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NATIONAL post.
Oakland County commissioner Dean Wolf, R-Farmington Hills, was named to the National Association of Counties (NACo) Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee.
Committee recommendations on county legislative goals are presented to the nation's county officials at NACo's annual conference.
If approved, the recommendations become part of the American County Platform, which is the basis of NACo's efforts in representing counties in Washington.

AT the helm.
The Farmington school board has named its committee chairs for the 1989-90 school year: James Abernethy, building and site; John Cotton, community relations; Janice Holnick, curriculum; R. Jack Inch, finance; Susan Renssels, policy and board operations; Helen Ditzhazy, safety and operations.
The three-member committee serves in an advisory capacity to the full board.

QUOTE of the week

There's no use being depressed.

— Tara Heichel, recovering and looking forward to going home after she was nearly electrocuted in an on-the-job accident last month in Farmington Hills. Story: 1A.

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IN TODAY'S ISSUE

Moratorium shelves IRO rezoning bid

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Developers contemplating industrial-research-office rezoning requests should take heed: Farmington Hills Monday imposed a temporary moratorium on such rezonings.

The moratorium does not affect existing IRO zones.

Up to 100 businesses could be within an industrial-research-office district if the city council rezones 14.5 acres in the Drake-Grand River area from office service district (OS-1) to industrial research office district (IRO).

Developer Melvin Kaftan owns the rolling land, immediately south of

Hillside Estates Condominiums, north of Indoplex Circle. He contends the city has sufficient controls to regulate the kinds of businesses that might locate there. Some neighbors fear a toxic threat to the neighborhood.

"We have a means of policing," said councilman Ben Marks in answer to repeated citizen concerns that the city could not adequately keep tabs on potentially harmful research lab activities.

"We have the building department," he said. "Twice a year, the fire marshal goes through every building."

Fire marshal Stephen Hume said

"Some of us have been chastised for being emotional. I think it is a sad day in America when you can't be emotional about your home or your family."

— Jean Fox
Hills councilwoman

visits in IRO zones are closer to once every 18-24 months.

THE IRO dispute started with a

1988 zoning ordinance amendment. The change allows city planners to review proposed uses, hold a public hearing and impose special condi-

tions such as greater buffers, height restrictions and land use controls to keep out toxic chemicals. IRO zones are allowed next to multiple-family zones but not single-family.

Farmington Hills' zoning enforcement division is responsible for policing special uses, city attorney Paul Bibeau said.

"What really bothers me is that Mr. Kaftan's representative played a major role in getting the change," said councilman Aldo Vagnozzi. "He was here the night it was adopted by council. He wanted to maximize whatever he wanted to maximize to make a profit. Hillside was the only

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Tara Heichel (left), 20, of Southfield, talks with Wally Kurzeja in her room at Botsford General Hospital. Tara was hospitalized four weeks ago after she received a severe electrical shock while cleaning lights at Windemere Apartments in

Farmington Hills. Kurzeja is one of the Farmington Hills firefighters who helped save Tara's life, using the automatic defibrillator unit bought a year ago by the department and the hospital.

Accident doesn't daunt her spirit

Woman rebounds from near-fatal electrocution

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Tara Heichel took her first step this week, after four weeks in a Farmington Hills hospital bed and a brush with death.

It felt good. So good, in fact, that Tara hopes to go home to her parents, 6-year-old sister and three family cats in Southfield in a couple of weeks.

"The doctor said I could go home when I decide I'm able to get around without the aid of a walker," said the 20-year-old, who is recovering from an Aug. 28 near-fatal electrocution accident at a Farmington Hills apartment complex where she was working as a

groundskeeper. "I wanted to go home today, but I can't."

"The faster I go, the faster I get out of here."

SHE LOOKS up at a calendar marked with pink X's that represent each day she has spent in her private room at Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills.

Soft, straight brown hair frames a happy face and a smile full of braces — put on her teeth after an automobile accident last November, which required nearly nine months of physical rehabilitation.

No sooner was therapy for the auto accident completed than the electrocution accident occurred.

