

Residents' sidewalk opposition overruled

Continued from Page 1

city's plans to install two passing lanes along Drake at Howard Road and West Lyman.

THE CITY council's concerns about safety and liability, however, cast aside residents' opposition. When the gravel portion of Drake is paved this summer, it will have a sidewalk on its east side and two passing lanes.

"The city council totally disregarded 200 signatures of people who live here. We got the feeling their minds were made up (before Monday's public hearing)," Foss said.

Whether the road should be paved and realigned was overshadowed at the more than 1½-hour public hearing Monday by complaints about sidewalks and passing lanes. Mostly

as afterthoughts, residents said the recommended plan was fine, except for sidewalks and passing lanes.

Residents complained that the sidewalks would be an invasion of their privacy, detract from the natural beauty of the area, create maintenance problems and increase their liability insurance.

Residents opposed the passing lanes, feeling they would attract more traffic at greater speeds and require more right-of-way.

Both Foss and Compo told the council they would be the most affected by sidewalks. Both have at least 200 feet of frontage on the east side of Drake.

"It's a sidewalk basically going nowhere," Compo said. "We have no precedent for a sidewalk in the new paving areas."

Mark Tressel of Hubbell, Roth &

Clark Inc., consulting engineers, Bloomfield Hills, who developed paving and alignment plans for Drake, told residents the sidewalk cannot be moved to the west side of Drake because the steep hills would make the costs prohibitive.

COMPO REFERRED to other newly paved areas such as 13 Mile, Drake, north of 13 Mile; and Halsted, between 12 and 14 Mile, that still are without sidewalks.

City administrators told Compo those sidewalks will be installed, either by the city or developers along the thoroughfares. City policy requires sidewalks along major roads.

Both Compo and nearby neighbor Joyce Skinner contacted their insurance companies when they learned of plans to install a sidewalk along

their frontage. "They certainly had questions in terms of insurance," Skinner said.

In a letter to city manager William Costick, Foss wrote that her four acres of property, with pond, stream, waterfall and tennis court, "would be most inviting to pedestrians welcomed onto my property by a public sidewalk."

Although the city plans to erect signs prohibiting bicycles on the sidewalk, its winding configuration, especially cut into a hill at one point near East Lyman, would invite bicyclists and liability for the city, Foss said Tuesday.

Foss was joined by other residents who maintained the sidewalk would change the character of the area because of the possibility of having to knock down trees.

But safety concerns ruled the council's final decision to cast aside residents' wishes.

"ONE OF the goals in safe roadways is to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic," said Tom Blasell, public services director.

The paving plans call for curbs rather than shoulders. "In this particular area, where we do have pedestrians . . . they are forced to walk in the roadway itself."

In keeping with residents' requests to preserve as many trees and other vegetation as possible, the plan doesn't include shoulders and open ditch draining that would provide room for pedestrians along the road, Blasell said.

Safety was also a factor in city administrators' recommended passing lanes near the roadway's major

curves at West Lyman and Howard Road.

The passing lane at Howard is considered the most necessary. "This is extremely important since this is located at the bottom of the steepest hill. A car making a left turn there is especially vulnerable to northbound traffic coming down the hill," Blasell said.

The West Lyman passing lane would be provided for residents entering the Old Homestead subdivision. "The installation of a passing lane prevents rear-end collisions," Blasell said.

Farmington Observer

(USPS 167-840)

Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham, MI 48012. Second-class postage paid at Birmingham, MI 48012. Address all mail (subscription, change of address, Form 3569) to P.O. Box 2428, Livonia, MI 48151. Telephone 591-6500.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(in Oakland County)
One year . . . \$24.20
(Elsewhere in Michigan)
Newsstand . . . per copy, 25¢
One year . . . \$40.00
(Elsewhere in U.S.A.)
One year . . . \$60.00
All advertising published in the Farmington Observer is subject to the conditions stated in the applicable rate card, copies of which are available from the advertising department, Farmington 33203 Grand River, Farmington, MI (313) 477-5450. The Farmington Observer reserves the right not to accept an advertiser's order. Observer & Eccentric ad-takers have no authority to bind this newspaper and only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance of the advertiser's order.

Safety concerns led to sidewalk design OK

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills City Council members Jean Fox and Joe Alkateeb stood behind residents opposed to sidewalks and passing lanes on the winding portion of Drake Road.

But councilwoman Jan Dolan led the cause for road safety and garnered enough support from the rest of the seven-member city council Monday to approve the design.

