

Building permit ban dropped

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Holds on building permits in two Farmington Hills subdivisions were lifted July 14 by the city council.

Cases for two builders — one at Hunters Pointe and the other at Farmington Brook — were discussed at length before the decision was made to release all pending permits.

Permits continue to be withheld in four Hills neighborhoods because developers have not yet completed the open spaces, according to city officials. The city is requiring that these open spaces be completed before building can continue.

At Farmington Brook, where the developer was given notice more than one year ago, the city will spend the developer's escrow deposit and finish the open space, which still needs an estimated \$11,000 in work.

At Hunters Pointe, the city will lift the building permit ban, contingent on receipt of an agreement that the open space work, estimated

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— Jan Dolan
Hills councilwoman

at \$7,000, be completed by August 12.

Hills builder James Compo, who has a prospective out-of-town buyer for his single lot in Farmington Brook, presented his case to the council in person, while Artie Leo's case was presented by Councilwoman Joan Dudley.

Leo is a builder in the Hunters Pointe subdivision and is also contracted through Standard Federal Savings of Troy to complete the open space area in that neighborhood.

THERE ARE five vacant lots in Farmington Brook, according to city officials and several hundred waiting to be developed in Hunters Pointe.

The permit ban was approved in the hopes that local builders would put pressure on developers to finish the open spaces in older, established subdivisions.

Dudley said "it's working." But Mayor Joe Alkateeb said the policy "borders on being immoral and unethical," and said he has received numerous calls from local builders complaining about the situation.

"I have a concern holding up these individual lot owners because we have the money in hand," Councilwoman Janet Dolan said. "I have concerns about creating real hardships."

The city received escrow money, but also cashed in letters of credit

given by developers, officials said.

Councilman Ben Marks, who in November requested a new policy to ban permits until open spaces are completed, said he "would have no problem giving him permission to pick up his permit."

"We're responsible — we have the money," Councilman Donn Wolf added.

CITY ATTORNEY Paul Bibeau advised the council to continue using the escrow money as leverage. "The city is not in the business of developing parks," he said. "We're under no obligation to do that."

Farmington Hills builders turned out at a May 29 planning commission meeting to protest the proposed policy requiring builders to complete neighborhood open spaces before the fifth building permit is issued.

Their concerns included the impracticality of putting in an open space when few homeowners are living in the subdivision. They also said such a policy would punish all builders and developers for the wrongdoings of a few, causing financial hardships that would be passed along to buyers.

Planning commissioners recommended the council not change the current open space policy, calling the proposed one "too severe."

City officials decided to crack down on developers last fall, when 32 subdivisions with incomplete open spaces were identified. All but eight were completed by an established Oct. 16 deadline. A June 1 deadline was set for the remaining projects, some of which have not yet been completed.

In late June, developer Tony De-Federico agreed to complete the open space at Meadowbrook Park within 45 days, after he discovered the city was withholding building permits on 15 of his projects in the neighborhood.

The city's current policy calls for completion of open spaces in proportion to the amount of the neighborhood that's completed, requiring completion by five years after the start of the building process.



RANDY BORS/Staff photographer

Festival craftsman

Potter Bill Cloutier shows his artistic skills during last week's Founders Festival in downtown Farmington. The Ferndale resident was at Michele & Marc's Flowers and Gifts.

His Holiness visits Hills

Continued from Page 1

prever. Following his Hills visit, he travelled to Toronto, Ont., Canada.

During his month-long visit to North America, he will visit other areas of the U.S. including parts of

Florida, Los Angeles and San Francisco, said his associates.

BESIDES THE U.S. the Bohra religion has other centers in Malagasy, India, Dubai, Pakistan, Cairo, East Africa and throughout Europe.

Legal contract approved

Attorney Paul Bibeau was retained for another year as Farmington Hills city attorney by a unanimous vote of the city council July 14.

He is a partner with the law firm of Brennan, Bibeau and Poehlman of Farmington Hills.

