

RECALL 3 on Hills council face ouster drive

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

The low income housing, senior citizen zoning controversy in Farmington Hills has reached its peak with a recall petition drive launched by residents dissatisfied with actions of three councilmembers.

Recall petitions are being circulated for the recall of Mayor Jan Dolan, and councilmembers Cathy Jones and Joanne Smith.

Leading the recall are Massie Kurzja and Robert Pratt, co-chairmen of Citizens United for Recall (C.U.R.E.). Charges listed by C.U.R.E. in a statement released Oct. 27 of why the recall is being launched are as follows:

- They either failed to disclose or misrepresented the contents of the application to HUD for community development funds.
- They failed to disclose in a timely manner the proposed location of low-income housing to be built in the city under HUD's program.
- They refused to allow the citizens of Farmington Hills to vote on whether they wanted mid-rise housing.

The battle revolves around recent actions taken by the city council during which Dolan, Jones and Smith supported the concept of following through with the Community Development Block Grant program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The program was terminated by unanimous vote at last week's council session. It called for the construction of 100 units of low-income housing units in the city's south end.

Also included in the program was a housing rehabilitation program providing loans and grants and funds to finish construction of storm sewer drains. The majority of funds would have been used in the city's south end—Sections 25, 26, 35 and 36.

Also at issue is the three councilmembers support of the mid-rise zoning designated for senior citizen housing. At the Sept. 11 Hills council meeting councilmembers Smith, Dolan, Jones, Opperhauser and Deacon refused to support a motion by Councilman Joe Alkateeb to put the issue on the ballot.

There is no organized effort to have Deacon and Opperhauser recalled.

The zoning designation originally was approved by council last year after much resident protest. At that time Jones, Alkateeb and Joanne Deacon weren't on the council. Deacon voted against the rezoning designation at that time which calls for allowing housing to be constructed up to 60 feet high.

"It's much more than just the HUD low income housing issue," said Mrs. Kurzja. "The people in our city have lost confidence in their leadership. Instead of voicing their constituent's wishes, they brag that they know what is best for the city," she continued.

The committee claims to already have 1,800 signatures.

According to Pratt, 4,050 signatures

are required to place a recall on the ballot.

"We have district leaders coordinating the petition drive in virtually every part of the city," he said. We also have the support of the Council of Homeowners Association of Farmington Hills, as well as individual subdivision organizations."

But those councilmembers being under recall threat deny the charges, claiming that literature distributed has misrepresented their positions and that they didn't misrepresent or conceal any of the facts concerning the Community Development Block Grant Program.

"To this day we don't have any housing sites. We have census tracts listed, but they are the same ones that have been listed for the last three years and they have been a matter of public record," said Dolan.

"They have been on all of the HUD applications," she said.

She said it was natural that the funds used for the program be in the city's south end because that is the area where the drainage improvement, housing rehabilitation and new housing is needed.

"Where else do we have an area where we can apply these general objectives?" she asked.

A recall attempt is irrelevant at this time, she claimed, because the council has unanimously voted to withdraw from the program.

Dolan admits that she has been lying back in attempts to fight the recall attempt, but since Alkateeb has joined the recall forces, she has been "spurred on" to fight back.

"We're going to meet with an interested group of residents. We're going to get out information to tell our side," she said.

Smith vehemently opposes attempts to recall her, saying it is useless any way since she doesn't intend to run for office next year. When she was elected three years ago, she vowed to serve only one term.

She believes that many of those supporting the recall attempt are being manipulated by persons who have something other than low income and senior citizen zoning on their minds.