The vote authorized city administrators to proceed with the paving and realigning plans. The two-lane road will follow the existing gravel road except at the sharp curve north of Knights Drive and south of I-696. There, a new road will be cut east of the existing road to avoid removing houses.

With the Drake Road Citizens Committee blessings, the plan calls for preserving much of the natural beauty of the road, including trees, vegetation, natural hills and slopes and two historic homes. The homes, known as Miller's Cottage and the Arnold House, have been purchased

by the city and are expected to be relocated along Drake.

The decision on where to place sidewalks and passing lanes threw the city council into a debate. Several votes were taken before the final 5-2 vote determined that the east side of Drake from 11 Mile to just south of the I-696 bridge will have a sidewalk. Alkateeb and Fox opposed the sidewalk.

JUST WHERE that sidewalk will be placed will be the decision of residents and staff, a plan that's expected to be brought back for council consideration.

Council also voted to install two passing lanes, one at West Lyman and another at Howard Road. Fox stood alone in her opposition.

"At this time, I don't think I'm convinced the sidewalk is needed," Alkateeb said, asking that an exception be made to the city's policy requiring sidewalks along major roads. Fox agreed. "We need to be concerned with the problems they (residents) see. They live there," she said. "We should, in this case, waive the

sidewalk requirement."

Residents and council members suggested allowing room for a sidewalk but not yet installing it until there is a need. But city administrators held their ground, maintaining it would be cheaper to include sidewalks and passing lanes in the paving project now.

Siting that the city has "had some very expensive losses," Dolan argued for building a road based on a safe design. City manager William Costick said, when asked by Dolan, that the proposed project design is safe, including sidewalks and passing lanes.

SIDEWALKS WILL be necessary, Dolan said, in light of the Farmington school board's consideration of a new elementary school at Halsted and 11 Mile, and of plans for residential housing just south of I-696.

"I don't think children can ever go safely along that road," she said. "Safety should be of the utmost importance to everyone."

But resident Carol Foss said Tuesday that Drake would be far from the proposed school and more than

likely, those children will be bussed. "Kids wouldn't be walking there," Foss added.

Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi supported Dolan. "The alternative, as was indicated, is no room for walking, jogging, any activity, except in the street."

In response to sidewalk supporters, Alkateeb said he could name "150 miles of roads" in Farmington Hills with faster traffic that don't have sidewalks. "I don't think this safety picture has already been planned down."

Fox also stood alone in her opposition to passing lanes at West Lyman and Howard Road. "I don't see how the council can ignore the petitions that have come in this evening," she


said. Council action "dilutes what we're trying to do on this road at great expense."

AT FIRST, Alkateeb opposed the passing lanes. But after Mark Tressel of Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc., consulting engineers, Bloomfield Hills, referred to the lanes as "escape lanes," for traffic, Alkateeb said he would give his support.

"You should give the motorist every protection to avoid an injury accident," Tressel said.

Considering the new paved road will entice more traffic along Drake, Mayor Jody Soronen said safety must be the greatest concern.

For Your Valentine
a pure Icelandic Woolen
Blazer...perfect for all seasons



BOOLDA
OF ICELAND
255 S. Woodward at Brown
BIRMINGHAM • 642-6360
MON-SAT. 10-6, THURS. 11-5

just a few
Nordic steps
from the
Birmingham Theatre



Remember Someone Special


VALENTINE'S DAY
Sunday, February 14th

Bonanza Clock, Jr.	McDevitt's Hallmark	Radio Shack	Winkelman's
Hair Works Too	The Pet Depot	Radio Shack	K-Mart
Kinney Shoes	Paper Tiger	Computer Center	Farmer Jack
	Perry Drug Store	United Health Spa	

7 SHOPPING CENTER

7 MILE at FARMINGTON RD.

Sharing the joy.



A new baby is a happy event that everyone in the family wants to share. At Huron Valley Hospital we like that special feeling. Here, new moms help plan their own birthing experience — traditional or a more intimate natural birth shared with the family. Every mom enjoys a special room where the whole family can share the joy. Our Couplet Care keeps mom and baby together, except when mom needs special rest or baby needs special care. Our Primary Care Nurses and House Physicians in obstetrics/gynecology and pediatrics are here 24 hours a day — always available when mom's own physician is not in the hospital. Specialists in neonatology and perinatology are available for consultation around the clock.

If you are planning a family, phone for our Maternity Booklet, and details about Family Life Education classes. For help finding an obstetrician or pediatrician, ask for our referral service. Call (313) 360-3450.

HURON VALLEY HOSPITAL

1601 East Commerce Road • Milford, MI 48042
(313) 360-3300
A Member of The Detroit Medical Center
© 1987 HURON 5172