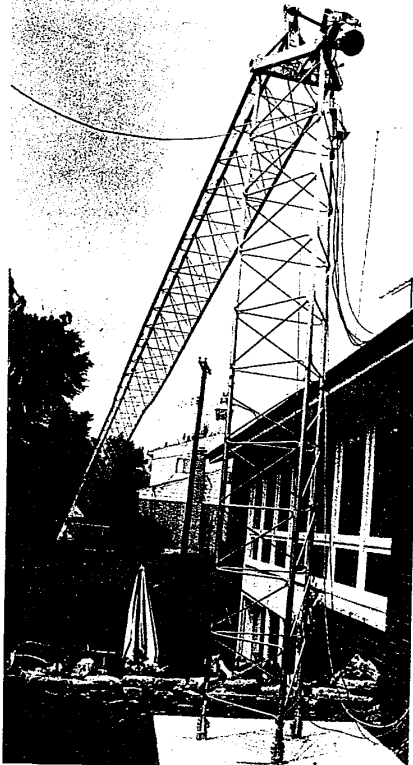
MANDATORY overtime; cost-of-living allowance (COLA) cap; and proposed salary increases are the major gripes of the disgruntled workers, Brown says.

The average postal worker earns \$14,536 annually, with starting pay set at \$8.90 an hour. The proposed contract calls for a six per cent raise annually over the three-year life of the contract. COLA allowance is set for two per cent this year; three per cent effective July, 1979; and five per cent July, 1980.

Brown doesn't like those figures. "No one else took a 5.5 per cent increase like Carter wants," Brown says.

He believes that the public is convinced postal workers are overpaid because the salaries of public and federal employees are just that—public. "Who else gets their wages printed in the paper all the time?" Brown asks. "If you compare our wages to private industry, we don't look overpaid at all."

(Continued on page 4A)



Towers such as this one used by a ham radio operator are the center of a building controversy in Farmington Hills. Ham operators call them necessary while homeowners are tagging the structures "ugly." (Photo by Allen Schlossberg)

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