Hills council wants discussion about group home placement

By Joanne Maliazewski ataff writor

The latest controversy over a proposed group home for mentally retarded adults has come and gone, but of members informally agreed Mon-

Suit over planned home ended

said. "There's no live-in person who is responsible," she said. "I feel the resi-dents or patients deserve some continu-ity to their care."

lty to their care."

Clark acknowledges that group homes do not have live-in supervision. But staff is in the house at all times day

homes do not have live-in supervision. But staff is in the house at all times day and night, he said.

"The staff comes in on a shift basis," Clark said. "We have actually found over the years that there is more consistency. Even with a live-in who has hours off, they never get away. There's Corber also questions the training of the direct care staff. Most, she maintained, are low-wage earners, have a minimum amount of training for the job and, as a result, are not as dedicated to their work as they should be when working with mentally retarded adults.

"EVERY WEEK, I see ads for direct care givers (group home employees). I feel it means there's a high turnover, she said.

"I think it takes highly skilled people to work with profoundly mentally retarded people," Gerber adults earded people," Gerber adult earded eded to enter direct care work make a tradeof between their interest in such work and

high pay. That doesn't mean these employees have little interest in group home clients, he said.
Clark equates the job with that of being a parent. Parents have little training when their children come along. But the most important qualifications for the job are "caring and patience" he said.

tience," he said.
Direct care employees must be at least 18 years of age and of good moral character, Clark said. The employees are trained before being placed in a group home, he added.

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CLARK ALSO disagreed with
Gerber's remarks that most direct care
workers are quite young and lack
heavy training.

Studies have been conducted, Clark
said, that indicate the average age of
the direct care worker is 22, most have
some amount of college education,
many are taking college classes while
working and many have advanced college degrees.

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"The quality of the staff overail I think is exceptional," Clark said, adding many are promoted to bouse managers and some become development specialists for MORC.

In conjunction with what she feels is inadequate training, Gerber said she is

concerned that direct care workers dispense medication to group home residents. "We question whether this is appropriate," Gerber said.
Direct care workers, Clark said, are trained in "medical-type issues" as well as dispensing medication.

"THE NUMBER of folks we serve have no more of an unusual need for medication than you or I." Clark said. "We make a concerted effort to min-imize any medication. Every pill is ac-counted for and recorded. Everyone with minimal training can dispense pills. We're not talking about folks giv-ing injections."

neons, participant, participant, participant, participant, or build a group home in the Briar Hill subdivision.

"MORC (Macomb Oakland Regional Center) is going to be proceeding. If the city wants a committee, they should be proceeding now," said City Attorney Paul Bibeau.

MORC is a Clinton Township-based agency of the state Department of Mental Health. The agency sponsors and monitors group homes.

A committee could also draw up guidelines for group bomes in the city although MORC would not be forced to follow them, Bibeau said.

Bibeau's suggestion came after he reported to council that the Briar Hill residents withdrew their lawsuit to prevent construction of a group home on Old Bedford.

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cooperation from group home proponents against the first attempt to built a group home in the Briar Hill subdivision.

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"There's nothing wrong with a community and the ventor of the council that the Briar Hill residents withdrew their lawsuit. City officials declined the city council in early September to join their lawsuit. City officials declended the city council in early September to join their lawsuit. City officials declended the city council members wanted to deal with concerns, Council-Man the officials declined the city council members remained disgrunted when consolitate the Briar Hill residents withdrew their lawsuit to work the complaint of the consolitation of the state of the council that offer. But they questioned whether the state Department of Mental Health or state Department of Menta

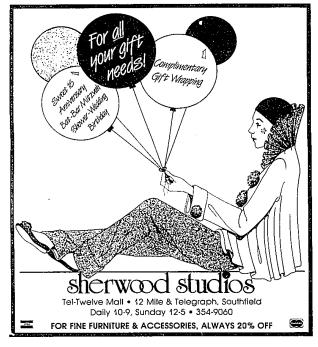














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