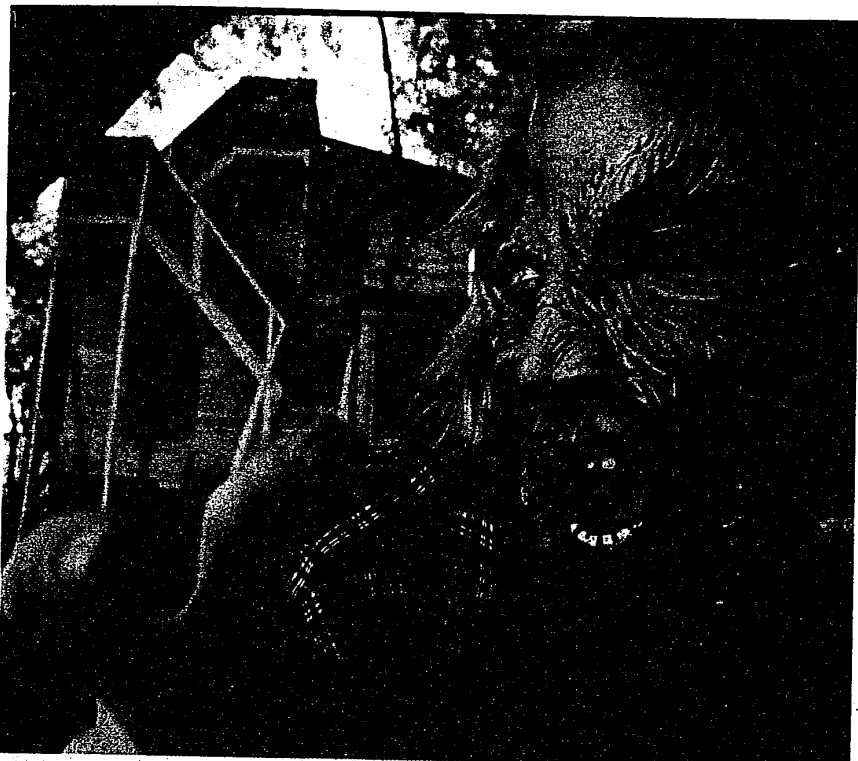
"The HUD program is off. It's a dead issue," she said.

"I think the recall is the poor man's way to fight senior citizen housing," she said referring to the Council of Homeowners attempts to nix the senior zoning attempt through court action.

Smith lashed out at Alkateeb for joining the recall movement, saying he is being "used" by other persons in the community.

Last week Alkateeb attended a meeting of the Council of Homeowners, where he informed them he was joining the movement. Smith and Jones came to the Homeowners' meeting after attending a council meeting. Alkateeb was absent from the city council meeting.

Alkateeb claims that Smith and Dolan have caused a "confidence crisis" in the city and that Jones "just goes along."



A monster greeting

This menacing looking fellow is actually quite willing to accept houseguests this Halloween season. As one of the suburban Jaycees in the Detroit Metropolitan area, he's discovered that haunted houses can add spirit to fundraising efforts. For a further look at ghosts, goblins and fundraisers, turn to page 2A. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Few residents join war on inflation

President Jimmy Carter shouldn't hold his breath waiting for volunteers to join the country's latest war on inflation.

That's the advice from a sampling Farmington area businessmen and trade unionists, interviewed last week about the President's call for voluntary compliance with his wage and price guidelines.

Carter wants next year's negotiated wage settlements to hold the line at seven per cent, including fringe benefits. He wants business to keep price increases to an average of 5.75 per cent. The goal is to reduce the current 9.5 per cent inflation rate to at most 6.5 per cent by the end of 1979.

"It sounds nice, the theory is beautiful, but it isn't going to work," said one merchant. "I don't see any way this thing is going to go other than a freeze," he said.

"He's hoping, right," a postal worker said about Carter's volunteer appeal. "Fat chance."

The most enthusiastic response from local residents to the anti-inflation plan was, "it's worth a try."

Short of wage and price controls, the voluntary guidelines were the best Carter could do, said Aldo Vagnozzi, editor of Michigan AFL-CIO News, said labor is "very leery of any kinds of controls," because the program items that have a big impact on inflation are not covered, including mortgage interest rates, dividends and profits.

"Without them in, any kind of control ends up as wage controls," Vagnozzi said.

Farmington Chamber of Commerce President Roger Walker called the Carter effort a "weak program." The problem, Walker said, is "trying to please everyone."

The chamber doesn't want "legislated wage and price controls," he added.

Walker said the price guidelines are realistic depending on the marketing chain. "It's the same old circle," he said. "It has to start at the basic supplier. The retailer shouldn't have to absorb the cost increases from the supplier, Walker added.

Carter's program should be fair if "special interest groups" cooperate, Walker said. He included "unions, big business and teachers" as special interest groups.

BOB BROWN, an officer with the American Postal Workers Union Farmington local, has had first-hand experience with a Carter guideline.

"We really took it through the nose," he said of his union's new contract. Carter established a 5.5 per cent wage increase limit for all federal employees earlier this year and stuck to it, according to Brown. The result, after arbitrary wage hikes, was a six per cent annual wage hike. The union had wanted nine per cent.

Brown predicted a large union like the UAW "won't yield" if pressured to stay within the wage guideline. "We had no choice," he said, since federal employees can't strike.

The UAW last week adopted a "wait and see" attitude toward the Carter program. It doesn't start new contract bargaining with the auto industry until next summer.

Ken Murray, of Farmington, a maintenance supervisor and electrical workers union member, said Carter's "going to have to invoke wage and price guidelines and have everyone adhere to it."

"The time of voluntary compliance is over with," he said. If a wage and price freeze were invoked equally on both sides, trade unions would comply, Murray said.

