

Emotions run high in day care hearing

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'No matter what you do tonight, they're going to continue to operate. There's not enough of us to go around.'

— Lynne Strachan, home day care provider

nance restrictive. She said women who needed the revenues from their home sitting services to survive are being punished.

"If these women were sitting here, they would not deny them a livelihood," she said after the meeting.

SHE REFERRED specifically to group day care provider Darlene Feldman, who said the limit of six children in day care homes inside subdivisions, as imposed by city ordinance, would force her out of business and cause her to move. Larger group day homes are only permitted on main roads.

"We are kind of picking on a few people," Feldman said. "Many of the fears are more imagined than real." Several women were reacting to

comments from board members of the Homeowners Council of Farmington Hills who spoke out against the proposed changes to the home day care ordinance.

Council spokesman Martin Krohner said: "We're talking about two people who are currently breaking the law. This is a piece of special legislation for the benefit of two peo-

ple. The city is sending out the wrong message; it will have citywide application."

Feldman, at the center of the controversy since it began, disagreed.

"It has taken months and months to hash this out," she said. "I'm a little embarrassed for the new association. I am offended; I'm not a criminal."

Council denies day care change

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several changes, which will:

- delete the requirement of 500 feet between day care homes,

- require the provider to register with the city clerk,

- make the homes subject to fire department inspections,

- require a smoke detector in all daytime sleeping areas.

The proposed ordinance change would have allowed group day care homes, licensed by the state to handle up to 12 children, on interior sub-

division streets if the home sites met certain conditions.

THE NEW ordinance, approved in March, allows only six children per home in these areas and up to 12 on major roads.

"It's still too early to determine whether there's a need to go to the 12-person limit at this time," Sever said. "I think we need controls at this point in time."

He said when the day care ordinance was approved in March, "most people... left with the satis-

faction it was resolved."

Before voting, the council heard more emotion-packed testimony from several home day care providers, who spoke in favor of the proposed changes, and from members of the Council of Homeowners of Farmington Hills, which vehemently opposed the measure.

"WE'RE NOT against kids, or group day care... we're talking about a business for profit," said homeowners council spokesman Martin Krohner. "The issue is not

change that would have allowed group day care homes on interior subdivision streets under certain conditions. He said the new ordinance approved in March, limiting such homes to main roads, was enough. "There is nobody against children," he said. "The ordinance provided a solution—a responsible way to solve a problem."

child care. It is operating a business in a residential area."

He criticized the state licensing system, warning the council not to rely heavily on it. "The DSS (state Department of Social Services) is not the all-knowing, all-omnipotent body we think it is."

Licensed day care provider Lynne Strachan defended her services.

"This type of business is not intrusive on the neighborhood," she said. "There's a lot of difference between children in my back yard and a tow truck in my front yard."

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