But that doesn't keep her down.

"There's no use being depressed," she said.

Kathleen Heichel, Tara's mother and an elementary school teacher in Southfield, said that initially, doctors believed her daughter might die. "It was a rough couple of days," she said. "One doctor here didn't think she was going to make it. Her pulmonary condition was extremely bad."

A team of specialists at Botsford, including cardiologists, plastic surgeons and others, kept her going, after on-the-scene help from Farmington Hills firefighters and transport by Botsford's Community Emergency Medical Services paramedics. She has sustained no neurological damage, her mother

said, but still cannot recall all the details surrounding the accident or the several days before it.

FACTS ARE returning to her slowly.

Ironically, firefighters Wally Kurzeja and Don St. Clair, who used an automatic defibrillator unit to revive Tara in August, were the same two who helped cut her from the car during the accident last November.

During the incident, at the Windemere Apartments on Independence Drive, Tara was discovered on the ground on top of a metal ladder that had apparently made contact with a Detroit Edison power line. No one is sure just how much voltage entered the 20-year-old's

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Spot zoning fears mount

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Some residents who reiterated concern Monday about a request to rezone 14.5 acres in the Drake-Grand River area from office service district to industrial-research-office district fear spot zoning.

Developer Melvin Kaftan is seeking the rezoning. The acreage is on the east side of Drake, immediately south of Hillside Estates Condominiums, north of Indoplex Circle.

Art Gels, who lives on Charter Crest in Independence Commons, said his neighbors find it hard to believe the area is even up for rezoning. "I've heard the term spot zoning utilized in our neighborhood," he said.

R.W. Haberstroh, who lives on Witherspoon in Independence Hills, questioned who would sue the developer if a contract between Kaftan and the Hillside Estates Homeowners Association was not complied with.

"At the planning commission meeting Sept. 7, I thought the planning commission, themselves, showed a very glib behavior on toxics," Haberstroh said.

"Planners made some sarcastic remarks about the toxicity of Whiteout and lawn and swimming pool chemicals. With that type of attitude they had that night, I wouldn't trust them to make the decision to make the decision of who can use this complex and who can't. I think this should be put in somebody else's hands."

CITY ATTORNEY Paul Bibeau said the city should not get involved in a private contract to be enforced as a deed restriction.

"The city should not be a party to the agreement or amendment of the contract. The city is not a party," he said.

"The city council is elected by the residents of Farmington Hills and I believe it is your responsibility to

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Officials eye penalties for ethics violations

By Noroon Flack
staff writer

While a Farmington Hills committee tries to separate right from wrong in a municipal code of ethics, some residents and city officials want to include tough penalties for violators. They say the draft is too wishy-washy.

"Technically, they (city officials and employees) don't have to go by it (code of ethics)," Mayor Terry Sever said. "This is not an ordinance or law. This does not give council the right to reprimand offenders."

"When someone blatantly violates the code of ethics — at least blatantly — there has to be some means of

"I am reluctant to give council members the ability to remove another elected council member from office. The people put them in office, the people should take them out."

— Hills Mayor Terry Sever

censurement," said Masha Silver, a Farmington Hills council member.

"There should be some penalty where you can at least rap them (violators) on the knuckles and maybe, in some cases, they should be punished by firing."

The code is insignificant unless guidelines can be enforced with penalties, Silver said.

In the past, offenders in ethical cases have not been punished and no public action was taken against them, Silver said.

CODE DRAFTERS include Sever, City Manager William Costick and councilmen Aldo Vagnozzi and Philip Arnold. City attorney Paul Bibeau assisted. They drew on the few such existing codes nationwide.

The proposed code was formulated after it was revealed councilman Ben Marks, then mayor, paid a city sewer hookup fee with a \$17,000 check that bounced.

The 1987 bill remained as an account receivable for 1½ years. In August 1988, shortly after the issue became public, Marks paid it, including full interest and penalties totaling \$22,528. He then publicly apologized.

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Terry Sever
Farmington Hills mayor