

Flamingo Park

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moved to the park more than 20 years ago. But unlike many park residents, she and her husband hadn't planned on making Flamingo their permanent home.

"I worked at the Clarenceville Methodist Church so this was close," she said. "We had thought about looking for a house. But we liked it here real well. My husband Paul passed away in 1991. So I don't know where else I would want to live. My neighbors are just lovely. I feel at ease here."

She's not alone. The park's quiet hours, from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., are enforced and between owners and renters, most residents stay for a long time and take care of their property. The park has not turned into a transient or troubled area.

"I never heard about any problems there," said Floyd Cairns, who served as township and then city clerk from 1956 to 1985. "I think the former owner (Tom Cox) took real good care of it."

And although Flamingo changed hands seven years ago, residents say the property is still well-maintained.

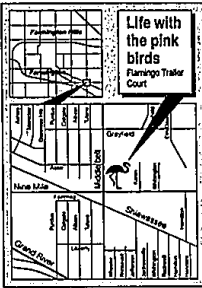
"The manager does a very good job," said Mike DeLongchamp, a trailer owner who's called Flamingo home for five years. "I like to work on my yard, so it's like living in a house. You're close to I-696, to restaurants, to Kensington Motors, to everything. I'm on the road 12 hours a day, so I really like coming home to this."

All sizes of trailers

The park's unusual character doesn't stop at the distinctive entrance either. Small trailers from the '50s are dwarfed by larger, newer models. And some lots, such as the one that belonged to former owner Cox, are very large.

Many of the lots have lawn decorations, flower boxes and hanging plants. There is even a park for kids, complete with swings and slides, on the park's east side.

"There are people who have lived here for 30 years," said Velma Ellsworth, who with her husband, Bill, lives in the large, dou-



I'm on the road 12 hours a day, so I really like coming home to this.

*Mike DeLongchamp
five-year resident*

ble wide trailer formerly occupied by the former park owner. "When we looked for something with three bedrooms and two bathrooms, we couldn't find anything reasonable."

The Ellsworths say they take pride in hanging outside holiday decorations, taking care of their lawn and enjoying the quiet of the park.

"That's the way it is here," Velma Ellsworth said. "Whether it's a trailer or not, it's your home. You've got to do something, make it nice and take care of it."

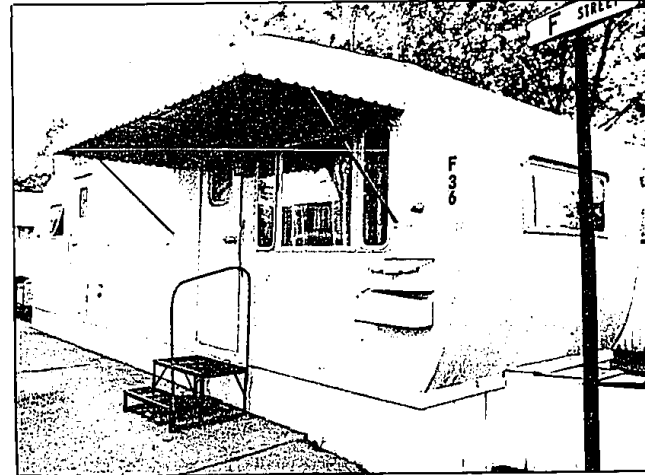
It has its drawbacks. "It's really hard to get out on to Middlebelt in the morning," said Bill Ellsworth.

And recycling is not yet curbside in the park.

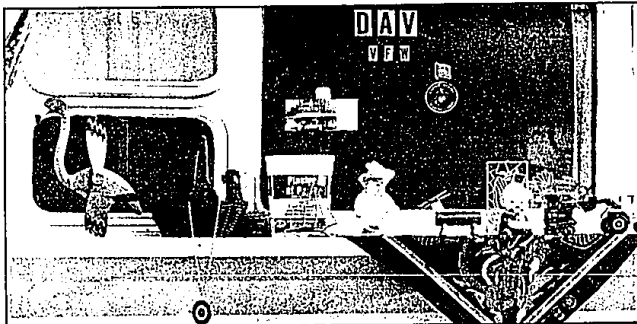
But with its reasonable prices, good location and stable population, the Flamingo Trailer Park remains like its symbol — a Farmington Hills landmark.



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMIEUX



No recycling: Above, Flamingo resident Mike DeLongchamp carries newspapers to the Dumpster. Recycling isn't offered in the park; residents also complain that they can't get the Farmington Observer delivered to their doors. At left, a smaller trailer sits at the end of F Street, a sharp contrast to some newer, larger models.



Decorations: Above, a Flamingo Park home is decorated with stickers from the Marine Corps and Harley Davidson, and various toys and symbols. At right, Rob Gaynor, a former Farmington Hills resident and a family friend to Flamingo resident Tina Schaefer and her husband, holds Tina's son, Jonathan.



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