

Home child care issue continues

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"I've opened up a bag of worms here I didn't even know existed," she said. Because of existing local laws and lack of enforcement by the state, many women who babysit children are not licensed, causing an underground network, she said.

Another facet of the problem involves the parents who take their children to unlicensed child care homes and don't have any other option.

To receive a state license, an applicant goes through a three-hour orientation, provides references for the state, goes through a criminal and protective services check and must prove they have no communicable diseases," state officials said.

"People are sacrificing their children" in order to work, she said. "It's become a moral issue now. I am just beside myself."

Her newly formed group, Parents to Legalize In-Home Child Care, is



Darlene Feldman
child care provider

still organizing to address these issues. Feldman said she has received calls from parents, social workers and PTO organizers who want to get

involved.

An organizational meeting for the group is planned for later this month when a meeting place can be arranged, she said.

"WE'RE CRAWLING right now," she said about the group's progress. "We're trying to make people realize how extreme it (the problem) is."

Citing a parallel to the changes needed in child care regulations at the state level, Feldman is strongly considering going on a supervised "hunger strike" to make her point.

"If people can see the metamorphosis in myself, it would symbolize the extreme need" in the child care area, she said.

Between caring for children, Feldman's days are filled with radio talk shows and telephone conversations with concerned parents from around the area.

"They better watch out — this is not going to go away," she warns.

Feldman is one of 23 state-licensed home day care operators in the city and 955 in Oakland County who care for children in their homes, according to state and county child

care officials.

Besides tackling the statewide child care issue, Feldman still faces some neighborhood resistance to her proposed zoning ordinance changes. Going through the proper city channels could take until March, city officials said.

The city is allowing Feldman to babysit in her home until the issue is decided.

Under current city law, Feldman remains out of compliance in the following areas: requirements that a child care facility border on either a primary or secondary road, that the operator have at least one acre of land and that there be at least 5,000 square feet of play area.

Feldman's proposed ordinance change calls for "state certified quality home day care" as a permitted accessory use on a single family residential property and also asks that such use not be subject to special conditions.

Repairs eyed for museum

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"I know we don't have enough to do everything right now but we have to look down the road for what would be the easiest and best method of maintenance," he said.

The electrical work will be one of the most costly repairs in the history of the museum, which opened in 1982 after the family of Edessa Warner Slocum donated the mansion to the city after her death in 1980.

The estimated cost of the electrical work, according to 1985 figures, is \$14,500. Carvell added that the museum committee will ask for bids for the project once the money is sent to the city.

Carvell said the commission's long-range plans, which include fund drives and additional grant applications, will be to "preserve and expand" the museum.

An estimated 4,500 people visited the mansion last year and even more used the spacious grounds, Carvell said.

Users expected to share annual costs

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through any other compatible source, Lauboff said. The task force is trying to coordinate a complicated effort and save communities money by going through a central source.

All local communities are responsible — physically and financially — for installing computer hardware at the various answering points. Lauboff said now is the time to make the decision.

"They're free to go ahead," he said.

Michigan Bell Communications will "wait and see" who wants to use their equipment before moving ahead sometime in February.

Lauboff is expected to bring further information, including a recommendation for the city of Farmington with price estimates, before the city council in January.

THE E-9-1-1 is a computerized system that will replace local emergency phone numbers throughout the county by allowing Oakland County residents to dial "E-9-1-1" for both police and fire emergencies.

The system will have the ability to direct a call to the appropriate emergency department and will also give dispatchers information about the calling location through computer screen — the enhancement feature.

Farmington's public safety department has hired a part-time person just to handle the data preparation work necessary to locate each address to the Michigan Bell wire district, Lauboff said in a recent administrative report. Once compiled, the information will be fed into the Michigan Bell data base for use in the E-9-1-1 program, he said.

A 23-step timetable for the E-9-1-1 system — beginning with plan adoption and ending with bringing the system on line — is well under way. Identifying the street addresses is step seven in the process, he said.

All communities are physically and financially responsible for installing E-9-1-1 computer hardware.

department's telephone system will not interface with the E-9-1-1 system, Lauboff said. Separate lines and telephone instruments will be installed as part of Farmington's conversion to handle the emergency calls.

Other communities will also find areas they will need to address individually. According to Lauboff, "everything's different" in each community, making the countywide process a bit more difficult.

Both Farmington and Farmington Hills agreed to participate in the program one year ago. An estimated \$1 million of the annual financial responsibility will be shouldered by telephone users, due to state legislation passed earlier this year allowing 16-25 cents per month be charged as a "telephone emergency charge."



Farmington Director of Public Safety Frank Lauboff sits on a 10-member Oakland County committee charged with organizing and working out details for the proposed E-9-1-1 system.

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