

Massage regulations adopted by Hills council

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solutions provide certification exams only on a scheduled basis.

"These people will be unable to work until they can pass the tests and get certified," Dudley said.

ASSOCIATION officials Monday assured council they would make exceptions and offer certification tests before scheduled dates for those professional massage therapists who wished to become certified through either organization.

Professional massage therapists who do not wish to become certified members of the state associations are not forced to belong. But the owners of the businesses where the therapists work will be forced to comply with the new ordinance, Bibeau told council.

The decision to propose an ordinance stemmed from the Farmington Hills Police Department's initial investigation into complaints about illegal health spas providing alleged sexual activity, Dwyer said.

Seventeen people — 16 women and one man — were charged with providing alleged illegal sexual activity following police raids Oct. 7-8 at five oriental health spas in Farmington Hills.

Three of the arrested women pleaded no contest to reduced charges — one to engaging in an immoral or illicit occupation, the other two to loitering. The three women, who worked at the Keiko Oriental Health Spa on Nine Mile, each received one year of probation and a \$500 fine. Trials are pending for the remaining 13 women and one man.

The need for a local ordinance, Dwyer said, stems from the fact that because of funding cuts, the state is no longer licensing or regulating the massage business. The state is also not preventing anyone from entering the profession, according to Judith Dennis, administrative secretary for the state Board of Massage.

THOUGH MOST who commented about the proposed ordinance at Monday's meeting supported the measure, each had their own particular com-

plaint about various complaints.

Most appeared satisfied — except for Marks — with deleting the opposite sex prohibition. But other complaints stemmed from provisions that prohibited providing massages in private, closed rooms.

"No massage shall be performed in a massage parlor or a massage school in a private room which is completely closed to the view of other persons, however, reasonable measures may be used to offer privacy to patrons such as partitions, stalls, curtains and the like," according to the revised provision.

Despite the change in the provision allowing some measure to ensure privacy, complaints still surfaced.

"If the door will not be there, I don't know how a person can relax and enjoy the massage," said Tamara Friedman, owner of Tamara's Institute de Beauté, stressing the need for privacy and quiet during a massage.

Dudley also disagreed with the private room prohibition.

"I cannot see any purpose to this section as written," she said, adding that the provision should be changed to simply read that the door on a private room cannot be locked.

Although Dudley received support from Councilwoman Jan Dolan in her attempts to change some of the provisions — the question of moral integrity and mental health of a massage licensee applied in particular — her efforts failed.

DUDLEY CRITICIZED the provision that allows for the chief of police to deny a license application "if the character, reputation, moral integrity, or

physical or mental condition of the applicant or his employee is found to be inimical to the public health, safety, morals or general welfare."

"I think this is extremely dangerous to include," Dudley said. "The best way to enforce a law is to write one that will stand up in court."

Dudley unsuccessfully requested that the moral integrity phrase be changed

to criminal record and that the mental health phrase be deleted altogether.

"I would urge us to change those terms," she added.

After some of the professional masseuses and masseurs expressed their concern about some of the provisions, a resident urged council to enact the ordinance for the sake of residents near the oriental health spas that police

raided in October.

"I would like to remind you that the citizens of this community would like an ordinance passed," said Sharon Chilson, president of the Citizens for a Decent Community. The grass-roots organization formed in opposition to alleged illegal sexual activity at health spas in Farmington Hills. The group organized shortly after the October po-

lice raids.

Chilson called on council to "reemphasize," instead of business owners, Councilwoman Jody Sorensen later echoed similar sentiments.

"I think we have tried to bend over backwards to accommodate the legitimate businesses in town. But I don't want to lose sight of the reason for the ordinance."

Overview of Hills massage regulations

Under the Farmington Hills massage regulation ordinance, business that provide body massages will be required to comply with provisions beginning March 10.

But the ordinance lists types of business that will be exempt from compliance. The businesses or professions include registered nurses, athletic team trainers, licensed barbers and beauticians, medical and osteopathic physicians, as well as psychologists, psychiatrists, clergymen, family counselors and clinical social workers.

Skin care salons, spas and beauty institutes will also be exempt if the massage therapists are certified members of the American Massage and Therapy Association and International Myomassethes Federation (Michigan State Association of Myomassethologists).

For those businesses and employees who provide massages and do not fall under the exempt categories, the ordinance requires — in addition to a business license — an operating permit.

Farmington Hills City Council Mon-

day also adopted a schedule of fees for the operating license for the business and employees. Inspection fees will also be charged.

THE ANNUAL license fee for a business is \$100 and \$25 for each massage therapist. The application inspection fee is \$250 for a business and \$50 for an individual applicant.

The permit application would be forwarded to the police to investigate the applicant. The city's building, planning and fire departments would inspect the applicant business premises. The premises also would be inspected by an officer of the Oakland County Department of Health.

An operating license is issued for only one year. When seeking a license renewal, the applicant will be required — as in the original application — to provide a signed affidavit from a physician stating the applicant is free of any contagious or communicable disease. Individual employees seeking a license renewal would have to do the same.

The ordinance also addresses the physical amenities of the business where massages will be provided. Massages cannot be provided in a private room although measures can be taken to insure privacy. The ordinance also addresses the need for adequate bathing, dressing, locker and toilet facilities, as well as showers. The business must also provide each patron with

clean and sanitary towels.

The ordinance also requires that the massage therapist dress in apparel that covers the body from the neck to just below the hips.

Violation of the proposed ordinance is a misdemeanor that upon conviction carries a penalty of up to a \$500 fine and 90 days imprisonment.

Farmington awards tree-trimming bids

Approximately 192 trees in the Farmington Meadows and Tall Oaks subdivisions in Farmington are scheduled for trimming this year. The subdivisions are located from Nine Mile south to Flanders.

The Farmington City Council awarded bids Monday for the work to K.J.

Tree and Spray Service of Livonia at \$26.00 per tree, for a total of \$5,002. The Livonia company was the low bidder of four. Bids ranged from \$26 to \$55.15 per tree.

In the future, trees south of Flanders to Eight Mile will be trimmed, city officials said.

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