A lot of union members won't go along with wage guidelines, according to Murray, "if they feel big business is getting out of it."

SEVERAL FARMINGTON merchants, too, had their doubts about the anti-inflation guidelines.

"No one does things like that voluntarily unless there's a crisis situation," said Phyllis Mahlin, owner of the Art Alcove gallery.

"It (inflation) can't go gung ho forever," said Al Jean, owner of Jean's Hardware. "At least his (Carter's) try is worthwhile."

Jean hinted he'd like to see supplier's price increases slow down a little. Lightbulbs are a case in point. Jean said General Electric bulbs are nearly 70 cents each now. "They used to be a quarter not long ago," he recalled. He said GE has raised prices on bulbs 20 per cent in the last year.

But, referring to a wage and price freeze, Jean said, "it takes a lot of bookkeeping and work and then they find out it doesn't work anyway."

Fred Stocker, owner of Stocker's Market, said the best way to control inflation would be "imposed price ceilings and wage ceilings." Stocker expressed little confidence in the voluntary guidelines.

"Some people are greedy. Some companies are greedy," he said.

Stocker said his gourmet food store is taking in a higher volume of dollars, but isn't making more, thanks to inflation.

Self-employed painter Dick Ewing agreed something has to be done "about inflation. He suggested reduction of federal spending.

The government should also, "shut the printing press off," Ewing said. "The one that prints the dollar bills."

Priest opposes effort

Removal attempt splits parish

A recent message in the St. Alexander Roman Catholic Church bulletin authored by the Rev. James Wright, the parish priest, has split the congregation in Farmington Hills' south end.

In the statement, Wright attacked the council recall movement which is attempting to oust three councilmembers—Mayor Jan Dolan, and councilmembers Cathy Jones and Joanne Smith.

Some of the recall backers are from the south end (sections 25, 26, 35, and 36) which is served by the St. Alexander parish.

"The recall effort is a waste of time and much needed energy," he said in his message which appeared in the Oct. 22 bulletin.

"As a fellow resident of Farmington Hills, I ask you not to be involved in the recall effort."

Wright blasted a circular being handed out by recall backers which lists reasons for recall. It is entitled, "What is the recall all about. HUD is not dead."

Listed are a number of events revolving the U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant Program which was designed to rehabilitate homes, provide funds for new drainage construction and to provide for new low income housing.

Also listed is the controversial senior citizen zoning which would provide for six story multiple dwellings for the elderly.

Recall backers claim that the three councilmembers have supported the mid-rise zoning and low income housing to the exclusion of residents' wishes.

"Councilmembers Dolan, Smith and Jones have ignored the voice of the people of Farmington Hills on mid-rise zoning and HUD's low income housing. Recall is the only way to restore responsiveness, responsible government and make the voice of the people count at city hall," says the fier.

Wright takes exception to the fier and the recall movement.

"Stare us on for being duped and wasting the momentum we were gaining in getting the long overdue attention this community has so long needed and deserved," said Wright.

He have known and worked with people in this community since 1952 and this is the first time I've ever had the slightest reason to be ashamed.

"The purpose of that document, the inflammatory wording and references it contained and even the lack of signature are a cause for real shame," he continued.

Wright claimed that south end residents were being "used" for reasons contradictory to the common good of the neighborhood.

"The hurt feelings, uncontrolled emotions and divided loyalties created in a recall effort are too high a price for us to pay," he said.

He cited Councilman Joe Alkateeb, who is backing the recall movement, as one of those who volunteered to aid in solving south end problems if the HUD financing program was dropped by the council.

"Offers were made by council people and citizens to use one, two, three and even four mills in improving housing and living conditions in this area. Has anyone done anything to get

this activity started?" he asked.

During a September Hills council meeting, which nearly 500 residents attended, many persons did say they would be willing to vote more millage if the low income housing program was dropped.

"There are many folks would like to forget all this vengeful business and get busy about the work of building a better community and demanding the whole-hearted cooperation of city government," he said.

"I go to church to learn about God, not to see how Father Wright feels about politics," said one parishioner who wished to remain unidentified.

"He can vote the way he wants to and I'll vote the way I wish."

Another resident had an even stronger reaction to Wright's newsletter.

"I just won't go to church there any longer. A recall is legal and it is our right to pursue it. What right does he have to use his position to talk us out of it? I shouldn't have to be made to feel guilty for how I feel."

inside

A MIXED BAG

That's what's offered on the Farmington Observer editorial opinion page this week. From some scary thoughts on Halloween to some funny and thoughtful ones on private clubs, the Observer columnists have dished out a mixed bag of treats. For a look into some poignant thoughts and off the wall comments, turn to page 10B.

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