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Bootleggers loses appeal for license

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

After battling the city of Farmington in court for more than a year, Bootlegger's Bar has lost its bid for renewal of its liquor license.

In a recent decision the Michigan Court of Appeals upheld the Ingham County Circuit Court's earlier decision that Farmington acted properly in recommending that the bar's Class C license not be renewed.

"Basically the decision confirmed that the lower court acted properly," said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman.

Norman Farhat, attorney for Joe Ascone, owner of Bootlegger's Bar at 3355 Grand River, was unavailable for comment.

The Ingham Circuit Court in December ruled in favor of Farmington's recommendation to the state Liquor Control Commission (LCC) that Bootlegger's liquor license not be renewed. Farhat appealed the lower court's decision.

Without a liquor license, Bootlegger's "cannot sell any alcoholic beverages," Deadman said. "The LCC by law had no choice but not to renew (the liquor) license," he continued.

A CITY'S recommendation plays a large part in whether the LCC renews a liquor license.

The appeals court decision is the latest, and what's expected to be the last, battle in a longstanding war between the city and Ascone. The bar owner, however, can appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court.

"If the case were appealed to the supreme court it would take the court approximately six months to decide whether or not to entertain this case," Deadman said in a report to the Farmington City Council.

Farmington City Council in March 1984 recommended to the LCC that renewal of a Class C license granted to Pal Joe's Inc. for the operation of Bootlegger's Bar should be denied.

Less than a month later, Ascone obtained an injunction in Ingham County

Circuit Court to prevent the LCC from refusing to renew the license. The injunction allowed the bar to open.

While the issue was before the Michigan Court of Appeals, Bootlegger's, which has been without a liquor license since last December, has continued to operate and serves non-alcoholic beverages.

Ascone has operated the bar with a license since June 1981. Council recommended renewal of the license each year without objection until February and March 1984.

AT THAT time, following a couple of public hearings, council recommended to the LCC that renewal of the bar's liquor license be denied. From that time until the Michigan Court of Appeals decision, the city and the bar have been in court battling the issue.

At the public hearings before council's recommendation to the LCC, city officials and homeowners testified to a host of incidents involving the bar and its patrons.

Among the complaints were alleged incidents of fights, urinating in the parking lot, trespassing, patron shouting obscenities, squealing tires and knocking horns.

Farmington police also presented evidence that approximately 100 police-related incidents occurred at Bootlegger's in one year.

Ascone's problems began almost immediately after he opened in 1981. Neighbors complained that parking places in front of their homes were taken by Bootlegger's patrons.

City officials attempted to alleviate the situation by issuing parking permits to nearby Brookdale residents. The rift continued as police received an increasing number of complaints from residents about incidents by and between patrons in the bar's parking lot.

But a reported increase in drunk-driving incidents in 1983 spurred the city to take action.

Since Bootlegger's has been unable to serve alcoholic beverages, "there's been no problem to my knowledge," Deadman said.



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

Anite Schwartz of Farmington Hills (left) checks out materials with the help of Ann Cleary, library assistant at the Farmington Hills

branch. The circulation desk will be a busy spot next week, when "Amnesty Week" brings in patrons with overdue library materials.

Amnesty Tardy patrons are let off the hook

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Now's the time to check your basement bookshelves, to see if any materials belonging to the Farmington Community Library are stashed there.

The library is holding a "Fines Amnesty Week," beginning next Monday and continuing through Friday, Aug. 16. All overdue materials may be returned — without fines and without interrogation.

"No questions," said Clara Bohrer, branch head for the Farmington Hills branch. "We don't care if it's one week, five weeks, five years. We will just wipe out any fines that have occurred."

Overdue materials may be returned to the circulation desk at either the Farmington or Farmington Hills branch. The Farmington branch is at

23550 Liberty, the Farmington Hills branch is at 32737 W. 12 Mile Road.

Library hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday. After hours, all but audio-visual materials may be deposited in the drop box.

"Because they're so fragile and they tend to break, those would have to be brought in during those hours," Bohrer said.

THE DECISION to hold the "Amnesty Week" coincides with the library's switch to the GEAC computerized circulation system.

"It's because we're switching over to that that we've decided to do this. I would hope by late fall, early December, we'll have all our materials in, there, all set," Bohrer said. "Maybe sooner."

Between now and the late fall, library staffers will need to catalog between 10,000 and 12,000 books, she said. Librarians hope to get the overdue materials back so they can also be entered into the computerized circulation system.

"We just decided that with the system that we would like to get the materials back," Bohrer said.

The librarians don't know quite what to expect from "Amnesty Week."

"We have no idea what we will get," Bohrer said. "We will be happy just in getting any materials back."

books, well in excess of the 10,000 anticipated.

SOME MATERIALS returned to the Chicago library system dated back to the 19th century, she said.

