

Licensing issue is raised with prefab homes

By Casey Hana
staff writer

The issue of proper licensing has been raised in the construction of Keating manufactured houses in Farmington Hills.

The city discovered this during the past two weeks, as officials worked with the developer, Keating Community Homes of Bloomfield Hills, to address complaints brought by Keating's neighbors near Nine Mile and Middlebelt. The issue was raised at an April 11 city council meeting.

Although Keating houses are inspected and sealed at the factory, the developer may not have obtained a necessary state license to sell and install the homes, according to city officials.

"We learned last week he may not have all licenses from the state," city manager William Costick told city council April 11. "He's taking care of that."

Brooke Isberg, a spokeswoman for Howard Keating, denied any licens-

ing problems last week, saying, "The Keating people are certainly fully licensed and their installers are fully licensed. They're (the city) unfamiliar with the licensing."

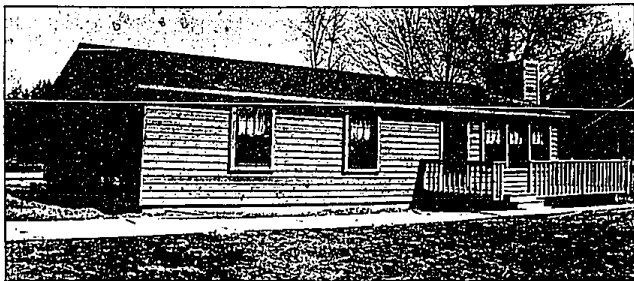
Keating subcontractors its installations, she added. Owner Howard Keating could not be reached for comment.

CITY BUILDING department employees also met with state building licensing officials and received further information about manufactured housing rules.

"We feel now we are on top of it," Costick added. He could not be reached later in the week to update the Keating situation, or comment on the company's denial.

Isberg said the company was "comfortable" with the situation in Farmington Hills, and added, "Howard Keating is probably the pioneer in this state (in manufactured housing), and pioneers never have it easy."

City officials asked for more time



TOM ARNETT/staff photographer

This Keating Community Home is on Nine Mile, east of Middlebelt, in Farmington Hills.

before giving a full report to the city council April 25. They continue to withhold permits for Keating because of other concerns, including cleanup work on some sites and other ordinance violations.

The city took action following complaints from residents near the already constructed Keating homes. Complaints ranged from appearance of the houses' exteriors, to grading and drainage problems, to traffic and parking violations by construction workers and prospective buyers.

COUNCILMAN ALDO Vagnozzi asked for a comprehensive report and activity list about the Keating situation for the upcoming April 25 meeting.

He also called for reactivation of the Single Family Construction Review Board to look at the already constructed Keating houses and present recommendations.

"There's a 'surprise a week' on this situation," he added. "Because of the commotion that's been raised ... this issue should be put to bed."

Vagnozzi was supported by councilwoman Jean Fox; council members agreed to activate the review board.

The city has already implemented administrative revisions for handling permit applications for manufactured homes, Costick said.

And, despite the questions being raised in the Hills about manufactured housing, the state Supreme Court ruled two years ago that such homes can be put on residential lots, he added.

MEANWHILE, RESIDENTS of the Nine Mile/Middlebelt area, who brought complaints about Keating to the council, complained last week about Farmington Hills police response to their calls about traffic.

The city issued an order to its police department to watch the area and ticket traffic and parking violations. Residents told council members that police were giving warnings, not writing tickets.

Costick said he would see that the order is enforced in the future.

While saying problems relating to traffic activity in the area have dwindled, city attorney Paul Bibeau said the city wouldn't hesitate to take legal action "if the activity picks up."

No representative spoke at the April 11 meeting on behalf of the developer.

She was a giving person

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teach patient care at a \$0-bed hospital in Oyo.

"Three to four times a week, they went to different villages and worked in very primitive conditions conducting mobile medical clinics to teach patient care," Sister Marjorie said. "They also instructed volunteers who came into the clinic."

Michelle enjoyed the work so much, she extended her stay to nearly a year.

SISTER MARY Joel, Michelle's French teacher at Mercy, said Michelle was responsible for organizing a student festival "to bring young women at Mercy together in a community setting."

"She felt if they worked together in a common project, they'd develop a deeper sense of community," said Sister Mary, who now teaches adult education at Marygrove College of Detroit and Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Farmington.

Sister Mary characterized Michelle as a life giver. She absolutely made things happen. She was very caring.

ROUGEAU TRANSFERRED to Mercy from Birmingham Marian High School after the ninth grade. At Mercy, she particularly enjoyed French, science and film study, school officials said.

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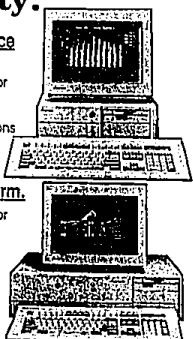
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