

Underage drinking is target of Hills drive

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IN 1986, the police began periodic stings, dubbed Operation Liquor Strike, not only to enforce liquor laws, but also to educate licensees and employees about the laws, including ID verification, and handling of problem patrons. Restaurants were checked twice and package liquor stores four times.

In the last sting on June 2, involving package liquor outlets, 11 of 33 stores were cited to the Liquor Control Commission (LCC) and 11 employees received misdemeanor tickets under city ordinance, for selling alcohol to minors. District court penalties ranged from cases taken under advisement to a \$500 fine.

Sever, who rode with the police June 2, was pleased to report all four 7-Eleven convenience stores did not sell to the decoy.

Dwyer promised another sting before Christmas.

MR. SPORTS participated in the first "reverse sting" on Nov. 11. Plainclothes officers waiting in the parking lot were alerted when an

employee thought a patron's identification presented at the door was false, fraudulent or altered. Eight minors received misdemeanor tickets for liquor law violations. Another four were ticketed for misrepresentation ID.

"What we're hoping that did was to send a message out, not only are we taking these IDs, but we have the police in there writing tickets," said Kim McNamara, Mr. Sports general manager. "That word is going to spread among their peers and, hopefully, they will just stay clear of our doors."

At times, though rarely, an ID is confiscated in error. More than 600 misrepresentative IDs have been confiscated this year at Mr. Sports and only three or four were taken in error, Sinelli said. If there's a question, he calls the police.

SOME LICENSEES appeared reluctant to join with the police because of past stings, which they found hindered their business.

T.J. Studnicki, owner of Farmington Party Store, 10 Mile and Middlebelt, was fined \$750 because of a

sting, he said. An employee said the decoy cadet looked like a regular customer and mistakenly sold alcohol to him.

Dwyer assured licensees that if there's any question about the stings, they should call him directly.

"The police department is not the enemy," Dwyer said. "We have a responsibility to enforce the law. We want to work with you. We want to provide training. We want to provide education to your employees."

THE POLICE have organized a training program for licensees. Officer Tim Connor will direct it, with the first session on Feb. 1. Quarterly sessions will follow.

"We will form an informal committee to assess the needs of licensees," Connor said. "Once the committee is formed, we will be able to set up a program to address those needs."

McNamara and Don Bosco, of Bosco's Cafe & Grill, Orchard Lake Road and 12 Mile, were named licensee representatives to work with the police.



Kim McNamara, general manager at Mr. Sports One of A Kind on Orchard Lake Road, mixes a drink while tending bar.

Stiffer fines pushed for underage drinkers

By Noreen Flack
staff writer

Farmington Hills Mayor Terry Sever is working full force with state representatives to revise state legislation and increase penalties for minors found in possession of alcohol.

At a meeting with Sever and police Chief William Dwyer Nov. 15, city liquor licensees agreed that until the fine for minors is raised from the current \$25, underage drinking will remain a problem.

Under Senate Bill 619, first-time offenders are fined \$25, second offenders \$50 and third offenders \$100, said Joseph Sarafa, executive direc-

tor of the Associated Food Dealers of Michigan in Southfield.

"I want to see the fines across the board increase and I want to see that the minors have to pay a fair price, too," Sever said. "In some communities, maybe \$50 is legitimate, but in Farmington Hills, the minimum fine for a minor in possession should be \$200."

LEADING THE revision to tougher state law, state Sen. James Barcia, D-Bay City, has introduced Senate Bill 629. The bill raises the minimum fine for minors to \$100 and the maximum to \$500.

In addition to being fined, the mi-

nor would undergo substance abuse screening and perform community services to be determined by the court.

A minor found using fraudulent identification or a person who furnishes fraudulent identification to a minor is guilty of a misdemeanor, the bill said.

The person is subject to be fined. The driver's license of first-time offenders would be suspended for 90 days; of second offenders, for six months; and of third offenders, for one year.

SB 629 has been passed by the Senate committee and will now be taken to the Senate floor. It hasn't yet gone

to the House, Sarafa said.

ALTHOUGH THE fine would be against the minor, parents would most likely pay the price, Dwyer said. An increase in fines will therefore promote parental awareness and make parents more responsible, he said.

"Right now, we're up against state law," Sever said. "As soon as state law is amended, we will be in the position to write a local ordinance to offset that."

Some licensees said they pay the price for underage customers using fraudulent identification.

SINCE THE Farmington Hills Police Department's first police sting (see related story), 201 licensees have been checked and 197 total violations have been issued:

- 97 license violations for sale of alcohol to minors were forwarded to

'I want to see the fines across the board increase and I want to see that the minors have to pay a fair price, too.'

— Mayor Terry Sever.

the LCC.

