

# Hills agrees to low-income, senior housing

By STEVE BARNABY  
Farmington editor

Senior citizen and low-income housing came one step closer to reality for Farmington Hills this week.

In a 4-3 vote, city council agreed to hire a contracting firm which will work with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to build a six-story structure.

Financing for the project, which would be constructed on the corner of Freedom and Drake, would be through bonds sold by MSHDA.

Although the council split its vote on who to hire for the project, all of the legislative leaders agreed that the project should be carried out.

Voting to hire the firm of Rosenhaus, Robinson, Cline and Slavic (RRCS) were council members Cathy Jones, Jan Dolan, Joanne Smith and Mayor Earl Oppenheimer.

Voting to hire other contracting firms were Keith Deacon, Joe Alkateeb and Joanne Sorenson.

The council interviewed three contracting firms before making its final selection.

The other two were Amercon and Forest City Dillon, the firm which is building a senior citizen complex in the city of Farmington.

RRCS would manage the complex after it is built.

Although the concept of senior citizen housing construction won unani-

mous support from city leaders, implementation of building rests with approval from MSHDA, according to city officials.

The city had to notify MSHDA by March 8 of its intent to build a senior citizen and low-income project in order to be considered for funding.

Under MSHDA plan, communities from throughout the state vie for funding. The state authority studies the plans and decides which cities will be granted funds.

The decision to go with a MSHDA program came after months of haggling between council members and residents who expressed dissatisfaction with previous plans which would have placed low-income housing in the city's

southeast section.

Last September, the city voted to pull out of a community development block grant program with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development after resident dissatisfaction.

But a series of meetings between opposing factions and a tour of RRCS facilities in Westland calmed reservations of some of those who had opposed other senior citizen housing projects.

Alkateeb lost the majority of his council colleague's support for selecting Amercon, garnering support only from Mrs. Sorenson. Alkateeb's opposition to RRCS rested with Bud Cline's support of the controversial RCE-1 zoning, which Alkateeb has opposed.

Under the RCE-1 zoning, senior citi-

zen housing can be built up to a height of 60 feet. RRCS already is constructing a senior citizen complex under the RCE-1 zoning on Orchard Lake Road, north of 13 Mile Road.

That project's rents aren't subsidized by any government agencies.

"I would fight wholeheartedly not to have this land rezoned to RCE-1," said Alkateeb.

An eight-story project on the Freedom Road site would be preferable to having the land rezoned to RCE-1, said Alkateeb.

An eight-story structure would be outside the RCE-1 ordinance guidelines.

But Alkateeb lost a bid for support from the rest of the council that the

project be outside the RCE-1 survey.

"It isn't fair to ask the council for a commitment without an opinion from our lawyer," Oppenheimer told Alkateeb.

The project will be built on an 11-acre site, half of which already has been donated to the city by Ron Hanaway. The remaining acreage will either be donated, leased or purchased from Hanaway. Stipulations from Hanaway for the city obtaining the land was that it be used for senior citizen housing.

The low-income housing will be built on the same site.

City officials hope to build a 200-unit senior citizen complex. Residents' rents would be based on 25 percent of their income.

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## Troubled teens given new life at Boysville

When teenaged boys tangle with the law and lose, Boysville is waiting for them.

The residence program offers the boys help in problems with their schoolwork, their family and the way they relate to the rest of society.

With its administrative offices newly arrived at Mercer Center in Farmington Hills, the organization hopes to make itself accessible to Oakland County residents, according to James McLaughlin, director of development.

In addition to tending a helping hand to troubled boys and their families, Boysville is looking for financial and moral support from the communities it serves.

The organization has five community-based group homes across the state which service about 65 boys. The homes in Saginaw, Alpena, Detroit and Ecorse offer room to boys who have gone through the court system but who show signs of wanting to finish their schooling and assume jobs.

