



Farmington Observer

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Dolan votes — in height row over Botsford

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Farmington Hills Councilwoman Jan Dolan, an eight-year veteran trustee of Botsford General Hospital, has always abstained from voting on hospital-related issues under City Council consideration.

"Tonight I will break that self-imposed rule," said Dolan, minutes before casting an affirmative vote making Botsford the third business allowed to build higher than the city's height limit.

The City Council voted 5-2 Monday amending an ordinance enabling Botsford to extend its south tower to a maximum 85-feet high — more than 20-feet taller than zoning allows.

Adoption of the amendment permits Botsford to move ahead with its \$11-million expansion plans, including adding two floors and an equipment penthouse to the south tower.

Last week, after council members introduced the ordinance amendment by a 3-2 vote, uncertainty lingered over whether Botsford would get a fourth vote — a full majority — for final adoption of the amendment on Monday. A full majority is required to adopt or amend an ordinance.

ALTHOUGH DOLAN'S vote Monday was a turn-around from the previous week when she abstained on the amendment's introduction, her vote was not the crucial one needed for a full majority.

Instead, Councilman William Lange,

who was absent during the amendment's introduction, on Monday cast an affirmative vote — the fourth vote — pushing the amendment through.

Before voting, Dolan pointed to a city charter section indicating that a conflict of interest arises only when a council member derives a "proprietary or financial benefit" from voting.

She also asked city attorney Richard Poehlman whether any other laws could prevent her from voting on the hospital issue.

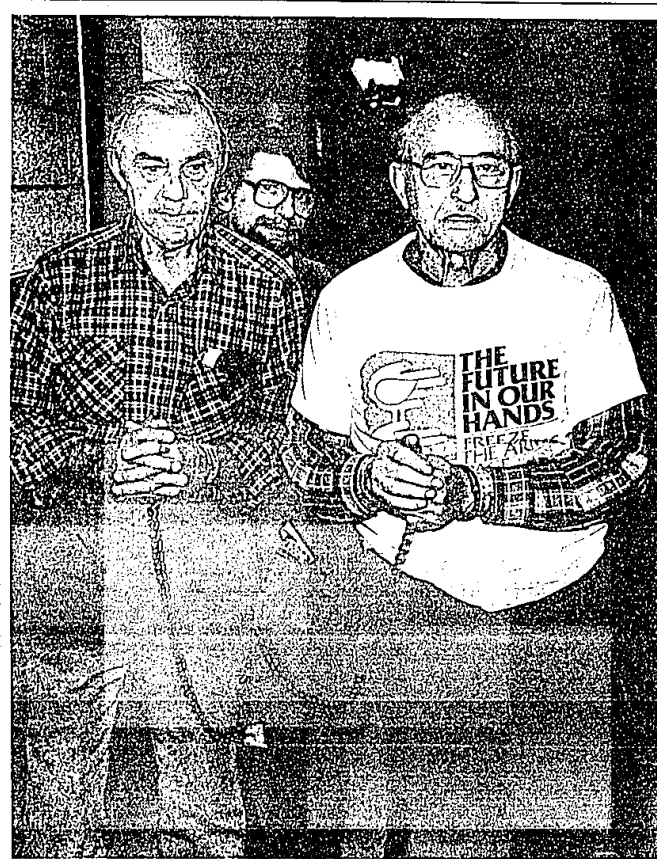
"There is no other law in the state of Michigan regarding conflict of interest except . . . with regard to a contractual relationship," Poehlman said.

While Botsford was given the green light to proceed with its plans, the City Council's action touched off a short round of debate on whether city officials should reconsider the validity of the city's height limit.

The City Council's decision to amend the zoning ordinance for Botsford overturned the planning commission's earlier recommended denial. This is the third time the council has allowed structures beyond the height limit. The MetroVision cable firm and the Alexander Hamilton Insurance Co. were allowed to circumvent the ordinance.

"There is nothing intrinsically good or evil about heights," said resident JoAnn Smith, asking the council to investigate the building height policy.

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GARY CASKEY/staff photographer

Protesting for peace

Nuclear arms foes are led in chains Tuesday to Oakland County Circuit Judge George LaPlata's courtroom after being arrested for trespassing at Williams International Corp. in Walled Lake. The protesters — (left to right) Patrick Bruder of Southfield, Phil Villaire of Grand Rapids and the

Rev. Carlton Foltz of Pontiac — spent the night in Oakland County Jail. They were among some 50 protesters expected to be jailed this week. For story and more pictures on the anti-nuclear protest, see Page 3A.

