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Council eyes senior housing alternatives

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

After hearing that a plan to construct senior housing through a private developer is financially unfeasible, Farmington Hills City Council members are casting around for other ways in which to provide for the elderly without entering a federally subsidized program.

Council members will meet in a study session with the housing commission and the commission on aging at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 1 in council chambers. Remaining options in providing senior housing will be discussed.

"Council members have to stop being poll takers and start leading the community," said council member Jan Dolan in urging the group strongly to sup-

port some type of housing for the elderly.

Instead of trying to finance their own building, she suggested the council consider using already existing structures such as vacant schools and old apartment buildings.

Other of Ms. Dolan's suggestions, slated to be discussed during the study session, include setting up a non-profit organization to purchase homes from seniors who can't afford their upkeep but who would like to remain in their residences.

THE FORMER homeowners would be able to keep their own bedrooms and live in the house with other compatible seniors, Ms. Dolan suggested at Mon-

day night's council meeting.

Another alternative centered on making mobile homes available to seniors who would share the house-keeping chores and the rent.

Both Ms. Dolan and Mayor Joann Soronen, who supported discussion of the ideas, admitted that the legality of the suggestions still needed to be investigated.

The impetus behind the slew of suggestions was the recommendation by Larry Wilkinson Associates that the council's plan of supporting the city's own senior housing project on Drake and Freedom roads is financially unfeasible.

The project, which was to be built through a private developer, would

prove too costly for its backers and its senior citizen residents, according to Wilkinson.

Rents in the 200-unit complex would need to be in the \$400-\$450 range by 1982 to make the project profitable to the developer, according to Wilkinson.

If the project had been planned two years ago and was about to open this year, those rents would be in the \$340-\$350 range. Wilkinson calculated the rents to increase between \$20-\$30 a year, which is the average for this area.

ANOTHER STRIKE against developing senior housing is the interest rate on building bonds which is above the 10 1/2 percent necessary for the develop-

er to make a profit, according to Wilkinson.

He suggested it could be possible for the council to prepare plans for its senior citizens' residence and keep them ready until the interest rate drops again.

He cites last year's fluctuation of interest rates as an example of how the market can change.

The \$400-a-month rent proposed by Wilkinson to make the project attractive to developers was beyond the \$200 rent envisioned by Ms. Soronen.

Although she acknowledged there could be a market in the city for such housing, including support facilities for the elderly at the \$460-a-month level, she also would like to accommodate

seniors who can't afford such housing payments.

Councilman Joe Alkateeb, who fought federally subsidized senior housing in the past, agreed that at the rent levels quoted by Wilkinson, "I don't think we could build our own. We should go on from here and look for affordable housing."

But as the council searches for alternatives in senior housing, they aren't considering federal money.

"THERE ARE others on the council who have some problem with federal money and the strings attached to it," Ms. Soronen said.

"And a lot of members of the community would, too."

Smokeout

Puffers urged to butt out for a better life

Millions of smokers are expected to collectively crush out their cigarettes today for the fourth annual "Great American Smokeout."

If those smokers stay off cigarettes for 10 years, their lungs will be almost as clear as the lungs of lifelong non-

smokers. Their chances of recovery are even greater if they're under 35.

But a Gallup poll conducted for the American Cancer Society last year reported more than half of the five million smokers who kicked the habit during the 1979 smokeout were smoking

again three days later.

"I don't know what it takes to get people to quit," said Dr. Bert Rabinowitz, chronic-pulmonary-disease specialist at Botsford General Hospital.

"Whatever works, I'm for it." A lifelong non-smoker, Rabinowitz

can't understand why smokers don't give up smoking even when their life depends on it.

"If we could convince just 10 people to quit, it would be worthwhile," he said.

Rabinowitz cites American Medical Association statistics:

- Lung cancer, which is closely associated with cigarette smoking, leads to death in 90 to 95 percent of all cases.

- 41 percent of physicians who smoked in 1959 stopped by 1972.

- Mortality from emphysema is 25 times higher for smokers than non-smokers.

- Mortality from chronic bronchitis is 21 times that of non-smokers.

- By the time symptoms develop in a person who smoked one to four decades, only 25 percent are surgical candidates.

THE GRUESOME PICTURE has a silver lining.

"Chronic lung disease can be decreased if you stop smoking between 35 and 45," Rabinowitz says. "During that time, things are happening inside the body but they're not noticeable."

"The problems become irreversible after that."

Filter-tip cigarettes also reduce the risk because they cut down on tars and pollutants entering the lungs.

Still lung cancer is the No. 1 cancer killer in males. In females, it's rapidly catching up (it's just behind breast and intestinal cancer).

"If we can just convince young people it's bad," he said.

Bronchitis and emphysema are also common smokers diseases. And smoking is a major contributing factor in coronary heart disease.

(Continued on Page 4A)



Dr. Bert Rabinowitz does a fiber optic bronchoscopy. By looking through a tube inserted in the patient's nose, Rabinowitz sees the patient's bronchial tubes and lungs. The five-minute procedure can diagnose a lung spot.



