

Acreage not appropriate for park — Hills

By Joanne Mallisowski
staff writer

Farmington Hills officials don't want two lots offered by a developer — planning to renovate an old elementary school into senior housing — for use as a neighborhood park.

"They are not appropriate parcels of land for a neighborhood park," Director of Public Services Thomas Bissell said.

Instead, city officials Monday suggested that developer Jeff White use two lots south of the Clarenceville School District's old Westbrook Elementary on Osamus as outdoor recreational use for the proposed senior housing units.

"Combining the adjoining lots that are on the south side of the existing building (school) will not provide for a beneficial neighborhood park site. The two lots simply do not provide

significant area for that purpose," Director of Special Services Douglas Gaynor said in a memo to council.

In a 5-1 vote, Farmington Hills City Council also enacted an amendment to rezone Westbrook, from single-family residential (RA-3) to elderly housing district (RCE). Councilman Dennis Wolf was absent. Councilman Ben Marks opposed the rezoning.

"I JUST think it's the wrong use for this property," Marks said, adding the school property should be used for single-family houses.

The vacant school is on an eight-acre parcel east of Osamus, between Salvador and Junction. But rezoning includes only the school and a small portion of land surrounding the building.

White offered the two lots south of the school to the city for use as a park to assure concerned neighbors that he would not expand his project. A third lot, north of the school is expected to be sold for single-family use.

Despite the zoning amendment's enactment, White must still request a variance from the Farmington Hills Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) because the project does not have access to a major or secondary thoroughfare, as required in the RCE zone.

In April, Councilwoman Jan Dolan suggested creating more direct access to the old school by opening up Salvador — a portion of which is a road only on paper — as an east-west route connecting with Robinson, west of Osamus. By connecting to Robinson, traffic would have a more direct route to Eight Mile.

CITY ENGINEER James Cubera prepared a report showing that reconstruction of the existing portion of Salvador, construction of an extension and required drainage would cost an estimated \$92,000.

City Manager William Costick asked White if he would be willing to pay \$40,000 for drainage and paving. "At another point in time," White responded, adding he wanted to use his available dollars for the senior housing project.

Costick, however, reminded White that with any development, work is required on utilities and other improvements. Costick also confirmed that White's share could be paid through a special assessment district over a 10-year period.

But council members were reluctant to financially commit the city, or residents to a road project. "I won't stick people with road costs just to have access to the school," Mayor Joe Alkateeb said.

Council later asked city staff to make a recommendation to the BZA regarding the roads near the school.

Following the zoning amendment's enactment, council also adopted a resolution asking the BZA to consider the two lots south of the school as an open space for the senior housing project.

Science change is OK'd

An additional year of science will be added to Farmington High schools' curriculum beginning this fall.

The Farmington school board voted unanimously Tuesday, May 6, to require a total of two years of science in each of the three high schools, beginning this fall with

ninth and 10th graders and eventually including all students.

This maintains the 21 needed credits for graduation, but adds one requirement.

Trustees said they wanted the addition to be one of quality.

"I want them to develop an appropriate science program — not just

dump work," board Vice President Helen Pritow said. About 50 percent of Farmington students take less than two years of science at the high school level, according to reports.

"We have to be very careful and very creative," Pritow added.

The purpose for the change is to "mandate that all students develop real life, decision-making skills about global issues, according to a general statement of purpose developed by a recommending committee.

The mandatory two years also calls for "preparation for today's society where yesterday's truths are constantly being exposed as today's myths."

Interim Superintendent Graham Lewis said the administration would offer a progress report to the board in one year about the science curriculum change.

State appointment made

Gov. Blanchard appointed Dr. Max McKinney, a general practitioner in Farmington Hills and a staff physician at Botsford General Hospital, to the Michigan Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery.

The board is in the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulation.

In 1983, McKinney was elected

president of the professional staff at Botsford General Hospital. He is a member of the board of trustees at the College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery in Des Moines, Iowa.

McKinney will serve a four-year term on the board, which licenses new physicians and approves the licensing of physicians who transfer into Michigan.

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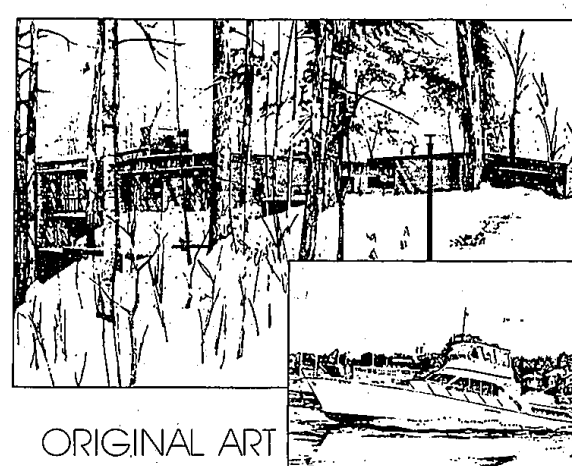


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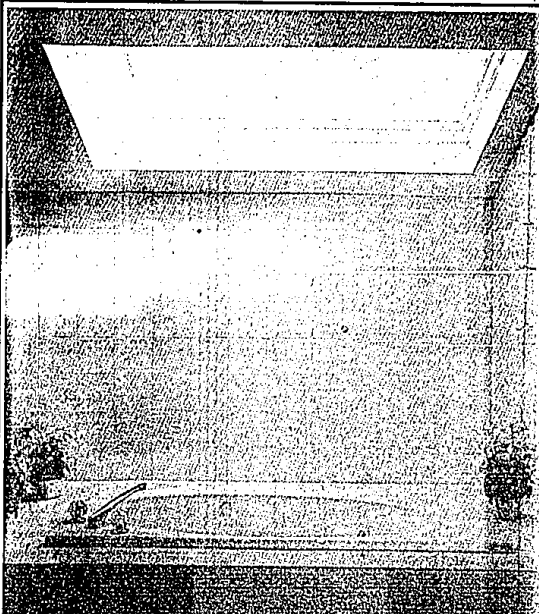


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