"Some were checked out in the late 1800s. So, everyone cleaned out their basements, I think. A lot of it, of course, was useless, but a lot of it they could use, too."

Farmington Community Library staffers don't anticipate getting any materials that are quite that old.

"I doubt it," Bohrer said. "We haven't even been around that long."

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District dedicates funds for building fix up

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington school officials will spend approximately \$420,000 this year on major building repairs and renovations.

The five projects were approved Tuesday by the Farmington Board of Education in a unanimous 7-0 vote. Money for the projects comes from the district's capital improvement fund.

"It's a supplementary fund used for major repairs and renovations," said Superintendent Lewis Schulman. "Money in this fund comes from the sale of district property and its inter-

est, said Don Howell, director, community services and federal projects. Money from the sale of property cannot be put back into the district's general budget for instructional purposes, he said.

Of the five projects the top priority is in renovating the district's transportation complex, Howell said. "We definitely need improvements in the area," Schulman said, indicating the building is "unsatisfactory."

The bus drivers, most of whom are women, need improved restroom facilities and more room in the waiting area, Howell said. The transportation area is congested with limited staff parking,

as well as poor visibility and maneuverability.

Although officials have estimated cost for this project at \$228,000, they are still reviewing renovation proposals.

Other projects that will be completed in the 1985-86 school year include:

- Paving the East Middle School parking lot for \$82,000.
- Replacing heating lines at Alameda School for an estimated \$12,000.
- Repairing the roof on Shawwassee School for an estimated \$110,000.

Although approximately \$445,000 is available in the district's capital improvement fund, the sale of the 12 Mile

and Drake Road property could increase the amount of money available for additional projects, Howell said.

For example, officials had considered remodeling the media center at Eagle Elementary School. But at an estimated cost of \$226,500, the project, which is considered less of a priority than those listed, has been put on hold in anticipation of the sale of the 12 Mile and Drake Road property, Howell said.

SCHOOL BOARD members also approved a separate list of projects totaling approximately \$87,800 to be paid for by the district's capital needs fund. Money for this fund comes from the

general budget, said Howell, who is chairman of the capital needs committee.

The capital needs fund was built into the budget to be dispersed to individual buildings for varied other needs, Howell said. "It could be for instructional materials, it could be building renovations or modifications or anything like that."

School board members previously approved a list of capital needs projects, but the list approved this week includes those projects which will cost more than \$3,000.

"Every item over \$3,000 has to go to the board for approval," Howell said.

The projects approved include:

- Basketball scoreboards for Farmington, North Farmington and Harrison high schools and O.E. Dunkel, East and Warner middle schools for approximately \$24,000.
- New diving stands and boards for Farmington, Harrison and North Farmington high schools for approximately \$9,800.
- Purchase of a new language laboratory, including headsets and antennas for North Farmington High School for approximately \$27,900.
- Purchase of new draperies for William Grace Elementary School for approximately \$5,900.

Sports activists plead for space

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Concerns about availability and maintenance of facilities led to a meeting of youth sports organizations with the Farmington Hills City Council Monday.

Forty people attended the meeting, including council members, members of the city's Parks and Recreation Commission, city administrators, representatives of several youth sports organizations, and Farmington schools representatives.

"Our fields at the 12 Mile-Drake site are pretty darn good," said John Bailey of the Farmington Soccer Club.

The club fears it is going to lose the site at 12 Mile and Drake roads. The

property, owned by the Farmington schools, is for sale.

"WE EXPECT that it will be sold," Bailey said. "Our problem is we need new fields."

Fields for youth sports would benefit youngsters throughout the community, he said, and could be used for lacrosse, football, and other recreational activities.

"This is not just for soccer," Bailey said.

Jim Hudson, commissioner for South Farmington Baseball, said the youth sports organizations share a common concern — equipment storage problems. He suggested that a city facility could perhaps be cleared out and used for that purpose.

"Something like that would benefit a large number of people," he said. "Any other thing would be chalk for the fields. Maybe those types of things could be looked into now. It wouldn't be big bucks."

HUDSON SAID his organization asks parents to help out with field maintenance. "We do a lot of our own stuff, as much as we can, to keep our costs down."

Representatives of North Farmington-West Bloomfield Baseball and Softball for Youth said playing conditions on the fields are a concern.

"That's all we use is school fields," said Carl Rosner, president of the North Farmington-West Bloomfield or-

ganization. The South Farmington organization uses school facilities and city of Farmington park facilities.

"I think it's the first time they're aware of what the situation is," Rosner said after Monday's meeting. "Anything the city could do to help us, it would really make me feel good."

THE SPICER property was mentioned briefly at Monday's meeting as a potential site for youth sports facilities. Farmington Hills recently completed the acquisition of the Spicer property, which is west of Farmington Road and north of 10 Mile Road.

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