

# Hills rejects rezoning request

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

They said no in 1985. They said no in 1986. And the Farmington Hills City Council has said no again to a request to rezone wooded acreage on Orchard Lake Road, south of I-696.

"The reason I'm here . . . the parcel cannot be used as the city has zoned it," said Joe Galvin, on behalf of owner Kay McMahon, who for the third time in four years failed to have the approximately nine acres rezoned for a non-residential use.

In its unanimous decision Monday, the council upheld the planning commission's earlier recommended denial. The council supported planning commissioners' recommendation that to rezone the property to a commercial use would not conform to the master plan and would be incompatible with the other residential use in the area.

Unlike the past two unsuccessful requests for a specific zone, Galvin offered the city council a choice of rezoning the current RA-2, one-family residential classification to any of

the city's non-residential zones ranging from office, to office-research, general business and expressway service.

"I CAN'T use it for what it is. What can I use it for?" Galvin asked. "When you look at the stuff you're supposed to look at, when you look at the things that matter to a landowner, all the factors lead to the conclusion this zone is the wrong zoning for the property."

In 1985, attorney Jim Glan, on behalf of his client Sheldon Rott, requested rezoning for an office building. In 1986, Mike Horowitz of the Selective Group requested rezoning for a hotel.

Nearby residents argued that the property, between Rockshire and Springland, can be developed as either cluster homes, as called for in the city's master land use plan, or single-family homes. Commercial development is out of the question, residents said.

Rockshire resident Dr. Donald

Hodges said the rezoning request is "pure selfishness on the owners' part. They want a bundle. There is no reason a single-family house can't be built except the owners want a bundle for that property."

Cluster or single-family homes cannot be developed economically on the site, Galvin said. He referred to factors such as land use, nearby I-696, traffic and the housing market that make it impossible to develop it as residential.

Galvin referred to each of the four corners of the I-696/Orchard Lake interchange as an example of other zoning near the freeway. On the northwest corner is Quality Inn and a gas station and deli. More restaurants and a gas station fill the northeast corner. And on the southeast, Oakland Community College stands in a residential zone, he said.

**GALVIN PROVIDED** the council with a scenario. If 24,180-square-foot cluster houses were to be built on the site, each would cost \$174,000-\$175,000. That price tag ignores any builder's profit, cost of land, saving trees or any amenities required in the cluster ordinance, Galvin said.

The Farmington Hills City Council didn't buy Galvin's arguments.

"Unfortunately, Mr. Galvin, I don't agree with you," councilman Ben Marks said. Referring to comments made during the public hearing that the asking price was about \$1 million, Marks said the land is still on the market "because the price is too high."

Councilman Joe Alkateeb offered similar comments. "You fall into the same residential zone. I think some of the residential zones we have would fit this property. I think this property has no other use but residential."

Councilman Terry Sever agreed. "It really comes down to the fact that you're looking at more profit one way or another. I have a problem zoning for economic reasons."

## Boy loses fingertips in door at Larkshire

A 7-year-old Larkshire Elementary second grader lost two fingertips Monday morning when a door at the school slammed on his fingers.

Doctors at Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit were able to reconnect one of the digits during about 1½ hours of surgery, school officials said this week. The name of the student was not released.

The Farmington Hills Fire Department was called at about 8:10 a.m., said Deputy Fire Chief Peter

Baldwin, after which the youngster was transported to Harper Hospital in Detroit's Medical Center. The incident occurred at the back door of the school, which leads to the playground.

"He was just leaning against the doorjamb, and his fingers got caught," principal Al Lanigan said.

Lanigan explained that surgery was done Monday night, and added that the Hills paramedics at the scene handled the situation well. "They were very good with him."

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## Headlee and officials differ on bond defeat

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Planagan said the district has been advised, through an unofficial ruling from the state Attorney General's office, that they cannot use operating money to build a new school. "I think that's nonsense," Headlee responded. "It's all the same taxpayers' money."

Planagan said "a number of things" contributed to Monday's defeat, including Headlee's attention to the issue, when he came before the board just two weeks ago. "They got a real blast," Planagan said, in terms of Headlee's publicity.

BUT HE also attributed the defeat to a cross-section of voters who don't want a school in their back yard, who don't have children in school and don't want the added tax, or perhaps, for other unknown reasons. Board president Jack Cotton said the problems that prompted the

bond election "are not going to go away. They're still there. The board hasn't talked about any alternatives."

But he said the board would review all the options available, including ones trustees have already looked at. "We looked at redistricting, and got bombed out there. It depends how much (classroom overcrowding relief) we can siphon off . . . with things like Highmeadow," a new alternative program.

"With this kind of a mandate from voters, the board has to do what it has to do. We're in a no/no situation."

Cotton called the continued issue of elementary-level overcrowding an "issue of high priority" and said the board would be discussing it in-depth soon. Reaction to the election defeat is expected at next Tuesday's meeting to be followed by a board study session at a later date.

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