

Council will decide hospital expansion

By Joanne Maliszewski Staff writer

Boisford General Hospital's new CAT scanner is sitting on a Detroit loading dock waiting for delivery to Farmington Hills.

But the remodeled facility that was to house the new scanner remains only an architect's drawing as the hospital's \$11-million expansion plans again hit a city zoning snag.

The construction that was expected to start last month has little chance of beginning before next spring, said Gerson Cooper, hospital administrator.

Two weeks ago, city planning commissioners recommended in a 5-3 vote to deny an amendment to the zoning ordinance that would allow Boisford to add two patient floors to the south tower, making it at least 80 feet tall — 20 feet taller than zoning ordinances allow.

Planning commissioners Ben Marks, Joseph Horvath, John Traflet, Robert Anzovino and Robert Pratt opposed the zoning amendment. Albert Huff abstained, claiming Boisford is one of the largest customers of Michigan National Bank, where Huff works.

"THEY (PLANNING COMMISSIONERS) felt it would be a precedent in a way to establish 80-foot high (structures) in our community," said Hal Rowe, Farmington Hills zoning department director.

Hospital officials requested the zoning ordinance change after the city's zoning board of appeals denied a variance that would have allowed the tower to extend beyond the city's height limit.

Although both the ZBA and planning commission have frowned on Boisford's expansion plans, the final decision on the hospital's planned tower rests with the Farmington Hills City Council.

The zoning ordinance amendment, developed by the planning commission, will be discussed during a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 21. Council members will make their final decision a week later at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 28.

"The council has in the past gone against the planning commission's recommendations," Rowe said. "But it is strictly up to the council."

Twice before council members have gone against planning commission recommendations on height restrictions — for the MetroVision cable tower and Alexander Hamilton Insurance Co. cupola, both higher than 60 feet.

Cooper, however, said hospital officials have not been "putting all our eggs in one basket" by assuming city officials would give them the green light.

Instead, he said, architects have drawn up "some 14 different scenarios" of the proposed expansion project. But, Cooper quickly adds, none of the new plans are as "good, operationally, architecturally or from the stand point of cost-effectiveness, as the original plans."

BOISFORD'S ORIGINAL plans call for building new fourth and fifth floors on the south tower. That addition would provide the hospital with approximately 59 percent more room than the original north tower.

Although some beds in the north tower would be closed, the additional floors would offer about 36 new beds, Cooper said.

The project also calls for moving the lobby south of the existing entrance and adding three elevators, nurses locker rooms, expanded surgical and cafeteria areas. New visitors areas, patient solariums and examining rooms would be added, he said.

"This is so the patients can get out of the environment of the hospital room," Cooper added.

Although the ZBA granted the hospital a variance for the north tower's equipment penthouse when it was built in 1965, Rowe explained that board members were following the ordinance's requirements of a maximum number of floors in a building without realizing that the distance between floor and ceiling is different in a hospital than in other structures.

Since that time, the hospital has been put in a special purpose (SP) zone which restricts building height to 60 feet. The only way the hospital can follow through with its current plans is for city officials to change the ordinance.

While the height of the proposed south tower is drawing the most controversy, hospital officials also have plans for a smaller project — expanding the medical office building to three floors from the present 30,000 square feet to 42,000 square feet, Cooper said.

Although construction on the medical office building was to begin this fall, Cooper said the hospital received much higher than expected construction bids.

"The bids make it unrealistic as it is currently designed," Cooper added.

Hospital officials have been working on expansion plans since April 1982, the hospital administrator said.

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Hospital appoints education chief

Linda Lake, of Farmington, was recently appointed director of the educational resources department at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac.

Prior to joining St. Joseph Mercy, she was a senior producer of medical

television programs at the University of Michigan Hospitals.

Lake has a master's degree in radio/TV/film and a bachelor's degree in journalism, both earned at the University of Michigan.

How candidates won

Continued from Page 1

1,700 and Hughes 1,673. Fifth place Terry Sever took 1,670, followed by sixth place Jack Barwell with 1,198.

Seventh place Melissa Levine captured 823 absentee votes.

Although fulfilling his campaign strategy of capturing a good portion of the senior citizen (absentee) vote, Sever nonetheless could not have outstripped Hughes, who was just ahead of him with 52 percent of the absentee vote.

Sever would have had to dominate some of the city's precincts to overcome Hughes' total 398 vote lead.

But as the votes stacked up, Hughes managed to place second in nine of the city's precincts, enough votes to hold on to fourth place. Sever placed second only in Precinct 6 and third in Precincts 18 and 22.

Hughes was further cemented into fourth place when Alkatieb tied with Wolf for 52 of 76 total votes cast in Precinct 9. Alkatieb placed in Precinct 18 garnering 91 of a total 132 votes cast.

Incumbent Burwell and Newcomer Levine posed little threat to any of the four victors or Sever. Only in Precinct 2 and 6 did Burwell make it to third place. At both Hughes and Sever's expense, Burwell took 50 of the 93 votes cast in Precinct 2.

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