

Boys home sues Hills over stop work order

Continued from Page 1

... housing unit so it can investigate the assessment program after residents expressed concern about it August 14.

"We are concerned with the safety of the whole community, and we are also concerned with any liability the city may be involved in," Mayor Terry Sever said.

... work is "harming the contractual relationship" with the Department of Social Services, which sends wards of the state there for treatment or evaluation, and the National Bank of Detroit, which approved a \$1 million mortgage loan for renovations, Piper said.

... NOTIFIED and, they said to work it out with the city," Piper said.

... increased staff and tighter security have accompanied the new assessment program. There is a secure assessment center. There are plans for increased security in the 27-boy treatment program housing unit, which will help curtail campus truancy, Griffin said.

... renovated first housing unit has had 20 assessment program boys since July 26. Target date for open-

ing the renovated second unit, which would house 20 more assessment program boys, is Sept. 5. Each day work is delayed, Boys Republic loses \$3,700 — \$185 per boy per day, Piper said.

The city could face more than \$45,000 in damages by Aug. 28, when the city council reviews the assessment program with campus officials, the police and the public.

LAST WEEK, Griffin said the facility receives \$170 per day (nearly \$64,000 annually) per boy in the assessment program and \$157.71 per day (nearly \$55,000) per boy in the treatment program. Figures include all operating costs, including payroll, food and utilities.

Building improvements, such as adding security window screens, door locks and a 24-hour audio monitoring system, needed to be made even if Boys Republic didn't take part in the assessment program, Piper said.

"The renovation work and the new assessment program should be treated as two separate issues," she said.

EVEN WITH the new assessment program, the campus will house few-

er than the 65 boys allowed under its 1989 license.

Griffin has assured residents and city officials the facility will continue house "the same type of youngsters Boys Republic has historically served over the last 15 years — boys who require a moderate-secure facility and not maximum security."

ANNETTE ABRAMS, director of the state Office of Children and

By Noroen Flack staff writer

Farmington Hills residents hope renovations and a new assessment program at Boys Republic will be reviewed by the Board of Zoning Appeals before the city council lifts a "stop work" order issued on Aug. 14.

The city council denied a request by Boys Republic on Aug. 21 to lift the stop-work order.

"They represented who they should have — the community," said Mable Kurzeja, an Old Town Homeowners Association vice president. "Let them (Boys Republic) prove that what they are doing is not changing the use. Let them prove it

The boys typically are first- or second-time offenders who have stolen a car, broken into a house or committed a drug offense, Griffin said.

"I'M ECSTATICALLY excited that the council saw fit to do the right thing," said Floyd DuFresne, also an Old Town vice president. "If this is a new use, they have to stop. This has to be evaluated by the zoning board."

City officials ordered renovation work to stop at the medium-security facility after neighbors expressed concern on Aug. 14 about the new assessment program and about what spurred tighter security on campus.

"If council lifts the stop-work order so we can get going on the buildings, we will not move any assessment and reception boys in (the sec-

ond housing unit slated to house assessment program boys)," said Boys Republic attorney Karen Piper on Aug. 21.

"NO ONE seems to know the whole story," Mayor Terry Sever said. "We have kept the stop order in effect until we have a chance to review the whole program."

At a Dec. 13 meeting, Boys Republic officials presented preliminary renovation plans to city officials, but the assessment program was not discussed, said city planner Ed Gardiner.

Campus officials stress that Boys

Republic buildings will not be expanded and that fewer than the authorized 65 wards of the state will be housed there.

Annette Abrams, state Office of Children and Youth Services director, said the state has no plans to ask Boys Republic to extend its contract to operate the assessment program beyond one year.

There's a shortage of beds for delinquents, but there's "no likelihood of changing plans," Abrams said.

Gardiner approved planned renovations on Dec. 14, waiving a review of site plans by the zoning board.


Neighbors: Zone board should review program

to zoning (the board of zoning appeals)."

and housing unit slated to house assessment program boys)," said Boys Republic attorney Karen Piper on Aug. 21.

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
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