The new retainer arrangement calls for payment of \$4,700 per month, an increase of \$200 over last year's contract, with additional hourly rates of \$80 per hour for

counsel from the legal firm's principals and \$65 per hour for the firm's associates. This represents a \$5 per hour increase in both categories.

The retainer covers the handling of the city's routine legal matters, including several administrative meetings per month. Bibeau is paid \$150 for meetings held after 6 p.m. with a cap of \$4,000 for the year.

The firm does not handle labor or bonding matters for the city.

"This is my main work — to visit and promote understanding with different types of people," the world traveler said, surrounded by followers at the home of Taher Raja in Farmington Hills, where he stayed during his visit. In 1985, Dr. Syedna visited Kenya, Tanzania, Egypt, Kuwait, Pakistan and Iraq.

Two sons, one residing in Cairo and the other in London, attended their father on this journey.

"In whichever country you stay, you must be faithful to the country where you decide to stay," His Holiness said. His religion lists followers to be good citizens.

HILLS MAYOR Joe Alkateeb visited the holy man, presenting him with a resolution, a seal of the city and a book about the city. "I bring you my friendship and love — and a blessing from our city," Alkateeb said.

The religious leader was garbed in white and seated on a brocade chair, with a pillow underfoot. Holding his holy beads, he toasted the Hills mayor and visitors with a mixture of milk and coffee.

Considered a small sect of the Muslim religion, the Dawoodi Bohra heritage is based on the teachings of the Fatemi Imams 885 years ago, a Fatemi Imam founded Cairo, Egypt in 969 A.D.

Dr. Syedna was raised and instructed in the Fatimi philosophy of literature and art in his youth, enjoyed horseback riding and hunting. He followed his father as leader of the sect and is the religion's 52nd Imam in the Fatimi tradition.

He was born March 6, 1915 at Surat, near Bombay.

"Although the Dawoodi Bohra community is a small community, their sense of discipline and orderliness, their charitable disposition, their regard of law and order together have won them the people's highest esteem," according to a speech by Col. T.A.M. Simba, regional commissioner of Tange, Tanzania.

Test parking ban OK'd

Following complaints from residents, the Farmington Hills City Council discussed the parking situation along Danvers Drive in Wood Creek Hills — a situation that one resident called "very dangerous."

As a test, council members voted to prohibit parking only along the west side of Danvers from 12 Mile to the creek crossing. The administrative recommendation to prohibit parking completely along the street was changed after area residents spoke before the council July 14.

"It feels very restricted," a resident said about the proposed total parking ban. One problem noted was the sloppy parking of local lawn maintenance companies' employees.

who park their vehicles alongside the road.

"Danvers Drive exists as a 25-foot-wide asphalt pavement, with some curb and no shoulder area," a city report said. "The winding and rolling alignment of Danvers Drive combined with the narrow pavement width, do create a safety hazard when vehicles are parking along the road edge."

"The movement of fire equipment, roadway maintenance equipment and school buses, as well as passenger vehicles, are restricted if vehicles are parked along one side and prevented if vehicles are parked along both sides."

Signs posted for safety

The city of Farmington Hills approved a yield sign for the intersection of Chesapeake Road and Livingston Circle, requiring Chesapeake traffic to yield to circle traffic.

A stop sign will also be placed at Chesapeake Road and Ranchwood, requiring Ranchwood and Chesapeake traffic to stop.

The measures, which were approved July 14, were brought to council after city engineers made the recommendation. The engineering study was prompted by a resident request.

An additional speed study showed a "large percentage of Chesapeake Road traffic is driving at an excessive rate of speed," according to the administrative report to council.

Funding pact approved

The city of Farmington approved a contract with Oakland County July 7 for the allocation of 1986-87 Commercial Assistance Program money.

The county awarded a total of \$47,872 to Farmington for the CAP program on June 12, which is funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant program.

The CAP program offers loan subsidies for local business owners, giving them a net loan of about 6 1/2 percent — or 6 percent below the current prime rate.

Farmington's allocation could generate about \$250,000 of rehabilitation construction, according to city estimates. There are currently three property business owners considering using the loan subsidy program in Farmington.

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