

# Barnett from page 1A

# Barnett happy she gave up life on road

land or buy down zoning. "I'm not against development," who said. "But the courts have taken a very strong approach to zoning."

And although the Timbercrest issue has been settled, Barnett said she believes the future of properties in the Northwestern Highway, 14 Mile and Orchard Lake area will be before the next city council.

The addition of a referendum to planned unit development will not curb development, because of the extremely short "45-day window" for getting signatures needed.

Barnett said she is leaning toward a public safety millage that will put more police officers on the road and have one station with a full-time staff 24-hours a day. But although there is strong support for public safety, there is some voter disillusionment to overcome, she added.

"People here felt cheated by Proposal A, because they didn't get a tax break," she said.

Barnett said her only concern with the tax is whether it should be 1 mill, as proposed, or a little less. And the issue is especially important to senior citizens, who both rely more heavily on the fire department for medical emergencies, but are often on fixed incomes where they can't afford a tax increase.

"I think we need to beef up our EMS coverage," she said. "We have an aging population with more than 50 percent over 65 (years old)."

Barnett said the police and fire

departments have done well, but that doesn't mean they don't need to expand to meet a growing need. The public safety millage, set for November, the ice arena bond issue, passed last year, and the successful OCC and SMART tax issues passed this year are pointing to a trend, she said.

"I think we're slowly going to have more pay-as-you-go services," she said.

Barnett called Bill Costick "one of the finest city managers in the country," adding that the city is efficient and well-managed. But with the possible loss of revenue sharing and other monies, the city may have to go to more regional cooperation and sharing of services in the future.

Taxes and traffic are key issues according to residents with whom Barnett has spoken while campaigning door-to-door.

Farmington Hills' diverse population, in terms of both race and culture, is part of its strength, she said.

"And that's something you don't see in every community," she said.

The University of Michigan-Dearborn graduate and master's of business degree holder said public service has merit, despite the skepticism and periodic abuses of individual legislators.

"I love the movie 'Dave,'" she said, referring to the film about a presidential look-alike. "It's great to see it about someone who found that public service can make a difference, that you really can make things better."

By BILL COUTANT STAFF WRITER

Vicki Barnett sings. Sounds like the title of a popular CD recording — and it could have been.

In her younger years, the Farmington Hills resident and political activist tried the club circuit for about five years, 1974-78.

From Key Elementary in Oak Park on, Barnett showed promise as a singer, and even wrote her own songs, beginning with "Mom's Home" at age 8. She sang in her high school choir, but was not a standout.

"But I wanted to perform," she said.

And that she did. After convincing the manager of the Monk's Cellar on 12 Mile and Orchard Lake to give her a chance for a week, Barnett wound up singing at many area clubs.

At the tender age of 19, Barnett was not going anywhere at 1 in the morning.

"My mother (Helen) said, 'I will drive you,'" she said. So her father Mitt and her mother would drop her off and pick her up after a night of renditions of "Fire and Rain," "A Song for You," "Your Song" and other favorites.

Barnett has performed at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. Sure, that was her at the Holiday Inn in Waukegan, Ill., but she got paid.

"I was on the road a lot," she said. "And you grow up fast when you are 19 and 20 and out in the world."

She loved to perform and finally had what appeared to be a break after recording a demo tape that caught the ears of record producers in California.

All she had to do was take that



DIANON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**"I was on the road a lot. And you grow up fast when you are 19 and 20 and out in the world."**

Vicki Barnett

plane and she was on her way. Except for one thing.

"I didn't want to always be on the road," she said. "I didn't know that I would have fame or-

fortune, but even if I would have, it wouldn't be worth it if I hadn't been happy."

And now, as a married mother of two who is active in the com-

Play it again, Vicki: Hills Council candidate Vicki Barnett plays the piano with daughter Samantha Steckloff and son Jordan Steckloff gathered around. The dog, Cocoa, likes to feel the vibrations from the piano.

munity, Barnett has struck a chord in her own life.

"I had parents who let me live the dream," she said.

Barnett is happy in the life she's chosen, and enjoys working with her "exceptionally gifted mathematician" son Jordan, 10, and her artistically and musically talented daughter Samantha, 11.

"She (Samantha) has a lot better voice than I do," Barnett said.

Well, perhaps Samantha will get to live the dream as well.

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