

# Tower height booster gives up fight

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills amateur radio operator Larry Gordon, leader of a recent second unsuccessful bid in six years to change the city's height policy for antenna towers, plans to bury the issue.

"I have kind of fulfilled my obligation in general to the hams (amateur radio operators) in the community," Gordon said Tuesday.

The Farmington Hills City Council Monday unanimously denied a request by local radio operators to change the zoning ordinance to allow them to build antenna towers to a maximum 75 feet.

According to the city's zoning ordinance, antenna towers are restricted to 25 feet unless the operator obtains an approved variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

In an effort to convince both plan-

ning commissioners and council members that increased antenna tower height would cause surrounding neighbors few, if any, problems, Gordon began his last speech to city officials Monday with words of caution.

"If an unfavorable decision is rendered tonight . . .," Gordon said, "there will be litigation." Two unidentified attorneys contacted him with an interest in taking the issue to court, Gordon said.

Although council members appeared undaunted by Gordon's remarks, Councilwoman Joan Dudley, began her comments with: "First of all, I would like to say I don't like to be threatened."

When the Farmington Observer contacted Gordon Tuesday for his reaction to the council's unanimous denial of the radio operators' request for increased antenna tower height, he said he had expected it.

When asked about the threatened lawsuit, Gordon said his comments were not for publication.

But later in the day Gordon issued a five-item statement regarding the height issue and threatened lawsuit.

"If an unfavorable decision is rendered tonight, which he called a 'complete stand in all respects,' he published in its entirety:

"It might be of interest to some parties to know that the adoption of the proposed ordinance would not have allowed the erection of my personal radio tower. ZBA approval would have been necessary. The ordinance per se would not have had any direct bearing on me personally.

"As the prime mover for a proposed tower ordinance, I do not, nor am I aware of any other local ham that plans to pursue this issue any further. This issue appears to be dead.

"With respect to future litigation for the hams in general, I have no plans to coordinate such a movement. Furthermore, I have no intention of pursuing on an all-inclusive basis, any discussion with the attorneys that wish to handle 'the right tower case' in Farmington Hills.

"I have tried to do my best with respect to helping some of the hams in our community for increased tower heights. But I did not achieve an ordinance revision. I plan to concentrate all my future efforts solely to the pursuit of my own personal tower needs.

"I believe that all parties that have been involved with this issue have had an opportunity to better understand the inner workings and philosophy of the ZBA. My immediate plans are to make a 'low-key' presentation to the ZBA regarding a reappraisal for a variance to my current 25 foot radio tower."

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# Hams lose bid for tower height

Continued from Page 1

25 feet, told council that "as a group, we have been discriminated against. I can't tell you what degree."

When Dudley asked Peterson how city officials have "officially discriminated" against hams radio operators, he pointed to the zoning ordinance's height restriction of 25 feet.

"They have done it by the fact that they've shot down so many people that went into the ZBA," Peterson said. Prior to the public hearing, Mayor Pro-Tem Jan Dolan said that since 1972, the ZBA approved 19 variances for antenna towers higher than 25 feet. Of the 19 variances, 13 were classified as residential, three as business and three as industrial.

Since 1972, the ZBA denied seven variances, Dolan said. Of the seven, four were classified as residential, two as industrial and one (a television tower) as business.

Although contending that variances

have been granted, radio operators claim that the ZBA procedure does not provide a uniform standard by which applications for a variance are judged.

Radio operators also claimed that antenna towers of at least 45 feet are needed to provide them with a sufficient signal to overcome interference and communicate on a worldwide basis.

"There is a lot to this. I don't think you folks really know it," Peterson said. "If you want to carry on everyday conversations you have to have at least 65 feet."

In fact, said radio operator Richard Painter, shorter antenna towers cause more electrical interference for neighbors than do taller towers.

But Jim Kraus, president of Kendallwood Farms Subdivision Association, armed with a scaled model of a house, antenna tower and utility pole, said "we're talking about excess here."

"Imagine what that would look like

on a ranch home," Kraus continued, pointing to a scaled down version of a 75-foot antenna tower.

Subdivision residents who have opposed the ham radio operators' push for a zoning amendment have pointed to aesthetics, safety and the possible negative impact of antenna towers on surrounding property values.

Although this is the second time in six years that the radio operators have lost their bid to have the zoning ordinance changed, Dolan told those at the public hearing Monday to apply for a variance.



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# Dunn campaigns

Continued from Page 1

"I've also spoken out against Ronald Reagan on cuts in education — suc-

cessfully, I might add — and against (former) Gov. (William) Milliken on the single business tax."

Continued Dunn, "Pete Secchia (a national committeeman from Grand Rapids who supports Loumas) and his Am-way boys want their own man in there. And Loumas has said, 'I'm trainable. I know how to take orders.' I've never been like that. I'm independent."

But Dunn said he supported President Reagan on most issues — even though that support may have cost him the election in 1982 in an area which had been re-districted to include parts of Pontiac.

"Do I have my differences with him (President Reagan)? Sure. But he's been more effective than any president we've had for a long time," Dunn said. "And I think that Michigan needs a Republican Senator that Ronald Reagan will listen to."

Meanwhile, don't look for a much-discussed debate between Dunn and Loumas.

"Gerald Ford said in 1975 that free and open debate is essential to ultimate unity," Dunn said. "But Jack (Loumas) has repeatedly refused to debate me."

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