

City council axes senior housing plan

By MARY GNIEWEK

The most serious effort ever made by the City of Farmington Hills to provide senior citizen housing for its residents has failed.

A year-long plan for construction of 284 units of senior citizen and family housing was scrapped by the Farmington Hills City Council Monday night.

The council voted not to allow sale of city property at Freedom and Drake roads to project developer Bud Cline of RRCS Inc. Tax abatement was also denied.

It was the refusal of tax abatement that ultimately assured the project's failure, according to Richard Helmbrecht, Michigan State Housing Develop-

ment Authority (MSHDA) Director.

If tax abatement had been granted, RRCS Inc. would have built a senior citizen recreation center for community use in lieu of paying taxes on the development.

"Without tax abatement, the project won't work," Helmbrecht said.

MSHDA's involvement with the project was a commitment to provide a \$10.5 million mortgage to RRCS Inc. The department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) would have paid rental subsidies.

Public outcry to MSHDA's regulation that a portion of the project include low to moderate income family housing overshadowed the project since its inception.

COUNCIL BEGAN paving the way for the project's demise two weeks ago when Mayor Earl Oppertbauer initiated a drive which brought a multiple family zoning ordinance up for reconsideration.

The Farmington Hills Planning Commission, an advisory group, is now reconsidering the RC2 zoning at Freedom and Drake.

A majority of council voted Monday for tabling both questions, sale of property and tax abatement, until a legal opinion could be sought regarding the city's liability.

But council voted on the two resolutions after Cline made an oral agreement that he would not sue the city or

individual council members for terminating the project.

Both resolutions went down 4 to 3. Oppertbauer and council members Joe Alkateeb, Keith Deacon and Joanne Soronen chose to defeat the project.

Councilmembers Jan Dolan, Cathy Jones and Joanne Smith voted to continue support.

Cline was chosen by the city council in February to develop the project. Without a written contract, Cline proceeded "in good faith," spending \$300,000 planning the development.

"If it drags on another five or six months, my meter continues to run," Cline said. "If you kill it, my meter is off."

"I've been led down a primrose path.

I'm not going to sue the city, but I'm not going to walk away happy."

Cline said he would contact MSHDA officials this week to let them know he cannot meet their requirements.

"It was an excellent proposal the city put together," said MSHDA director Helmbrecht.

"It would have provided 200 units for the elderly, 54 for families, and 10 for the handicapped.

"No one would have had to pay more than 25 percent of their income (for rent).

"If they deny tax abatement, that's it. The city made its decision. If policy changes, they can try again."

Mrs. Smith, whose support of the

project led to a re-election defeat Nov. 6, brought two copies of city council resolutions of Feb. 26, 1979 to Monday's meeting.

One stated the council's intent to cooperate with MSHDA and RRCS Inc. The other outlined the need for housing for both the elderly and needy families in Farmington Hills. Both resolutions had been unanimously passed by the council at that time.

"This is a railroad," Mrs. Smith said. "We play games and pretend on this council."

While Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones, another project supporter, were ousted in re-election bids, three council candidates who based their campaigns on the project's defeat were elected.

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Global life is stressed in classroom

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Fifth grade students tackle the intricacies of insulating an ice cube to keep it cold.

Senior high language students debate the wisdom of West Germany's move to rescind the statute of limitations for Nazi war crimes.

They may not realize it but these students are participating in global education, a program injected into the curriculum of a number of Farmington schools within the past three years.

Rather than a separate class as its name suggests, global education is an approach integrated into programs. Through it, teachers hope to awaken an appreciation and understanding of other countries, cultures and languages in students.

The approach, used in 67 percent of Farmington's schools by 8.5 percent of its teachers, is aimed at making students realize that two oceans don't cut off the United States from the rest of the world.

Under this approach, students take a look at problems involving energy conservation, space travel and international dilemmas involving moral questions. They compare the United States' approach to these situations to that of other countries.

It was five years ago that national attention began turning toward broadening students' outlooks, according to John Summerlee, coordinator of the Farmington program.

"I've incorporated it into my general personality," she said. "My point of view is geared to that."

Her first introduction to Europe was during her college days when she studied in Germany.

Now, she leads her German class in discussions of world politics and the ties between the two countries.

Students learn to surmount difficulties in cross-cultural communication as well as getting a dose of German grammar.

They study the cultural ties that Farmington, Michigan and the country have with Germany.

PUBLICATIONS such as the German language newspaper, Detroit Abendpost help them explore the German viewpoint. Tours of such areas as Frankenthum, Mich. give the students an idea of how German culture integrated into the American lifestyle.

Another part of the class poses a question involving a moral dilemma which students are asked to solve. A discussion concerning the statute of limitations for Nazi war crimes broke down into English from German. Later, advanced students wrote an essay in German explaining their thoughts on the subject.

While high school language students discuss world issues, elementary students learn to conserve energy as well as taking a step toward exploring the way other countries cope with conservation.

Karla Walkley's fifth and sixth grade students at Larkshire Elementary School try to devise ways to keep an ice cube cold by using insulated containers.

