

Farmington Observer

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High-rise project stirs controversy

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor
City of Farmington residents in five subdivisions approve of senior citizen housing, but they don't want a six-story structure planned for that purpose in their backyards.

Farmington Hills.
On February 26, the Farmington Hills council gave the go ahead to that city's administration to apply with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) for funds to build the project.

Subdivisions involved in the move to quash the project are Drake Heights, Chatham Hills, Woodcroft, Tall Pines and Heritage West, according to Bruckler.
"Let me make it clear. We're not against senior citizen housing," said Bruckler. "We object to the high-rise aspect of housing and the low income housing. They are counter to the residential area."

Sump-pumper denies charges of wrongdoing

By MARY GNIEWEK
The Oakland County Prosecutor's office plans to investigate a Farmington Hills well and pump repair company after hearing charges of alleged fraud from a West Bloomfield resident last Thursday.

MSHDA must approve the Hills' plans which will be one of many from around the state. But for a state subsidy, low income housing must be built alongside the senior housing structure.
The housing, if approved, would be built at the corner of Drake and Freedom Roads on an Eleven-acre parcel which is being granted to the city from a private landowner, Ron Hanaway.

But even without the low income housing, Bruckler's subdivision group objected to the high-rise senior housing last year when finding out about Farmington Hills plans to build in that area.
Originally, the Farmington Hills council had contemplated building senior citizen housing on that site through a bonding proposal. But since that time, that council switched to the MSHDA alternative.

Bruckler said his group hadn't any quarrel with the senior project being built in downtown Farmington at the old Farmington Junior High School site, saying that area is conducive for such a plan.
On the Freedom Road site, says Bruckler, it would be simple for the Hills to spread out the senior housing on the 11 acres.
"We are going to ask the council to act as leaders. It is up to them to determine what to do," says Bruckler. "They are the experts."

The probe is aimed at Rainbow Sump Pump Service, 21398 Jacksonville, and its owner Robert Holt. Mike Izzo, an investigator for the prosecutor's office, said the economic crime section will study the charges.
"If they are valid, we'll take him to court," Izzo said.
The investigation stemmed from a complaint by Louis Mellerowicz, first aired on a WXYZ-TV, Channel 7, newscast two weeks ago.

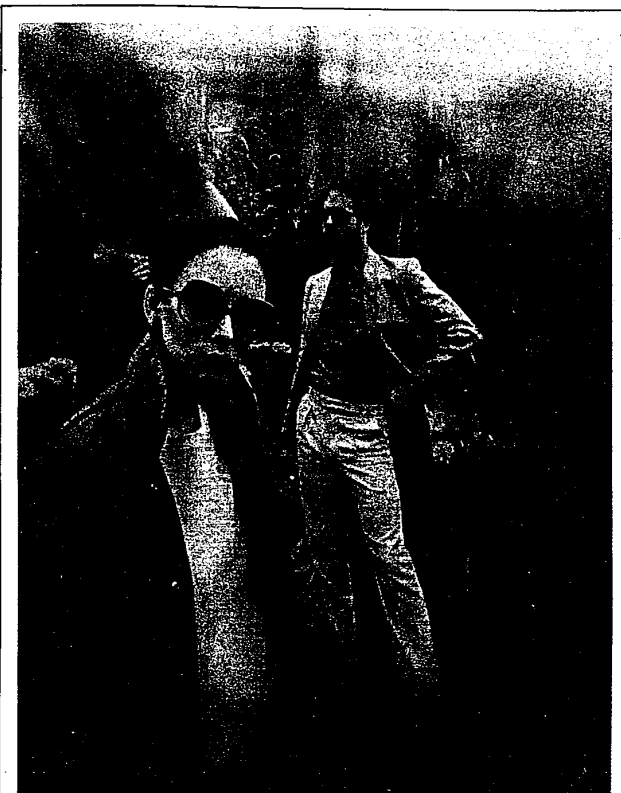
Mellerowicz said he paid Holt \$2,500 for a well pump replacement job that blew an electrical circuit in his home and left his family without running water for more than a month.
Dennis Hord of Richway Pump and Motor in Keego Harbor, whose company has completed several jobs begun by Rainbow, said the average price for such work is \$800.
"Some people will pay anything when they are out of water," Hord said.

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Mellerowicz said he was desperate when his well pump broke the week before Christmas. He contacted Rainbow because of a Yellow Pages ad that said it offered 24 hour service.
"HOLT DEMANDED \$1,500 before he would start the job. He said a new pump, wiring and pipe were needed," Mellerowicz said.
According to Mellerowicz, Holt pumped sludge through the newly installed pump which blew the electrical circuit in his home. An electrician restored power two days later and charged Mellerowicz \$225.

