



Hills' finest honored

Eight Farmington Hills police officers were honored with awards last week for outstanding service to the department. Pictured from left are: Ptl. William Duffey, letter of commendation; Ptl. Duane Reynolds, letter of commendation; Ptl. Dave Loe, letter of commendation; Ptl. Edward Wozniak, letter of commendation; Police Director John Nichols, who presented the awards; Ptl. Darnel Krause, citation; Lt. Jack Brown, citation; and Ptl. Dan Massey, letter of commendation. Ptl. James St. Louis, who was on vacation, also received a citation. (Staff photo)

for John Nichols, who presented the awards; Ptl. Darnel Krause, citation; Lt. Jack Brown, citation; and Ptl. Dan Massey, letter of commendation. Ptl. James St. Louis, who was on vacation, also received a citation. (Staff photo)

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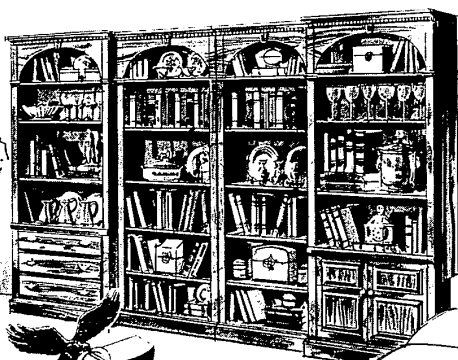


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License law miffs local businessmen

In an attempt to smooth the ruffled feathers of the Farmington Hills business community, city officials are making some concessions regarding the recently adopted business licensing ordinance.

In response to the charge that the licensing was hastily thrust upon area businesses, the Jan. 1 deadline for applications was extended to Jan. 31.

Meanwhile a study session for the city council concerning the controversial licensing ordinance has been scheduled for Jan. 30, during which business owners will have the opportunity to voice their objections to the ordinance.

The timing of the ordinance and the annual renewal fee are the business community's major concerns, Farmington Chamber of Commerce president Ed Lane recently suggested.

The Hills city council adopted the ordinance Nov. 28, under a resolution that stipulated the council's desire to ensure that business personal property tax delinquencies be minimized by requiring that taxes are paid prior to the issuance of an annual business license.

The desire to have a master list of all businesses in the community is another intention of the ordinance, City Mgr. George Majoros indicated.

Business owners failed to receive a letter of notification until mid-December, according to Lane, which gave them a scant amount of time to meet the original Jan. 1 deadline.

Although Lane says the community understands the concept of the initial application fee, most businesspersons are opposed to the annual renewal fee, he says. Initial application fees average about \$30, while renewals typically are \$25 per year.

The business community is far from pleased with the penalties for failing to meet deadlines, Lane said. A penalty fee of 25 per cent if added to the fee schedule for applications received 15 days after the due date (now Jan. 31), while a 30 per cent penalty fee will be added to applications received thereafter.

WHILE city officials are attempting to enlist the business community's cooperation, they have agreed to refrain from ticketing the Fun Factory, a pinball arcade, whose manager is legally challenging the constitutionality of the ordinance.

Although the ordinance closely follows other business licensing ordinances in the state, including the City of Farmington's ordinance, Atty. Robert Frederick is convinced the ordinance will fail to stand up constitutionally in court.

He charges the ordinance unfairly restricts the age of patrons—to those 16-and-over unless accompanied by an adult—and limits operating hours.

Business hours also are restricted. "What we are saying is that the statute is unconstitutional in that it denies equal protection under the law, and it's a deprivation of property without due process," Frederick said last month.

Because the ordinance does not have similar restrictions for bowling alleys, pool halls and other establishments patronized by teenagers, Frederick believes the pinball arcade's restrictions under the ordinance will not stand up in court.

A Jan. 11 hearing in Oakland County Circuit Court was postponed, and the city has agreed not to ticket the arcade in the meantime, according to City Atty. Paul Bibeau.

Farmington Observer

Published every Monday and Tuesday
by the Observer & Extension, Inc.
Editor: Robert Schumacher
Michigan 48190. Second class postage
paid at Livonia, Mich. and at additional mailing
offices. Postmaster: change of address
please send to: Farmington Observer, 2600 N. Woodward
Ave., Livonia, Mich. 48150. Telephone: 324-1389.

HOME DELIVERY SERVICE
Newsstand per copy, 25¢
Carrier monthly \$1.25

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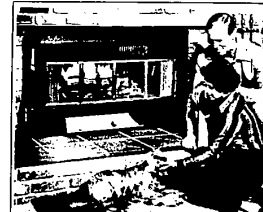
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