

Can Clutter Be Eliminated? Seek Sign Pollution Abatement

By EMORY DANIELS

The assault on cluttered commercial signs in the City of Farmington is continuing with attempts now being made to clear up grey areas in the city's sign ordinance.

The council, besieged in recent months with requests for variances, is asking its planning commission to re-study the ordinance.

CITY MANAGER John Dinan hopes the study will strengthen areas which are unclear and result in a more enforceable ordinance. Additions may better define permanent signs vs. temporary signs. Also to be included may be a more practicable schedule of how long temporary signs will be allowed to remain until permanently removed.

A problem which will receive special analysis is the temporary signs found often at gas stations. The most frequent use is to advertise gasoline prices, but they are also used to promote gimmicks such as free beer mugs, pop, trading stamps, or contests. **SINCE THE ordinance took effect**, the council has been besieged with agenda items concerning signs.

Most frequent on the agenda has been request for variance from gas stations owners or operators. The sore point has been the rule permitting only one free-standing sign per commercial site.

That provision does not permit, for instance, a second, permanent free-standing sign to promote trading stamps or brake repairs. But the proprietor can place a temporary A-sign promoting the same item for a temporary period. When the period expires, the sign can be moved to another location on the property and remain on-site indefinitely.

This is a loophole the council has instructed its planning commission to study.

A RECENT VARIANCE request which plagued the council came from Lakeland Farm Dairy which is locating an ice cream parlor at 32436 Grand River.

The dairy is moving into a building formerly occupied by Terry's Hardware. When the hardware moved out, a permanent fire-wall was installed to separate the building for two commercial uses.

Lakeland was denied a permit for its sign because the sign ordinance allows only one ground sign per building. The Belle Jacob Wig Shop had moved into the building first and received a permit for its sign.

The dairy owners argued that each store is self-contained with separate utilities and heating plants and should be classified as two separate buildings, like a shopping area. If variance was not granted Lakeland said, it could not lease the premises because advertising was vital.

Dinan admits that refusal of the sign permit was on a technical point and that for all practical purposes there were

two separate stores on one commercial site.

The council agreed with Lakeland's position and granted the variance by a 3-1 vote. John Richardson voted no and Fred Siebert was absent.

"BIRMINGHAM knows it has a tiger by the tail with its sign ordinance," says Richardson. "Special exceptions keep being requested, and the sign ordinance is constantly being amended. One blanket ordinance cannot handle all circumstances."

"I'm death on all these signs. They are not necessary for business and are detrimental to our community."

Birmingham will allow two signs for a commercial site with two businesses in one building provided the site has frontage, said Richardson.

Richardson added the frontage yardstick might be a good addition to the sign ordinance to take care of circumstances such as the Lakeland Dairy case.

ANOTHER VARIANCE matter which has been pestering the council is a request for a second ground sign at Cecil Beebe's Gulf station at 91233 Grand River.

At this station, the Gulf sign stands on a tall pole and Beebe had a permanent, A-sign embedded in concrete advertising brake repairs.

Beebe asked for a variance so the second sign could remain. The council tabled his request and was expected to allow the sign to remain since it was erected in 1964 and was permanent in nature.



SIGHT-SEEING—A sight-seeing trip down Grand River in the City of Farmington will show the visible stagnation of the atmosphere caused by commercial signs and overhead wires. The old saying should be redrafted because, today, you don't see the trees for the signs. (Evert photo)

The ordinance was not retroactive when passed and provided any existing permanent signs could remain until removed or major changes made.

CITY ATTORNEY Robert J. Kelly submitted a report to the council that Beebe's sign was non-conforming for two reasons: the station has two

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STATE CHAMPS — The South Farmington All-Stars captured the state Little League title Saturday in a slug-fest which included a grand slam home run by the team's winning pitcher. The team now heads for Ohio to begin divisional play in quest of a national win. (Evert photo)

South Farmington Little Leaguers Capture State Championship 11-1

South Farmington National's Little League team has a chance to advance toward the national championship Saturday when they play the Little League champs of Ohio in Maumee, Ohio.

The South Farmington team won the Michigan state title over the Muskegon by blasting Muskegon 11-1 in the championship game.

JAY CUMMINGS was the star of the championship game with Muskegon.

Cummings pitched the 11-1 win and hit a three-run homer in the fourth inning. Vince Egedy also smashed a three-run homer in the fourth inning, and Kevin Hickey cracked a grand-slam homer in the fifth.

Dave Ducho picked up the win in the semi-final game against Harper Woods. South Farmington's ace pitcher checked the east side team to one run, until his teammates scored two runs in the sixth.

CUMMINGS, Jim Vogel and John Carney came up with clutch hits in the final inning to score two runs for the victory.

The South Farmington team, made up of players from the National League, will play a game with the Ohio state champions Saturday in Maumee, near Toledo.

If the team wins, it will travel to a regional game in Indiana. A win in the regional game will move the team to the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pa.

The team was honored by city officials in city park last week after winning the district title in Southfield.

Monday night, an honors dinner was held in the Danish Inn for players, parents, coaches and managers.



APPLAUD WINNERS — The South Farmington All-Stars were honored by the City of Farmington for surviving regional competition. Last week's rally in city park was held before the boys captured the state title. Mayor Pro-Tem John Allen congratulates the team and wishes them well as they represent the Farmington area. (Evert photo)

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Plymouth, Michigan

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