

# Mobile-home tenants issue list of demands

By Joanna Maliszewski  
Staff writer

Oakland Hills Mobile Home Park residents — concerned about their future in light of a recent rezoning request — are threatening to picket if the park's owner refuses to meet with them and discuss a list of demands.

"They won't negotiate with us as a group. They want to talk to these people one-by-one," said Masha Silver, a former Oakland Hills resident who has helped residents form the new Oakland Hills Mobile Home Tenants Coalition.

Coalition members recently elected a committee charged with bargaining for certain demands with park owner Richard Partrich and legal representatives David Levine and Larry Swistak. Committee leaders were unavailable for comment.

"We are going to picket the house or business of Mr. Partrich if they (he and his attorneys) do not meet with us," said Silver, speaking for the coalition.

Controversy between tenants and management came to light earlier this year when rezoning was requested of four adjacent lots, including the mobile home park at 25720 Orchard Lake.

SWISTAK CONFIRMED that he plans to discuss concerns with individual tenants rather than with the coalition's bargaining committee.

"We have sent out a letter today to all residents if they want to discuss the possible rezoning they can come into our offices and talk," he said last Friday.

Because some of the tenants rent the mobile homes while others own them, concerns will be addressed on an individual basis rather than with a bargaining committee. Partrich and his legal representatives "are not willing" to talk with Silver because she is a former resident, he said.

"We contacted a number of tenants individually and they said they were not aware she (Silver) was their spokesperson," Swistak said.

The tenants said they preferred meeting individually to discuss their concerns, he added.

According to one of the bargaining committee's leaders, Silver said late Friday, tenants have agreed to remain unified and press for their demands as a group, rather than as individual tenants.

dividual tenants.

"They are trying to divide and conquer," Silver said, referring to the letters that were hand-delivered to tenants Friday morning.

THE GROWING dispute between tenants and park management was made public in March when Silver asked the Farmington Hills City Council for help in ensuring that tenants are informed of any rezoning requests that would affect them.

Despite the controversy, the Farmington Hills Planning Commission on March 20 recommended denial of the request to rezone 20 acres on the east side of Orchard Lake, south of 11 Mile, from single-family residential (RA-1) to medium-density, multifamily (RC-2).

Rezoning proponent Melvin Kattan, who would purchase the acreage (from Spencer) Partrich and Shapiro (if rezoning is approved), is proposing the construction of apartments.

Planning commissioners, however, recommended denial because the rezoning does not conform to the city's recently updated master zoning plan for Orchard Lake Road, between I-696 and 10 Mile, Farmington Hills Planner Ed Gardiner said. Kattan's request will be considered by the Farmington Hills City Council at 7:30 p.m. tonight in council chambers, 31555 11 Mile.

In March when Silver asked council members for help, Silver charged that park management was not informing tenants of possible relocation if rezoning was approved. She also charged that current tenants were being encouraged to buy the mobile homes, while new tenants were being taken into the park.

SWISTAK DENIED Silver's charges. "I am not aware of any new tenants coming into the park," he added. As far as park records are concerned, the newest tenants moved into the park five-to-six months ago — at least one-to-two months before rezoning was requested in January, Swistak said.

Yet Silver maintains that two mobile homes were sold in January following the rezoning request and two other homes moved into the park.

If rezoning is approved, tenants will be forced to relocate. By selling as many of the mobile homes as possible, Silver charged, Partrich won't be faced with the expense of moving

— at least the rented units — himself.

Moving a mobile home and setting it up elsewhere costs about \$1,000. "These are people who cannot afford it," Silver said.

Partrich would be willing to help tenants, to some extent, with the cost of moving the mobile homes, Swistak said Friday. But the matter will be handled on an individual basis, not on a group basis, he said.

"They (tenants) can't relocate. Many of the homes cannot be attached to a trailer," Silver said, referring to the age of many of the units.

THOSE TENANTS whose mobile homes are in good enough condition to move will be faced with yet another problem, Silver said. "There's no place for them to move it. It's cheaper to leave the home than to move it."

The majority of mobile home parks have size and age restrictions (on the mobile homes). Some of the parks also won't take private owners, Silver said.

As the result of research conducted by an Oakland Hills park resident, only two parks are available for Oakland Hills tenants. One of the parks, which is in Webberville, near Lansing, has no age or size restrictions. The other park in Plymouth has size restrictions, Silver said.

