

# Hills eyes tougher open space policy

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Adoption of the Farmington Hills City Council's relatively new policy on subdivision open space completion will be delayed until November. At the request of area developers and homeowner association representatives, council members voted 8-1 Monday to adjourn planned introduction of a new open space ordinance until Nov. 10. Councilwoman

Joan Dudley opposed adjournment. "There were a couple of developers and a representative of a homeowners group there," Community Development Richard Lampi said. "They want a chance to look at it." When council adopted a long-awaited, tougher new policy regulating open space completion in August, city administrators contacted building industry officials for reaction and opinions. Though city staff received a few calls, "they didn't

formally" respond, Lampi said. Except for a few minor word changes, the proposed open space ordinance is similar to the policy council adopted a couple of months ago, Lampi said. DUDLEY HAD originally requested that the policy be made into ordinance to carry "the force of law." The policy and proposed ordinance represent a crackdown on developers and their completion of open

spaces in new neighborhoods. The policy requires developers to complete open spaces before the fifth building permit is issued. "A permit for no more than four units or one building, in the case of multiple dwelling structures, will be issued until all open space improvements are complete and approved by the city," according to the proposed ordinance. Under the proposed ordinance,

open spaces would be treated as any other subdivision improvements, such as water and sewer lines, which are required in the subdivision platting process. The proposed ordinance would require the city to collect an amount of money in escrow "to ensure completion and conformance to the approved open space plans." The proposed regulations would require escrow deposits to not only ensure open space completion but to "continuously maintained and that all plantings including grass areas will be cared for in a healthy, growing condition."

IF AN open space does not meet the approved plan, the developer would be given 30 days to complete improvements. If work is not completed, within the time period, building permits would be withheld, according to the proposed ordinance. The new policy and proposed ordinance is a response to problems and controversy in the past year over incomplete neighborhood open spaces. Tired of continuing problems with open space completion, Councilman Ben Marks almost a year ago asked city staff to develop a tougher policy for the city's few remaining new subdivisions. The city's former policy — under which developers received numerous extensions in the past year — called for completion of open spaces in proportion to the amount of the neighborhood that's completed. Like the new policy and proposed ordinance, the former policy required developers to put the amount of money it would take to complete the parks areas in a letter of credit or escrow account. When developers did not complete open spaces by a required deadline, city officials in some cases withheld building permits and took money in escrow to complete the parks.

## Police seek link in robberies

By Marie Chesney  
staff writer

The gunman who held up a Laurel Park restaurant Monday might be the same gunman responsible for two recent holdups of local restaurants in the chain.

A description of the gunman who held up Bill Knapp's Restaurant, 16995 S. Laurel Park Drive, at 11 p.m. is similar to the description

given of the gunman who robbed the same restaurant Aug. 1 and the man who held up a Bill Knapp's Restaurant, 27925 Orchard Lake Road, in Farmington Hills on July 31. Neither robbery has yet been solved. "It's too early to tell, but it might be the same person," said Livonia Police Lt. Bobby Duren. In the two earlier holdups, police believed the gunman might have been wearing makeup and a wig to change his appearance.

Police described the gunman, who robbed Bill Knapp's Monday of \$300, as white, about 25 years old, 5 foot 10 to 6 foot, and 165 pounds. He had dirty blond, frizzy hair and was clean shaven. He had a scar on his right cheek.

That description is similar to the physical description given of the robber in the two earlier crimes. The one main difference was in the robber's facial and hair descriptions.

THE FARMINGTON Hills gunman had dark brown, feathered hair and was "nice looking."

The gunman in the first Livonia holdup had "greasy, black hair combed back" and "large open sores on his face that could have been makeup," an "untidy appearance" and "waddled when he walked."

Police said the robber entered the outer doors of Bill Knapp's Monday after it had closed. He knocked on the inner doors, produced a gun and demanded money when an employee opened the door to tell him the restaurant was closed.

Police said the gunman told the employee not to scream and threatened to "blow her head off" if she did.

After getting money, police said the gunman pushed the employee against the wall and put the gun to her back.

He put the money in a cloth bag and fled.

In the two past holdups, the robber pulled a gray handgun, handed over a white bag and told the cashier to fill it with money.

## Loose wheel injures boy

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

A 14-year-old boy walking on the shoulder of Farmington Road was seriously injured Monday morning when a rear wheel came loose from a passing car, crossed the roadway and struck him in the chest. The hubcap struck him in the face.

Following surgery Monday, Matthew Gregory was listed in stable condition in the intensive care unit at Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills. "It was one of those unfortunate, freak accidents, where all the circumstances were exactly right," said Officer Don Fradette of the Farmington Hills Police Department Traffic Section. "If any of the

circumstances had been different, the tire never would have struck the boy."

The tire was traveling about 60 mph at the time of the 7:20 a.m. accident, Fradette said.

Just before the accident, Matthew and a 16-year-old friend on their way to North Farmington High School were looking at sparks shooting from the southbound car's dragging axle, which had dropped. "I don't think either one of the boys saw the rolling tire," Fradette said.

THE BOYS were headed north on the east shoulder of Farmington Road, north of Oak Point, at the time of the accident.

Although exactly what happened still hasn't been determined, Fradette theorizes "the lug bolts for some reason just backed off the hub." The 1983 Mazda RX-7 lost its left rear wheel.

"It's just unbelievable," said North Farmington High School Principal G. Donald Cowan. "How often does a car lose a wheel, let alone at a time when it runs across the street and hits a young man on the way to school?"

Fradette said he paid a visit to Matthew in the hospital. "He was awake and alert, and he seemed to be progressing quite well. But it will be a long road to recovery," Fradette said.

The driver, a 50-year-old Farmington Hills man, was interviewed by police and released pending further investigation, said Sgt. Ray Cranston, Traffic Section supervisor.

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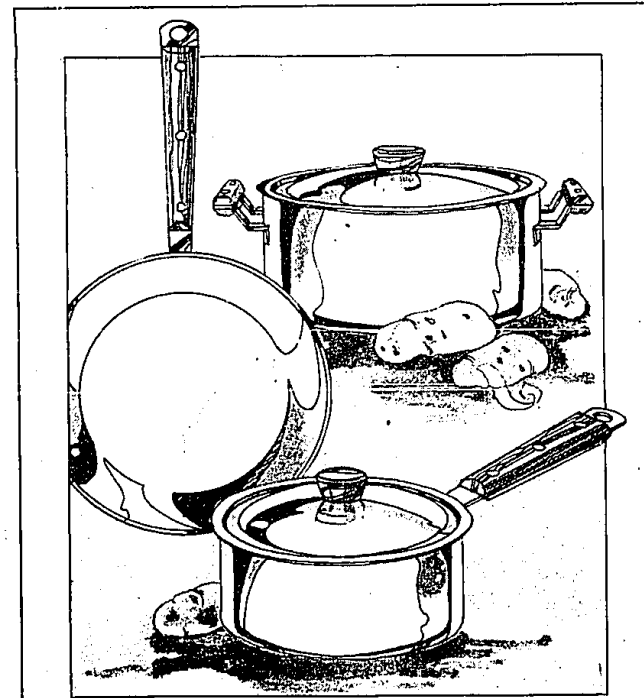
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