Judy Tourbin (left) tells Gayle Young when to blow into the mouthpiece. The computer will draw a picture of air flowing in and out of Ms. Young's lungs and compare it to a normal range. Ms. Young, an inhalation therapist at Botsford and a non-smoker, registered a near perfect curve. (Staff photos by Randy Borst)

Court grants temporary reprieve for secret meetings

By KAREN SUE HERMES

Oakland University trustees may meet privately to discuss the qualifications of the three remaining candidates for the campus presidency.

They can't, however, inaugurate their final choice until Oakland County Circuit Judge Alice Gilbert issues an opinion on whether the trustees violated the state's Open Meeting Act during the presidential selection process.

Gilbert refused Monday to enjoin trustees from meeting privately to dis-

cuss the three candidates' qualifications.

The state attorney general's office, which requested the injunction Monday, maintains that closed meetings held by public boards to discuss qualifications of candidates for public office violate the Open Meetings Act, also called the Sunshine Law.

James Howlett of Bloomfield Hills, the trustees' attorney, maintains that the 1976 act allows public boards to discuss candidates' applications in private when the candidates ask that their

applications remain confidential.

He said the remaining three candidates have requested confidentiality. Trustees, he said, would appoint their final choice in a public meeting where, anyone in attendance could ask questions about how trustees made their choice.

WHERE THE two sides differ is on the interpretation of the following language in the act:

"A public body may meet in closed session only for the following pur-

poses: (f) to review the specific contents of an application for employment or appointment to a public office when the candidate requests that the application remain confidential.

"However, all interviews by a public body for employment or appointment to a public office shall be held in an open meeting pursuant to this act."

Debra Devine, assistant attorney general to Frank Kelley, said her office purchase of the Gilbert's suit on the Michigan Court of Appeals if she agrees with Howlett's interpretation.

She said if the judge upholds Howlett's interpretation, public boards throughout Michigan will use the confidentiality exemption to privately discuss the qualifications of candidates for public office.

"Then you might as well throw out the Open Meetings Act," she said.

If Judge Gilbert's opinion agrees with the attorney general's, Ms. Devine said her office has three options:

- Forcing trustees to repeat their year-long search for a campus president, holding all interviews and deliberations about those interviews in public.

This is the least likely option, she

said, because of the expense to the public. (Trustees are paid per meeting.)

- INVALIDATING THE trustees' decision. This option is unlikely, too, she said, because trustees could simply revalidate their decision later.

- Enjoin trustees from violating the Open Meetings Act in the future.

The attorney general sued trustees Nov. 7 after the Avon Township college's student newspaper and a political-science professor wrote Kelley's office charging trustees with violating the act by splitting into groups of less

than five.

(Continued on Page 8A)

Road opens ahead of schedule

Who says miracles never happen?

Goodbye, construction barriers. So long, congested, two-lane traffic. It'll be smooth driving from now on all the way from I-96 in Farmington Hills to Maple in West Bloomfield Township.

Completion of the Orchard Lake Road widening — the largest construction project ever undertaken by the Oakland County Road Commission — is a month ahead of schedule.

All five lanes of new pavement poured during the summer and fall are now open to traffic.

The new pavement was to have been completed by mid-December, but the major contractor on the project, the Tony Angelo Construction and Cement Co. of Southfield, finished the widening long before the first snow.

"The temporary asphalt lanes several feet behind the new roadway's curbing — used to keep traffic moving during — will be converted into bike paths."

"NOT ONLY is the roadway open to full use ahead of schedule, but also much of the companion work has been accomplished ahead of schedule," said Oakland County Road Commission Board Chairman Fred Houghten.

Ribbon cutting ceremonies for the project were Monday at 14 Mile and Orchard Lake roads with officials from West Bloomfield, Farmington Hills, the construction companies involved and the commission on hand.

"It is indeed a pleasure to see the largest project ever in the history of

the road commission also became one of the most efficient," Houghten added.

Finishing touches to the project, such as auxiliary work, driveways and general clean up, won't be completed until next spring.

The 2.8-mile, five-lane widening program cost \$7.9 million.

The federal government provided \$5 million while the road commission put in \$206,000 and Farmington Hills added \$846,000.

West Bloomfield paid \$330,000.

A NEW TRAFFIC light system was being installed at Orchard Lake Road and Northwestern on Monday.

Prior to the widening, traffic flow along Orchard Lake Rod was more than 30,000 cars per day.

"That's far too much for a two-lane road," said Houghten.

Work on the 12 Mile to Maple segment of the project starts in summer with utility work and right-of-way acquisition.

The road commission has included purchase of right-of-way along Orchard Lake Road from 12 Mile south to Grand River in Farmington Hills in its 1980-81 proposed budget.

Long-range plans also call for widening to five lanes along that Farmington Hills section plus a portion north of Maple to Will-O-Way in West Bloomfield sometime in the early 1980s.

But the road commission does not know when it will receive federal aid to help pay for those widening projects.

what's inside

Community calendar . . . 3C
Editorials 16A
Entertainment . . . Section D
Inside Angles 3A
Obituaries 2A
Sports Section B
Suburban Life . . . Section C

EARLY THANKSGIVING CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

Because of the Thanksgiving Holiday next Thursday our classified deadline will be moved up to Monday, November 24 at 5 P.M. REMEMBER one call does it all!

644-1070