The mobile home park coalition's list of demands address tenants' relocation concerns, with a request that the park owner pay the costs of moving, and buy back any mobile homes purchased after Aug. 1, 1985.

"If relocation is not feasible the residents demand that the park owners buy the mobile home at a mutually agreeable amount, according to the list of demands."

TENANTS ARE also demanding a one-year lease "that is jointly agreed upon and that takes into consideration the owners' desire to rezone and remove all park residents." The demand also includes that tenants have the right to break the lease and move with 30 days notice.

Currently, the park does not provide leases, Silver charged. "If they (tenants) want a lease, they can't come into the park. There is absolutely no choice of a lease," she said.

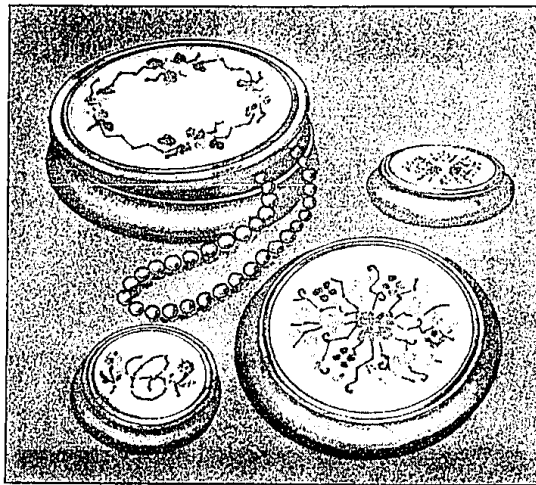
Despite concern among the tenants, they recognize that the park owner has the right to do what he

wants with his property, Silver said. Nonetheless, tenants also have the right to be informed of what is happening, she said.

While the dispute continues, how-

ever, Silver is working to ensure that tenants' rights are protected. Although many tenants own their mobile homes, they are considered renters because they lease the lot on which the home sits.

"We have all the headaches and responsibilities of homeowners, but none of the privileges. There is absolutely no protection," Silver said.



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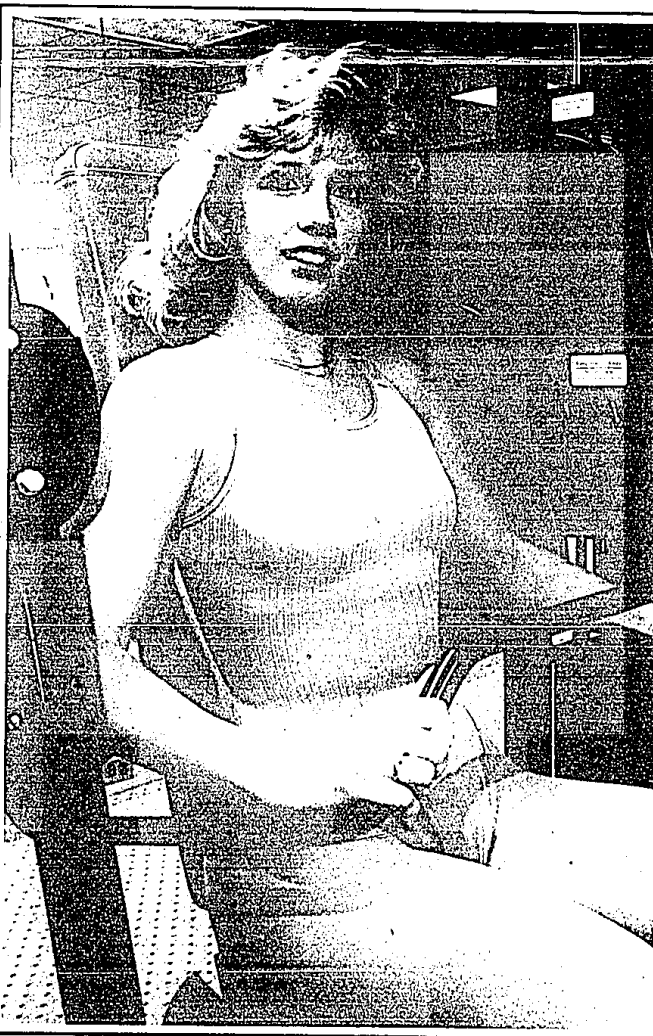
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