

Green belt is approved

By Casey Hane
staff writer

The grass will be greener for residents of West Franklin Estates as they prepare to greet a new neighbor — a small office building at the corner of Farmington Road and 14 Mile.

A 50-foot green belt, or buffer area, will remain residentially zoned, separating the Farmington Hills subdivision from the office building planned for the southeast corner of the intersection.

Planning for the proposed office building became an issue to neighbors this fall who spoke out against rezoning part of the 50-foot wide parcel for a parking lot. Original plans for a 30-foot green belt and 20 feet of parking were quashed by Farmington

Hills architect Michael Downes when, at a Dec. 21 city council hearing, he withdrew his petition to rezone for parking and agreed to keep the parcel a 50-foot wide, natural, park-like buffer area.

REQUESTS TO rezone this residential parcel were denied by the city in the past, city planner Claude Coates said in a written review of Downes' request in October. Although the city's planning commission recommended the corner be rezoned for the proposed office, they voted unanimously to recommend denial of the parking rezoning in the plan.

The parcel in question falls under rules of the subdivision deed and city officials worried that zoning it for parking could

prompt litigation.

The city's Master Plan calls for offices on that corner, and also on the opposite corner where another one-story office structure is already built. Property directly across 14 Mile in West Bloomfield Township is zoned for business; a shopping center is already developed there.

RICHARD ADAMS, president of the Homeowners Association of West Franklin Estates, and neighbor Robert Pratt spoke at the Dec. 21 council hearing, saying they were thankful Downes had withdrawn his petition for the rezoning to parking. They were just two of the residents who placed comments on the record at the November planning commission meeting.

"It is . . . critical that the remaining residential communities be preserved if the hills are not to lose forever the residential character which sets it apart from other cities with large numbers of commercial residents," Adams said in a written statement to the planning commission.

Several city officials and West Franklin Estates residents said they are concerned with development along 14 Mile at the city's border with West Bloomfield, which is becoming highly commercial on the township side, according to planning commission minutes.

Planning commissioners concurred that the 50-foot green belt might help to continue the residential character of the 14 Mile area.

Hospital cites flaws in report

Continued from Page 1

facilities, complications and orders not to resuscitate.

"We think we have some valid arguments that patients in Botsford are sicker than in the hospitals in the study," Glinter said. About half of all patients admitted to the 336-bed hospital are Medicare patients.

Glinter said that nearly all Medicare patients are 65 years of age and older. The average age of the 339 Medicare patients that died at Botsford, and are in the federal study, had an average age of 78. Of the 339 patients, 91 were 85 years of age and older.

"We think these are rather significant figures," Glinter added.

The study also neglects whether the patients were those who had been referred or transferred to Bots-

ford from a nursing home or other extended care facility. If the patients had been transferred, that "means these patients already need a lot of care," Glinter said.

Though patients may be admitted for treatment of a primary disease, such as cancer, many of those listed in the study had other complicating illnesses that caused or greatly contributed to their deaths.

Hospital staff reviewed the medical records of the 339 deceased patients in the study to determine whether they died as a result of the primary reason they were admitted to the hospital for treatment. The review showed that for each illness, patients had three additional complicating illnesses.

"I WOULD think that would say our patients were sicker than those

admitted to hospitals in the study," Glinter said.

Glinter said Botsford's patients tend to be sicker because "we have the facility and staffing to handle the critically ill."

The federal study also failed to consider the percentage of reported Medicare deaths that had an order on medical records that no resuscitative procedures should be used, Glinter said.

Of the 339 Medicare deaths at Botsford in the study, 206 or 61 percent had "do not resuscitate" orders on the patient medical records.

"In the context of our hospital policy, this means that a physician has determined that the patient's condition is such that death is imminent and that the family had indicated that no resuscitative measures be instituted," according to Botsford's

written response to the federal agency.

The study does not take into account the stage of patient illness when admitted to Botsford. It also does not consider the socio-economic factors, such as nutrition, nurturing and general living conditions of those patients before admittance to Botsford, Kuncz said.

"We always have had a quality assessment program here," said Glinter. "Hospital mortalities are always reviewed by physicians in that particular department."

In Botsford's written response to the study, officials said they are "willing to deal, on a case specific basis, with any allegations of inappropriate or substandard care delivered to any of our patients."