Should cities have red-light districts?

Red-light districts where prostitutes could work legally have been called a good idea — but unrealistic — for American cities by a research group for the Detroit City Council.

A spokesman for the group, called the City Planning Commission, said in a newspaper story that prostitution would be easier to control in a concentrated area, and the health of the prostitutes could be checked.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

SHOULD CITIES ESTABLISH RED-LIGHT DISTRICTS WHERE PROSTITUTION IS LEGAL?

To answer this question, call 477-5498. You have until 1 p.m. on Friday to respond. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please look in Monday's Farmington Observer.

Hills officers hoof it on patrol



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Sgt. Peter Larion and Officer Brian DeGrande discuss crime with Susan Breezink, manager of Togg's at Hunter's Square.

By Diane Gale staff writer

Farmington Hills police officers are reviving the old foot patrol approach to protect the public and beef up communication.

Right now the system is on a temporary basis during the Christmas shopping and high larceny season, but police officials hope the program will become a permanent aspect of the department.

"When you walk a beat, you get to know the people that are there, and you know the strangers, so you get a feel for the area and the people that belong," said Inspector Mirl Spencer, operational bureau commander.

"Residents and business people are more apt to give you information, when they wouldn't call the police station, and what they tell you may be more important than they think," he said.

Spencer, who is spearheading the program, said the advantages of foot patrol include closer public contact, familiarity with the business people and residents on the beat and preventive action against theft.

"They can make contact with a lot of people in a short period of time, and being in a scout car it would be difficult to drive a vehicle inside a mall, and make a personal contact," Spencer said.

Spencer, who walked a beat for four years in Washington, D.C., acknowledged that foot patrol has drawbacks. One disadvantage is the lack of mo-

bility to get from one point to another in a short period of time.

THE TWO-MAN teams will be patrolling both sides of the street on Orchard Lake between 12 Mile and 14 Mile. This district is saturated with parking lots and shopping areas, including Tully Hall.

Officers experienced in walking beats are training the younger policeman, but if the program survives, the patrol will be handled by one officer.

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Trees to grace roadway in Hills

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Weather permitting, the planting of more than 300 decorative trees along Orchard Lake Road will begin early next week in an effort to spruce up what has become downtown Farmington Hills.

City council members Monday approved an assessment roll for more than 100 property owners along the thoroughfare between 12 and 14 Mile roads to pay the almost \$40,000 tab for the trees.

Property owners in the two-mile stretch targeted for the trees will be assessed \$2 a front foot, said William Costick, assistant city manager.

With most parcels ranging from 20 to 700 feet of frontage, assessments will run \$200 to \$300 to be paid over three years at 10 percent interest.

ONLY ONE property owner, at 30076 Orchard Lake Road, was excluded from the assessment roll because the owner intends to continue using the property as a single-family residence, Costick said.

Hunters Grove condominium owners more than a week ago asked to be excluded from paying assessments because their area on Orchard Lake Road is already landscaped. But the Orchard Lake Road Beautification Committee, developers of the tree program, denied the request this week.

The tree program calls for planting seven trees in front of the 440 feet of Hunters Grove property.

Hunters Grove existing landscaping, however, meets a part of the tree program calling for complimentary plantings on private property adjacent to the road's right-of-way, Costick said.

THE SUPPORTING idea behind the tree program, he added, is that it will "hopefully serve as a catalyst to generate interest among property owners in beautifying the Orchard Lake Road frontages . . ."

Of the 332 trees to be planted in the two-mile stretch, 71 will be Bradford pear, 58 honey locust, 50 summit ash, 72 Rosehill ash, 15 Amur maple and 28 crab apple trees. The Bradford pears, however, cannot be planted until spring, Costick said.

Each species of the salt-resistant trees will be planted in half-mile groups with landscape architects determining which type will best serve a particular area along Orchard Lake.

The trees will be planted 12 feet from the curb with a minimum of 30 feet between trees. When they mature in five to 10 years, the trees should stand about 25-30 feet tall.

Because 5-10 percent of the trees might not survive the first year, Costick said, the program's total costs include about a 5 percent allowance to replace the lost trees.

Plans to improve the look of Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills began more than a year ago when city officials asked merchants and residents to join forces. The tree plantings are the only improvements planned at this point, Costick said.

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