In Clinton, 25 miles southwest of Ann Arbor, the organization has a 360-acre farm which houses 130 boys. These are the boys who are deemed the most incorrigible.

The organization, which receives 85 percent of its \$3.5 million yearly budget from the state, started out as a Catholic orphanage.

In 1948, Henry Ford donated the 360-acre Ford Vocational School in Clinton to the Roman Catholic archdiocese. The archdiocese, under the leadership of John Cardinal Mooney, opted for using the land as a school for boys. Until the mid-'60s most of the boys were Catholic orphans, according to McLaughlin.

Students from broken homes or whose parents had died attended high school and junior high on the property.

In the mid 1960's, the school began to focus on boys from all backgrounds who were in trouble with the law. The boys who were a nuisance in school, in society and to their families became the residents of Boysville.

The program boasts a 75 per cent success rate with 25 per cent of the boys returning to the program and getting into trouble again. Many of the boys have been convicted on drug charges or breaking and entering, McLaughlin said.

The success of the program is attributed to the emphasis on individual

responsibility and helping each other.

If the boys are living on the farm, they are broken up according to size and sophistication into living units of 13 persons. The boys in each unit are responsible for each other, according to McLaughlin.

IF ONE BOY in the unit neglects his homework or fails to make his bed in the morning, he is reminded or nagged by the other boys in his unit, according to McLaughlin.

Using peer pressure is only one way the school hopes to force the boy to re-evaluate his values.

The farm program is the more structured of the programs offered by the organization. But each tries to improve the boy's academic skills and give him a chance to learn a trade. The boys are tutored for the GED test so they can earn their high school degree without being placed in a classroom with students who are much younger, according to McLaughlin.

Most of the boys have problems in school. The academic problems are part of the boys' larger problems with society.

In Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties, Boysville offers help to the family as well as the boy. Boysville works with the family, the boy's school counselor and the boy. For the first six months after the boy leaves Boysville, a social worker from the organization follows his progress.

The follow-up work helps to give the boy some extra structure in his life. During the first six months, the shock of being returned to the site of the original problems can influence the boy to return to his old habits.

COMMUNITY BASED group homes for the boys offer the ones who need less structure. Boys who are without families can stay in the homes until they graduate from high school even after their term is finished.

About 65 per cent of the boys are from the tri-county area. The average Boysville student is about 15 years old, has trouble in school and with others. He has been in trouble with the law. All the students are referred to Boysville through the Juvenile Court system.

While boys in the organization receive therapy to help them correct their behavior, boys who aren't in trouble with the law but who exhibit behav-

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George Knable picks up his gold-plated microphone and the Broken Eagle is once again in action. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Keeping 18-wheelers moving CB radio keeps Broken Eagle flying

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

George Knable remembers the beginning of his association with the Joker, the Untouchable, Red Rider and Nine Toes — men who drive the highways by night.

They turned up one evening in his Farmington Hills living room to meet Knable, 63, known on the CB airways as the Broken Eagle in the Eagle's Nest.

The Broken Eagle had barely begun his CB career when he struck up a conversation with the Joker. The Joker drove cars all night through the Farmington Hills-Novl area, testing them for manufacturers. He noted the amount of gasoline consumed by the car and reported on his handle.

Joker was glad to talk to the Broken Eagle. In the wee hours the Broken Eagle was his contact with the world. After talking with Eagle for a several weeks, Joker brought some coffee and doughnuts and friends over to visit.

The Joker turned out to be a stocky man in his mid-50s who was about six feet five inches tall. In his younger days he drove a truck.

"That's how I started developing friends," Knable said of that first visit.

KNABLE HAS BEEN bedridden for two years with emphysema, a disease that has plagued him for 10 years. But Knable refused to lose interest in the world and defied a doctor's prediction that he would be dead in three months. That prediction was made 10 years ago.

Instead of growing bored as he lay in bed, Knable, who has four children, bought a CB base set from his oldest son and began listening to drivers talk to each other in that funny sounding jargon which sometimes uses outlandish names.