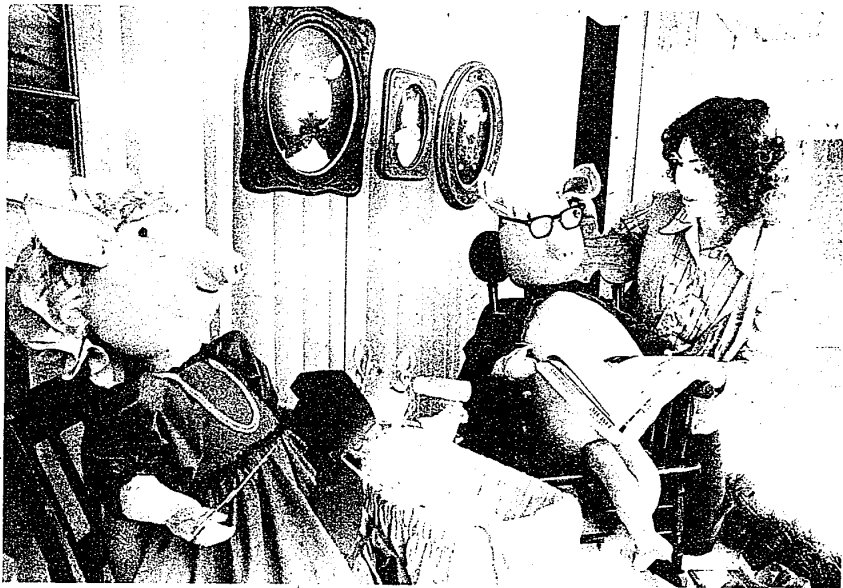
Students study practical ways to save energy by insulating homes and turning down thermostats. One student brought in magazine articles on solar energy.

"They learn these concerns aren't limited to their own country."

"I want them to understand that an adequate supply of energy is important to all, not just the United States," Ms. Walkley said.

THE APPROACH CONTRADICTS the teachings of the '50's when assimilation was the only accepted way and isolationism was not so subtly encouraged.

"Diversity is good," said Summerlee. "We're not all from the same mold. There's worth to each culture."



Gail Yurasek adjusts Pop Pig's magazine as she intrudes on the peaceful family scene in the window of Focal Point studios. Pop's reading the issue of Time magazine which featured Porky Pig on the cover while Ma Pig cuts ribbon for holiday packages. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

A real shopper stopper

How much is that piggie in window?

For Gail Yurasek, it was a clear case of here an oink, there an oink, everywhere an oink-oink.

While Ms. Yurasek isn't bucking to be the next old McDonald, she can lay claim to a menagerie which includes a friendly Christmas tree, a reindeer that likes to sit in school benches and a hungry, shirtless Santa Claus.

All of these stuffed characters brighten up Grand River storefront for the holidays.

And they've been the target of some spirited comments from shoppers.

One man stopped to admire a dummy outfitted in footed pajamas and

hunched into a sleeping position on a desk in a store window.

Suddenly persons inside the store heard a thumping coming from the direction of the display. The man was knocking on the window.

"I'm just trying to wake up your dummy," he explained.

The pigs grace the window of Focal Point studios where Ms. Yurasek is employed. For that added touch, there's a Polaroid picture of the swinish trio in the same window.

"What are pigs doing in the window?" has become a common query.

THEY'RE WAITING for the hol-

days along with the soft sculptured tree in an art shop window.

One customer walked into the shop to ask one question; "Where did you get that tree?"

The tree, reindeer and Santa all originated in the same place — Ms. Yurasek's imagination.

The Christmas tree is stuffed with old newspapers and is constructed by stacking different sections. The scholarly reindeer began its life as a pattern for a stuffed dog. Add a pair of antlers and voila, one of Santa's trusted minions appears.

The idea for the stuffed menagerie

germinated a few years ago when Ms. Yurasek designed window displays for Orbach's department store in California.

A graduate of the Kendall School for Design she used her sewing skills to create soft sculpture for the store's displays.

When the play "A Chorus Line" was into its Los Angeles run, the store kicked off a promotion with a soft sculpture display of huge, super-pink legs poised for the next beat.

Two years, later, Ms. Yurasek's soft sculptures are still kicking up their heels in Midwest.

Iranian student faces charges as illegal alien

By CRAIG PIECHURA

An Iranian student living in Farmington Hills was arrested as an illegal alien Friday by Southfield Police after being stopped for failing to signal a lane change and having a burned-out brake light.

After questioning, police turned Shahram Shahrhiri, 19, a student at Lawrence Institute of Technology (LIT), over to immigration officials.

Shahrhiri reportedly told arresting officer Patrolman Larry Montgomery that his visa had expired in September, and that he had failed to notify the Department of Immigration and Naturalization (INS) when he transferred to LIT from the University of Detroit this fall.

Timothy Houghtaling, criminal investigator for the INS, said Southfield Police were correct in detaining Shahrhiri because he didn't have his student visa paper or a permanent residency form (green card) on his person when stopped.

Shahrhiri could not be reached for comment.

Houghtaling said he released Shahrhiri after visiting his apartment where the student produced his passport and showed the INS criminal investigator books he was using in class.

"It appears he's attempting to comply," Houghtaling said.

"Standard procedure amounts to an

order to show cause," Houghtaling said. "There the student can explain his school standing to an immigration judge."

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Ex-employee charged in Landmark robbery

A 17-year-old Farmington Hills youth was released on \$5,000 personal bond Monday from the Farmington 47th District Court after he stood mute on charges of unarmed robbery.

James Roussey, a former employee of the Landmark restaurant in Farmington, is charged with taking \$320 from the restaurant on Nov. 14.

According to police, Roussey said he was having a difficult time collecting back wages. He was fired from the restaurant on Nov. 12.

Roussey told police the management owed him \$290.

According to reports, Roussey went to the Landmark on Nov. 14. After scuffling with two waitresses, he allegedly opened a cash register and took the money.

Landmark part-owner Jim Pearson said Roussey, a former assistant manager on the afternoon shift, was fired after he was accused by management of stealing \$290 from the manager's office.

Pearson said Roussey had a \$140 check due in back wages.

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inside

GET THE PICTURE

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