Mortality rating angers Botsford

Continued from Page 1

An official of the Medicare Peer Review Organization, which reviews the quality of medical care given Medicare patients, agreed.

"We have not found a direct correlation between these mortality lists and quality of care problems," said chief executive officer Gary Horvath. "By and large, the quality of care practiced in this state is pretty good. In fact, it is very good."

GLINTER'S COMPLAINTS about the study are basic. He believes the

federal agency neglected to take into consideration important variables, such as patient age and stage of illness when admitted to Botsford.

The study is also skewed because the cases were analyzed based on the cause for the last hospital admission of the year for Medicare beneficiaries, according to Glinter.

Hospital records show that 3,328 total Medicare admissions occurred in 1986, nearly twice the figure used in the federal study. Based on the higher figure, the hospital's mortality rate for 1986 was 10.2 percent.

But using only the last hospital admissions data used by the federal agency, the mortality rate climbs to 17.5 percent, which falls just outside the agency's predicted mortality rate.

"Yet Botsford is in the acceptable range for the 16 (diagnostic) categories," Glinter said.

The data used in the study shows that 340 Medicare patients admitted to Botsford died within 30 days of admission. Of the reported deaths, 299 were listed as occurring during the hospital stay and 41 occurring

after discharge, according to the hospital's official comments to the federal study.

"With the information supplied by HCFA, we were unable to identify one of the reported deaths as having been a patient at our hospital," according to the hospital's comment.

The 41 deaths that occurred after discharge, for example, are listed as part of the mortality rate for the hospital, whether they died from a disease they were being treated for or whether hit by an auto later, said a Botsford spokesperson.

Dukakis is winner in Dems' straw poll

Farmington-area Democrats prefer Gov. Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts for the next U.S. president, if the results of a recent straw poll hold true.

But there is apparent interest in corporate leader Lee Iacocca and New York Gov. Mario Cuomo who many Democrats speculate may join the race. Both were write-in candidates in the local polling.

Dukakis was the winner in a poll of members of the Farmington Democratic Club, garnering 36 percent of the vote. Other top vote getters included U.S. Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois and write-in candidate Cuomo who each received 18 percent of the group's vote.

GETTING 6 percent of the vote were the Rev. Jesse Jackson, presi-

dent of the National Rainbow Coalition; U.S. Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee; and write-in Lee Iacocca, chairman of the Chrysler Corp.

Thirty-five members and guests of the local Democratic club met recently and conducted the poll. Thirty-three cast votes in the straw poll.

Given a second choice, the group preferred Simon with 32 percent, followed by Dukakis with 21 percent and Cuomo with 14 percent.

The Democratic club is preparing for local caucuses in the Farmington area, scheduled for March.

Complaint saves party

Continued from Page 1

Armbruster attempted to return a \$150 reservation deposit for the skating party.

Though the way was cleared for Murphy, Chastang has not closed the file on Murphy's complaint.

REACTING TO a story in Tuesday's Detroit Free Press about the Bonaventure Club, Chastang said he may have some more investigating to do before the Murphy complaint against the roller rink is completed.

"This new issue we may have to deal with before we close the case if it presents a problem from a racial point of view," Chastang said.

Bonaventure owner Louis Armbruster and his son, Mark, were unavailable for comment. A Bonaventure spokeswoman late Tuesday afternoon said, "He (Mark Armbruster) isn't here and isn't available."

In the Detroit Free Press story, Murphy is quoted as saying the holiday skating party might be the last at Bonaventure for himself and other black skaters.

The Armbrusters have posted a sign on the window of the interior play counter that states as of Jan. 1,

the Pomac, Mercury and Cottrell brands of a hard rubber wheel — considered popular with black skaters — will be banned.

The hard rubber wheels apparently are popular because of their slipperiness, which makes it easier to slide across the wooden rink floor, a movement used in skate-dancing.

Though the Armbrusters were unavailable for comment Tuesday, the Free Press quoted Mark Armbruster as denying the ban on hard rubber wheels was racially motivated. The ban on the three brands of wheels was for safety, Armbruster was quoted as saying.

clarification

A Dec. 21 story about political lawn sign usage in the fall Farmington Hills City Council campaign incorrectly stated that then-councilwoman Joan Dudley voted against easing political lawn sign prohibitions in 1985.

She supported easing the prohibitions.



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