"I listened for a long time," he said. "The jargon was hard to pick up, but now I rattle it off like a carnival barker."

The CB radio became a way of making new friends for Knable.

BUT THE JOKER once discovered that among the persons he talked to on the CB, at least one wasn't his friend. One day on the CB an unfamiliar voice told him, "Joker, someone's gonna get you. You've got a nasty tongue."

Eventually, the Joker spoke to the woman who was threatening him on the CB and tried to convince her that

*'I listened for a long time. The jargon was hard to pick up but now I rattle it off like a carnival barker.'*

— George Knable

she had the wrong Joker. They agreed to meet in a diner. When the woman walked in, she passed the Joker without noticing him.

After a while, he walked up to her and asked if she were the one who wanted to get the Joker.

"Yes," she answered. "Why?"

"I'm the Joker," the man answered.

Until the word went out that someone else was using the Joker's handle, the Broken Eagle called him the Drifter.

Eventually, the Joker retired to Florida, but the Broken Eagle kept on making friends.

THERE WAS THE night he met the Michigan Skyjacker. A young man came on the CB one night asking for help.

Knable answered the call and discovered, to his horror, that the young man was on westbound I-96 near Farmington Road, and he was having trouble breathing.

The Broken Eagle was about to call the police to send an ambulance when the Skyjacker came on the air. He was a doctor and managed to get to the Skyjacker.

A few nights later, Broken Eagle was talking on the CB when he heard someone ask for the man who helped the driver having problems breathing. It was Skyjacker, so the Broken Eagle answered him.

"I was so scared, I didn't know what to do," Skyjacker said.

Doctors couldn't understand at first what made Skyjacker lose his breath. His heart was fine, Knable remembered. But later doctors discovered that the muscles around Skyjacker's heart sometimes relaxed and the symptoms of a heart attack resulted.

NOWADAYS, KNABLE can be found in his home, reaching out to the gold plated microphone to trade greetings.

"You know I don't give bear reports," he crows politely into the microphone.

"No, I didn't know that. Sorry," says a CB'er.

Knable's a man with respect for the rules. He gives out his call letters after each transmission. He doesn't swear and won't abide it in other CB'ers — even truckers.

And he tries to give the best possible directions to the truckers along I-96 who ask for his assistance.

"Everytime they go by, they shout for me," Knable said of his friends who drive the 18-wheelers.

On the wall above his bed, there is a wooden plaque of an eagle with one bent. There's another American eagle etched onto the side of his microphone. And around him are books dealing with history, geography and biography. Knable has brought the world to his door.

Last summer about 200 CB'ers from the club, of which the Broken Eagle is an honorary member, met at his house. The all-day celebration started after

Knable's wife, Dorothy, asked him if he wanted a wake or a party.

"She's a good egg," said Knable with gruff affection.

KNABLE WORKED as a tool and die maker until 10 years ago. Because of his illness, his wife stayed home for a year.

"Then she said, 'you're not going to die,' and went to work," said Knable.

Now Mrs. Knable can be heard as the Michigan Skydiver on the CB. She was the Pink Panther until last summer when she broke her collar bone trying out a teeter-totter. That's the sort of experience that comes back to haunt a 61-year-old woman.

Her family didn't let her forget it.

But while his wife's away at work or sleeping, Knable sits by the CB listening for his friends or the chance to help a motorist in trouble.

Any day now the Boston Baked Bean will be hauling fish in from the east coast and will give the Broken Eagle a shout.

Or maybe the wildcatter with the "biggest, prettiest rig you ever saw in your life — there's nothing he can't haul" will call.

And when they do call in the middle of the night, asking if anyone's out there, Knable can gleefully answer, "There's no one here but us chickens."

Make that eagles.

## inside

### NO SURPRISES

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James McLaughlin, director of development for Boysville, said the organization's program attempts to persuade the youngster to re-evaluate his values. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)