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Twenty Five Cents

League fights for senior housing zoning

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

A special zoning designation should be established for senior citizen housing. That's the proposal being made by the West Bloomfield-Farmington League of Women Voters. The suggestion was made after the Farmington Hills Planning Commission turned down an appeal by the Nardin Park Methodist Church to rezone a piece of its property from single family to multiple dwelling.

The rezoning request was faced with opposition from various area homeowner organizations which maintained the zoning change would set a dangerous precedent.

"To insure that the property will be used for senior citizens, we think there should be a special purpose classification on the books. Thus, if this project falls through, the property reverts back to single family residential," said League spokesman Paula Tobocman.

NARDIN PARK'S MINISTER, Rev. Meredith Mosbauer, who was spearheading

the move for the project, said the planning commission's rejection was a "cop-out" in its responsibility towards Farmington and Farmington Hills senior citizens.

"This action is a cop-out from the standpoint that the city isn't taking a responsible position toward 18 per cent of the population," said Mosbauer.

"The Farmington Hills master plan provides no projected housing for these people."

In her presentation, Mrs. Tobocman stressed that multiple housing regulations

could remain the same for the special zoning designation.

The need for senior housing, she said, justifies the Nardin Park request.

"The League of Women Voters has done a housing study of our community and we found there is an insufficient supply of housing for senior citizens."

"We therefore support adequate housing for senior citizens which provides for the

physical and social needs of the senior citizens under any available means of funding," she said.

Mosbauer says there are more than 4,500 persons in the Farmington-Farmington Hills area that are 65 years or older. He expects that the number will rise to 10,000 by 1985.

The proposed Nardin Park complex calls for 15 units per acre for a total of 150 one-and-a-half bedroom apartments with kitchen facilities.

Mosbauer says he and the Nardin Village Inc., the church's senior citizen group, will approach the Hills city council on June 21 in an attempt to have the planning commission overruled.

The city has granted zoning for two other senior citizen housing units within the city—the 260-unit Baptist Manor complex on 13 Mile, east of Orchard Lake and the Marian-Oakland West, a 100 unit complex on 10 Mile and Middle Belt.



Oakland County's best bus driving team is a trio from the Farmington School District. Clara Simpson, the district's driver supervisor (left), shared the victory with Patty Spencer, Judy

Watts and Sue Kin as they took top honors in the county's first bus Road-E-O Championships last week. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Ride 'em, girls

School drivers beat all

By RON GARBENSKI

Ride 'em, buggies. They're the best bus driving trio in the region, topping 38 other Oakland County school district teams.

Sue Kin, Judy Watts and Patty Spencer captured the number one spot in Oakland County's first bus Road-E-O championships.

The three bus drivers from the Farmington School District scored 730 points of a possible 800 team points to outdistance their closest rivals by 65 points.

"I've always told the drivers they're the best bunch of drivers in the county. Now we proved that to everyone around," claims Clara Simpson, the Farmington district's supervisor of bus drivers.

Each of the 51 contestants had to complete six skill events and the Farmington team was the only one in the Road-E-O with each driver scoring more than 240 points.

Twenty-four-year-old Ms. Kin out scored all drivers in the contest, placing first with 275 of 300 possible points.

MRS. WATTS TOOK fourth-place honors with 220 points and Mrs. Spencer was 11th with 205.

Second individual honors went to a Pontiac driver and a Lamphere entrant took third.

Overall, Pontiac was second with 655 points and Troy came in third with 545.

"Since this was the first time the county has put such an event and we're the winners, we are pretty excited," Mrs. Simpson continues. "We have our ups and downs at times, but I keep telling the drivers that they are the best around. Now we know."

The district's three winners, who have been operating the 45-foot vehicles for the district since 1973, said each of the six events was difficult.

Events included backing buses through an area with cups placed only four inches away from the wheels.

"So it was a tight squeeze," the drivers explain.

Another event tested parking skills. The drivers were required to back the buses into a 60-degree angle parking space, given only 22 feet in which to move the bus.

Road-E-O officials then gauged the girls on the dimming clearance event. This course narrowed from 10 inches to only

two inches on each side of the bus.

THE DRIVERS had to judge the distance by using their outside mirrors and complete the straight-line course without touching any barrels.

"That was probably one of the more difficult events," Mrs. Simpson says, "because the girls really have to know how to handle a bus to score high in this event."

The district held trophies for the Road-E-O earlier this month. The three girls out maneuvered about a dozen other drivers, completing the trials with the highest scores.

The team then went on to the Oakland County meet held last Saturday in Pontiac.



Carol Anne Koshy of Farmington and her seeing-eye dog, Trouble, are close companions. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Dog partner opens a brighter world

By CORINNE ABATT

It has been almost two years since Mrs. Carol Anne Koshy of Farmington lost her sight due to multiple sclerosis.

For a good part of that time, the woman, who "always loved the outdoors" was trapped inside her home. She was new in the city and didn't know many people.

But Trouble, a gentle, devoted golden retriever, changed all that. Mrs. Koshy recently spent four weeks at the leader dog school learning to travel with Trouble.

"There were intensive practice sessions while Mrs. Koshy and Trouble learned to work as a team. They took supervised excursions to shopping centers and in department stores."

