

West Bloomfield

Tough amendment to loitering ordinance proposed

Teenage loiterers — Farmington Hills doesn't want them and neither does West Bloomfield.

Reacting to the much-publicized problems of loitering, rowdiness and vandalism reported in adjacent Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield Township is ready to adopt a tightened, toughened penal code ordinance.

Although a loitering ordinance has been on the books since 1974, the law lacked "teeth," West Bloomfield police officers complained.

Stronger language to amend the existing ordinance was proposed during a first reading at a township board meeting Jan. 19. The stricter policy is expected to be adopted after a second reading at the Monday, Feb. 2, board meeting.

The purpose of the amended ordinance is to prevent confrontations between youths like those experienced on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills, just south of the border between the two communities.

THE AMENDMENT to the West Bloomfield ordinance was prepared by attorneys of the firm Bibeau, Brennan and Poehlman, the same firm that represents Farmington Hills. The purpose of the amendment is to prohibit loitering in and about commercial establishments.

Previously the law was aimed at those loitering around police stations, county jails and court buildings by people attempting to sell their "legal" services.

"Farmington Hills has passed a similar ordinance and has considered it a big help," township Supervisor John Doherty said. "If it (youth problems) spills over to here we want to be ready for it."

LT. GREG ROBERTS of the West Bloomfield police said his officers have wanted a stricter ordinance for a long time.

"Prespanning didn't cover it. All we could do was ask them to move on. Now if they refuse to leave, we'll write them or arrest them."

While officers insist the problem with loitering youths in West Bloomfield does not approach the magnitude of that in neighboring Farmington Hills, they do say teens gathering outside the "Eleven convenience store in the Honor's shopping strip just north of the township hall have long been a problem.

A confrontation between two young men in front of the store in August 1985 resulted in the shooting death of one.

"With so many kids hanging around (the parking lot)," Roberts said, "it affects business. Customers are afraid to go there. Kids are drinking there. It's a regular route for our officers."

THE MANAGER of nearby Honor's Interiors, who would identify herself only as Joanne, said, "We really need something. Our customers complain of the vulgar language. There's a tremendous amount of littering . . . drug paraphernalia, beer and liquor bottles."

The problem occurs at lunch time and after school, she said, but especially at night and on the weekends.

"There aren't enough spots for our customers. We don't mind kids, but not in those large numbers," she said.

Occasionally, Roberts said, the parking lots of other commercial building sites such as the Americana West Theatre, West Bloomfield Lane and McDonald's, all on Orchard Lake Road, have been trouble spots, but those incidents are rare. The idea is to prevent problems before they start, he said.

"We don't want the situation to escalate as it did in Waterford and Farmington Hills."

Larry Slason, owner of West Bloomfield Lane, said problems

with young loiterers are non-existent in his low-key alley.

"There's no problem here. We don't tolerate it," he said.

ASKED WHERE kids would now go, Roberts shrugged. "Where did you go when you were a kid? Home?"

That question is being addressed by Sally Rubiner and Ann Beuerle,

both board members of Youth Assistance. The two are contacting other community groups in hopes of gathering support for a teen center for older teens to be implemented next year. A center for middle school youngsters began last year at Eady School.

Interest in a teen center for older teens began last year before Farm-

ington Hills' problems and before consideration of the loitering ordinance amendment, she said.

Rubiner and Beuerle are meeting with the Optimist Club, parks and recreation and high school administrators to get something established for teens.

"They need something outside the high school, some place to hang out,"

Beuerle said. Rather than meet at the high school, "we'd like a community center type place," she said.

A subdivision clubhouse in the northern section has been offered, she said, but something more central is preferred, possibly a shopping mall.

BEUERLE SAID she'd like to see

the support come from outside the schools as well as within.

"I'd like to see other groups involved, parks and rec, even the township. It's the community's kids we're talking about."

Nothing is expected to be in place this year, however, she said. "We want to set it up carefully, like we did with the middle schools."

Local court computer needs grow

'We need to keep our records on computer for at least two years — we haven't been able to do that.'

— Margaret Schaeffer
District Court Judge

Growth in local communities has prompted the upgrade of computer space at Farmington's 47th District Court.

Both the Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils agreed to spend \$19,795 to meet the courts' record storage needs and allow for future expansion. The Hills will contribute \$16,453 and Farmington \$3,342.

It is the second time in a year the computer storage space has been increased, as the court begins to add different types of case loads to the system.

According to District Judge Margaret Schaeffer, a growing commu-

nity means more people, more tickets and more cases for the local court.

"Everything seems to be growing," she said. "We need to keep our records on the computer for at least two years — we haven't been able to do that."

She attributes much of the growth to an increase in tickets issued in Farmington Hills and said the hiring of new officers means the court can expect a new influx.

Although Schaeffer doesn't see the upgrade as a "permanent solution," she said the change is expected to take care of the court's needs for two to four years.

During this time, the two cities will have "further opportunity to evaluate the court's computer needs and add them in developing a more systematic approach in evaluating future . . . requirements," said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman in a recent report to city council. The computer space will be evaluated annually during the budget process, he said.

The recommendation computer upgrade came from a December meeting between Schaeffer, Deadman, Hills City Manager William Costick and representatives from Horizon Systems and Software Inc.

Company officials reported they were purging information onto microfiche every three months, and that each time there was less disk space remaining than during the previous purge.

The system was intended to allow two years of criminal cases, one year of cash receipts and outstanding cases to remain on line. Currently on line are 25,482 of the 72,000 criminal cases, six months of cash receipts and 250 civil case files, Deadman said.

The district court handles about 3,000 civil cases per year, and the new space is designed to allow up to seven years of cases.

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military news

Tapping the military news pipeline

- **HE RE-ENLISTED**
Sgt. Norman Mayer of Farmington Hills has re-enlisted in the U.S. Air Force after being selected for career status.
- **Assigned** at George Air Force Base, Calif., Mayer was approved for re-enlistment by a board that considered character and performance.
- **He is a munitions systems specialist** with the 37th Equipment Maintenance Squadron.
- **Mayer is a 1976 graduate** of Farmington High School.
- **JOINS ARMY**
Edward Bennett of Farmington Hills has joined the U.S. Army Delayed Entry Program.
- **Bennett is a senior at Farmington High School** and will graduate in June. He will report for basic training the following month at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. After that, he'll receive additional training at Fort Benning, Texas, at a medical specialty.

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Photos for senior discount cards scheduled

The Farmington Senior Center is one of several sites throughout Oakland County in February for senior citizens 60 and older to obtain discount cards through the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency.

The "identification" cards show

name, address, birthdate and Social Security number and offer up to 40 percent discounts at area merchants. Photographs are taken at the site and laminated onto the card.

The local site is at the Mercy Cen-

ter at Middlebelt and 11 Mile in Farmington Hills. Seniors can get their photos taken for their cards during the hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For further information, call toll-free at 1-800-482-9250 or the Mercy Center at 478-9147.

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