New open space policy suggested

Continued from Page 1

'This is going to be a money hardship in a sense. But I see it as another way to merchandise a subdivision, 'Marks sald.

In the past, the city has accommodated developers and their arguments for eddaying completion of open spaces, Marks sald.

"Ilmes have changed. The sophistication of the buyer has changed they deserve what they're buying,' he added.

At their meeting in late May, plan-ng commissioners — after receiv-

Ing comments from builders and developers — recommended that the city council sony changing the current open space policy.

... In light of the input given us by three builders/developers active in the community and in light of the discussion from the members of the planning commission, the proposed changes reflect a policy which may be too sever for the enforcement of the completion of open spaces," according to planning commissioners

IN THEIR motion, planning com-

missioners also said that recommended denial "Is due to recent changes that already have been made and the relative untested position of the current polley."

Concerns about the new polley voiced by builders at a planning commissioners' meeting included the Impracticality of putting in an open space when few homeowners are living in the subdivision.

Builders also complained that such a policy would penalize all builders and developers for the wrongdoing of a few, and financial builders and developers who will pass costs on to buyers.

Other builders suggested that when developers' open space plans are approved, a time schedule for completion of certain Items should be determined. Builders also suggested that completion dates for the open spaces should be presented to potential buyers.

Open space is an option qualiable to subdivision developers. By providing planning commission-approved, open-space-park areas in a subdivision, a developer can reduce the size of Individual lots.

THE CITY'S current policy calls for completion of open spaces in proportion to the amount of the neighborhood that's completed. For example, if 50 percent of the neighborhood is built, then 50 percent of the open space should be completed. But the policy also requires com-

pletion of open spaces five years after the start of the neighborhood, regardless of the number of homes built.

To ensure developers make good on open space areas, developers are required to put the amount of money it will take to complete the park areas in a letter of credit or escrow when developers do not complete open spaces by a required deadline, city officials can withhold building permits and enter of credit to complete open spaces when developers do not complete open spaces.

Despite the city poiler and efforts — beginning last delle to the city officials had to the complete shad to the complete shad to the casuring that developers and trouble ensuring that developers complete the open spaces.

Because of the slump in the builting industry in the late 1970s and early 1980s, "it was very common for us to give (developers) a two-year extension with the understanding that it (open space) would be completed after the recession."

Last fall, Richard Lampi, the city scommunity development manager, identified 32 subdivisions with incomplete open spaces. At that time, city officials set Oct. 10 as a deadline for open space completion. All but eight of the 32 were completed.

A JUNE 1 deadline was set for the eight remaining subdivisions, White work is progressing on these open spaces, building permits have been



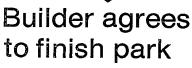
'Times have changed. The cophistication of the buyer has changed. They know what they're buying. And they deserve what they're buying."

Ben Marks, Hills councilman

withheld, pending open space com-pletion. The city has also received money in escrow accounts and cashed in letters of credit for com-pletion of the open spaces, Lampi sald.

with developers or banks involved with the remaining eight open spac-

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with the remaining eight open spacevictory.



By Joanne Maliszewski stall writer

It took some debating and negoti-ating. But finally after a five-year wait, the open space in Meadowbrook Park subdivision will

wait, the open space in Meadowbrook Park subdivision will be completed.

With Farmington Hills City Council's 7-0 approval last week, area builder Tony DeFrederico has agreed to complete the subdivision's open space within 45 days. Meadowbrook Park is one of eight subdivisions where the open space completion has run past a city council-established June I deadline.

The builder's offer to complete the open space came almost two weeks ago when DeFrederico complained to the council that the city was withholding building permits on 15 of his projects in Meadowbrook Park.

The permits were withheld — according to city policy — because the subdivision's developer (which is Standard Federal Savigas in Troy for the Trinity Land Development Co.) failed to complete the open space.

"I have nothing to do with the

space.
"I have nothing to do with the park. I'm not the bank, I'm the builder," DeFrederico told council in early June. "You guys are penalizing me. Not the bank. Not the developer."

me. Not the bank. Not the developer."

UNDER THE agreement with a
developer — the city will release
Defrederics' building permits. He.
Inturn, will complete the open space
within 45 days. If he fails to complete the work within the designated
time, the city will stop work.

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will have to sign simulating permits
will be stopen.

Under city policy, city efficials
take money in escrow or cash letters
of credit that consist of the amount
of money needed to complete an
open space. This has been done in all
eight of the open spaces that were
not completed by a June 1 deadline.
In taking serrow money, however,
the city is then faced with ensuring
that the open space is completed.
The money can be turned over to the
subdivision association, or the city
can contract to have the work done.
Because DeFrederico already has
contacts with landscapers and other
contractors, city manager William
Costick said the open space would be
completed in a more timely fashion
than if the city attempted to find a
centractor to complete the work.

MEADOWBROOK PAKKS Homeowners Association supported De-Frederico doing the job.

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Meadowbrook Park's open space in-cludes walkway repair, regrading, playground equipment installation and weed cutting. Meanwhite work is either almost heanwhite, work is either almost completed or still in progress in the remaining seven subdivision open spaces — Barbizon (Pines of Farm-ligton), Farmington Brook, Country Ridge No. 1. Farmington Green North No. 12, and 3, Hunters Pointe and Irv Wilcove (Foxmoore subdivi-sion).

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