"I'll have to use the check to pay another company to finish the work," Mellerowicz said. "The water is still brown — we can't drink or cook with it."
Holt denied Mellerowicz's charges.
"He had plenty of water when I was there," Holt said. "I don't know what to say. None of that stuff is true. I don't want to talk about it."
Rick Ference, a Rainbow employee, said Mellerowicz's work was completed satisfactorily.
"Bob's not out to rip anyone off. (Mellerowicz) had beautiful water pressure when we left," Ference said. "That guy was a pain in the rear. He was hounding and hassling my boss until he couldn't think straight."
"Mellerowicz got on my case, too. I had to take a day off from work. I may file a civil suit against him."

Several other Oakland County residents said they had similar dealings with Rainbow and Holt.
Dr. and Mrs. Adam Wiodarczyk of Orchard Lake paid Holt \$875 for replacement of a pump they were later told needed only a \$75 replacement part.
John Hixcox, also of Orchard Lake, said he paid Holt \$118 for replacement of a \$6 switch.



At ease
The look of spring fashion '79 is a striking contrast to previous seasons. Great classics team with natural fabrics to create not only a good fashion look but an investment as well. In Thursday's edition of the Observer and Eccentric newspapers, you'll see these looks and some of the people who wear them with ease. Some people are comfortable no matter where they are, and what works for them is what fashion is all about whether at home, abroad, on the job or at play. The ability to make fashion work for you is what creates that look of ease that so often draws envious glances. Learn how in "Spring Fashion '79" in Thursday's paper. (Staff photo by Stephen Cantrell)

Court rules contract is public

Meet Farmington staff at open house



By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington Editor
We're settled in to our new office and ready to greet you.
The Farmington Observer staff is having an open house at its new office, 23352 Farmington Rd., in the Downtown Farmington Center, just south of Grand River this Wednesday.
Beginning at 1:30 p.m. and lasting until 4 p.m., the open house will give us an opportunity to meet residents from Farmington and Farmington Hills, many of whom we've talked with on the phone, but never had the opportunity to meet face-to-face. It will be an informal occasion and everybody is invited to drop in. We'll be sharing some snacks — cheese, cold cuts, coffee, tea, soft drinks, cake, cookies and, of course, crackers, all to be consumed over the crackerbarrel with some good conversation in between bites.
We've even dusted off the checkerboard for anyone who is so inclined. But watch it, our receptionist, Gail Elfond, has proven to be a most skilled player.

The Walled Lake School District now has 20 days in which to appeal the decision.
The Walled Lake School District includes the western portion of West Bloomfield and the northwest section of Farmington Hills.
Sheldon said last week that any decision to appeal the ruling must be made by the school board. The board was expected to discuss what course of action it will take at an executive session on litigation last week.
Deputy Superintendent Roland Langerman said the contract would not be released until the board has decided if it will appeal the decision. The period during which an appeal may be filed, ends March 27.

STOKUS, A PERFORMING arts teacher at Walled Lake Western, filed the complaint in circuit court after being denied a copy of the contract by both the school administration and school board.
Stokus originally requested a copy of the contract from school administrators, but was denied access to the information on the basis that disclosure of the employment contract would constitute a "clearly unwarranted invasion of an individual's privacy."
The administration's decision was supported by the school board at a meeting on December 11, when its members voted unanimously not to release the contract.
The action was based in part on the advice of board Attorney Dennis Polard who noted that Sheldon had entered into his contract with the Walled Lake Schools in 1971 — five years before the Freedom of Information Act went into effect.

Greeting you will be Miss Elfond, myself, Suburban Life editor Loraine McClish, Sports editor Tom Baer, photographer Harry Mauthe, reporters Mary Gniewek and Louise Okrutsky and sales representative Shari Johnson.
Willoughby Wink reports that he will be at his usual hangout, the Village Inn, See you Wednesday.

But the rest of the staff will be here. So be sure to drop in and bring a friend. We want to meet as many folks as is possible.
See you Wednesday.

inside

A NEW COLUMN

Sports writer Chuck "C.J." Risak has been observing the sports scene for a number of months since joining the Farmington Observer. In his first column, "C.J.'s Side" Risak takes a check view at the controversy revolving around equality in men's and women's sports. To see what he has to say, turn to Monday's Commentary on Page 9B.

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Sports	Section C

Our sign is up and we're ready to officially greet you. Come on over Wednesday between 1:30-4 p.m. and celebrate the opening of the new Farmington Observer office. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)