

Subdivisions urged to act

Neighborhood watch endorsed as a crime stopper

The Farmington Hills City Council unanimously approved a Neighborhood Watch program for the city Monday.

The council in approving the program, created to increase citizen participation in reporting crime, expressed a hope that residents band together to make it a viable effort.

"Crime is not only a police problem, it is a social problem that can never be resolved by the police or the criminal justice system," said Don Wolf, mayor pro-tem.

Wolf initiated the concept last March when residents approached him and the Farmington Hills Police Department about their desire to help prevent neighborhood crime.

"The security of the community depends in part upon the people themselves," Wolf said.

A neighborhood watch program may be started by any block group in which at least half of the residents form to

participate. Subdivisions not divided by blocks should have participation of 60 percent.

The block area refers to both sides of one street. Each watch member's objective is to observe the block area, and report suspected criminal activity to the police by phone.

"It is the responsibility of every police agency to establish programs that encourage citizen participation and provide the opportunity for citizens to take an active role in preventing crime," said Police Chief John Nichols.

THE PROGRAM is intended to make citizens more vigilant, not to turn them into vigilantes. Members are not to take any police action or confront suspicious people.

Members of the watch program will be given specific identification numbers which will be used in reporting any incidents to police. The ID number

will allow the watch member to remain anonymous if he or she wishes.

The police officer assigned to the watch group and the block captain chosen by the group will keep a list of watch members and their numbers. The ID numbers will allow the police department to measure the effectiveness of the various neighborhood watch groups and members by monitoring calls for service.

The first step in organizing a neighborhood watch program in an area is to identify a person to act as "block captain." The block captain may be selected at a neighborhood or subdivision association meeting and assistants may be appointed as needed.

The block has no legal authority on behalf of the city or police department. The block captain has the responsibility of initiating the neighborhood watch as outlined, of monitoring its progress and of serving as the group's liaison with the police department.

Once the block captain has been selected, contact should then be made with all respective group members. This may be accomplished by personal contact, by issuing a flyer or media

press release.

Prior to the meeting, the block captain must secure a map of the block or subdivision showing all homes and addresses. The map should later contain the names and phone numbers of the residents.

The map will enable members, upon receiving copies, to give more accurate locations when reporting to the police. Information may be exchanged at the first meeting and must be continually updated as membership changes.

A POLICE OFFICER will attend the

first meeting. Prospective members will be instructed on organization, rules, laws, police department capabilities and member's responsibilities.

Instructions will be given on proper procedure for accurately reporting to the police what has been observed.

Pamphlets dealing with special problems will be distributed as available.

Persons who wish to become involved in the neighborhood watch program should contact the police department, juvenile division, at 474-6181 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Dancercise-slimnastics helps take off the flab

Michigan's 1980 Peach Queen has devised a series of classes she calls dancercise-slimnastics "to help take off the flab."

Susan Topolewski will lead the six session class from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesdays beginning Sept. 17 in Uncle Sam's, corner of Schoolcraft and Telegraph roads.

Total fee is \$12. Participants are asked to wear a body suit, shorts or loose fitting pants.

"I think more women should know about this both for health and beauty reasons," she said. Ms. Topolewski has been teaching exercise and dance les-

sons for Livonia Public Schools for the past two years.

"Staying healthy and keeping your weight down isn't much fun at times, but my classes, and many of them sign up for them over and over. The atmosphere and the disco music motivates even the most inactive woman," she said.

She estimates she's reached 1,500 women. Her summer class in Livonia, limited to 80 women, has been expanded to 150 women can attend.

Registration information will be taken by calling her at 531-4884.

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