Mrs. Koshy learned that she gives the commands and directs the dog. Trouble can't read traffic lights, but crosses the street on command. The master must study the traffic patterns and the dog will proceed when it is safe.

One of the most pleasing things for Mrs.

Koshy was to teach Trouble to go to the playground where her five-year-old daughter, Susan, loves to go to play. At first, Susan led the way and Trouble and her mother followed. Now, Trouble can find the route home from the playground without help.

Mrs. Koshy, who still has some light perception, says it feels so good to be able to take Trouble and once again enjoy the outdoors, to be able to go for walks and not worry, and to tell Trouble to "go find Susan." Recognizing the little girl's name was one of the dog's first accomplishments after he arrived at his new home.

John Koshy, delighted with the new freedom which Trouble brought to his wife called to her one day: "Hey, I think Trouble likes me too."

There is no charge for leader dog training although the cost per team is approximately \$2,500. The non-profit organization is entirely supported by contributions from Lions Clubs, other public agencies and private sources.

Small is better?

Cops experiment with compact cars

By RON GARBENSKI

Farmington has joined a trend becoming more popular everyday around the country, as cities try to cope with budgetary problems.

The Farmington Public Safety Department is experimenting with a compact-sized police car to help reduce costs and conserve energy.

The newest addition to the Farmington force is a 260-cubic-inch, police equipped 1976 Chevrolet Nova.

"I really believe that smaller cars are becoming the trend in police work," says Public Safety Director Daniel Byrnes.

"More and more departments across the country are switching to the smaller cars. The fuller size cars are beautiful for police work, but you must sacrifice a lot in costs, gas and maintenance when you operate these bigger cars."

"So compact police cars are a something more cities will have to get into in the future, especially when so many of them are experiencing budget problems," Byrnes explains.

Since fuel costs for the Farmington De-

partment have increased 300 per cent in the past four years, the change to smaller cars could save the department almost half of its annual gas bill.

AT ONE TIME, the Public Safety Department received discounts on its fuel. But now it pays about the same price most service stations pay for their fuel wholesale.

The department plans to test the compact police car for six months, keeping records of its gas mileage and maintenance costs.

"We'll be trying to get feedback on its performance. If it does what we think it should and is comfortable to ride, then the city may decide to purchase more of the compact in the future," Byrnes adds.

If the compact proves good performers then the city may purchase several more compact cars next fall and others the following spring.

Byrnes is satisfied with the response he has received from officers patrolling the streets with the new compact. Despite its smaller frame, there is a lot of leg room, even for the taller officers.

Other advantages of the smaller police car is its improved maneuverability in traffic, greater turning ease and lighter body weight with a large power plant for quick acceleration.

Farmington became involved in the compact car concept after the Los Angeles Police Department conducted a study of 12 small sized vehicles.

"WE DECIDED on Nova because the L. A. Department rated it the highest among the 12 studied," Byrnes continues. "Based on mileage, maintenance, performance and officers' reaction as well as its handling characteristics, we purchased the Nova."

Base price for the vehicle was \$4,500 and fully equipped, with radio, emergency equipment and lights, it is valued at about \$5,000.

Presently, the Farmington department has six police patrol cars with each being driven about 50,000 miles per year.

"When a department runs a patrol car through three shifts, 24-hours a day, the costs can really add up," Byrnes continues.

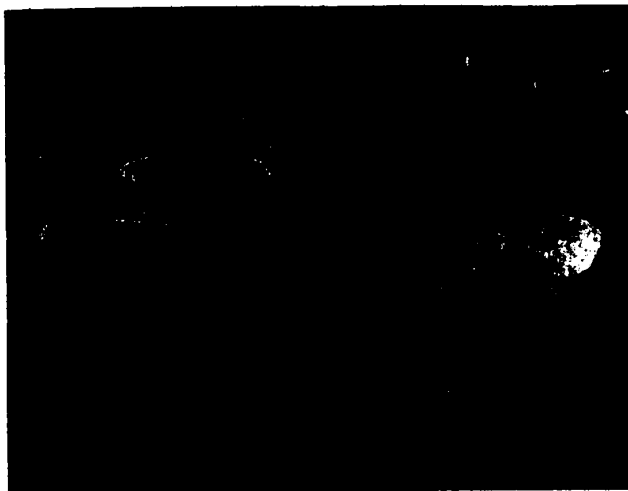
"That is one of the major reasons why we switched. Before we traded the cars in every year, but now we might be able to get about 18 months on a compact before we trade it in."

One problem Byrnes says might be experienced is the mental attitude of officers driving the smaller cars.

"Officers might be more seriously injured in the smaller cars because there is less metal to protect them," he says.

"But because it is more maneuverable, we probably will get in fewer minor traffic accidents. The men will be more conscious of the way they are driving since there is less protection for them in the compact."

"It may involve a higher risk, but the accident rate probably will drop because officers will be more self-conscious on the road."



Farmington Public Safety Officer Anthony Gubacz and Director Daniel Byrnes inspect the newest addition to the Farmington force and

the latest trend in police patrol—a 1976 Nova compact police car. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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SING A SONG

A Farmington area resident is hoping a song he has written will soon become the state's song. To read about his efforts turn to page 2A.