- three license violations for allowing people younger than 18 to sell alcohol were forwarded to the LCC.

- 97 employees received misdemeanor tickets under city ordinance for furnishing alcohol to minors.

The LCC has issued 82 penalties to licensees, ranging from a \$100 fine to a 10-day suspension with the average fine \$350, Dwyer wrote in a November report to Sever.

Judges at the 47th District Court in Farmington have handed down 77 penalties on ordinance violations issued to employees for selling alcohol to minors. Fines ranged from dismissal to \$500, with an average \$66.

The city's strong stand on the sale of alcohol to minors has spurred stiffer fines from the LCC and the court, Dwyer said.

"We still feel that we must continue our efforts to attain maximum penalties for violators," he said.

Operation/Cooperation partners

Farmington Hills Operation/Cooperation partners:

- **LICENSEES**
 - Adequately train employees.
 - Reinforce the need to check identification. Elevate employee consciousness. "If in doubt, check it out!"
 - Work with the police, report all violations.
 - Post warnings at checkouts. "Identification necessary for the purchase of alcoholic beverages."
 - Have cashiers wear badges. "I check ID."
 - Prominently display liquor license.
- **CITY COUNCIL**
 - Promote responsible behavior among residents and licensees.

- Increase minimum fines for a licensee, employee or patron found violating liquor laws.
- Recommend liquor license suspensions.
- Withdraw liquor licenses from chronic violators.
- Encourage residents to support establishments that operate within the law.
- List cooperative licensees in the city newsletter.

- **POLICE DEPARTMENT**
 - Continue periodic "Operation: Liquor Strike" stings, do as often as practical.
 - Target violators twice in six months, non-violators once per year.
 - Develop open communication between enforcement divisions and licensees.

- **FARMINGTON SCHOOLS**
 - Drive home concerns about alcohol and other substance abuse through education about the dangers and effects involved.
 - Make students fully aware of current laws and penalties.
 - Report known violators among licensed establishments.

Strip mall hearing tonight

By James Radabaugh
staff writer

Area residents will have a chance tonight to voice their concerns regarding a proposed Commerce Township rezoning that would allow construction of a strip shopping center on Haggerty Road near 14 Mile.

The Commerce Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. on proposed revisions to the township's master plan for development. Among areas up for rezoning is the site where the Haggerty Development Co. is proposing to build a 300,000-square-foot shopping center that has drawn opposition from residents of West Bloomfield, Farmington and Commerce.

Oponents say another shopping center in the area is unnecessary and will conflict with the goals of neighboring communities to promote the development of residential housing in the area.

The Haggerty Development Co. has requested the property be rezoned from office to commercial use to allow construction of the shopping center, according to Richard Crawford, Commerce Township planning director.

Crawford said the proposed development is a "small to medium" strip mall that will probably be anchored with a grocery store. "Your basic strip-type shopping area," he said.

A public hearing on the development was held in spring, but action on the project was tabled pending revision of the master plan, Crawford said.

Lorna McEwen, co-president of Concerned Citizens for West Bloomfield, said her organization will oppose the project.

"We have enough malls in the area and that extends beyond our borders," she said. "New malls tend to draw

business away from old malls... we're just moving things around. There's obviously no need."

McEwen said the site of the proposed shopping center is home to important wetlands, including one of the most important bays in southeastern Michigan. She said that although the development won't go into the bog, it will cause "tremendous environmental damage."

West Bloomfield recently rezoned much of the property on the east side of Haggerty to residential and other less intensive zonings.

McEwen said she believes the present push to build the shopping center, which apparently has been planned for years, is a result of progress toward construction of a link between Pontiac Trail and I-696 that has come to be known as the Haggerty Connector — a link that is actually likely to be built a half-mile west of Haggerty in Commerce Township. Concerned Citizens opposed the Haggerty Connector, in part, on the grounds that it would bring unwanted growth to the area.

"This is almost proving our point," she said.

James Galbraith, a principal of the Haggerty Development Co., could not be reached for comment.

Dan Lublin, a Commerce Township resident and owner of Ryan's Tavern near the proposed shopping center, said he fears that if the site is rezoned, it will open the entire area to commercial development.

"They're talking about 300,000-plus square footage," he said. "That's only a start."

The Farmington Hills planning commission is on record as opposing the rezoning that would allow the shopping center.

Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick said he is concerned that the development will build traffic congestion on Haggerty.

"It's overloaded now," he said. "I'm against intense commercial development there. I'm against it until I see plans to relieve the traffic."

held criminally responsible in the case. "That will probably be a big issue in the trial," Miller said last week.

Bonelli, a 17-year-old student at the Farmington Training Center for emotionally impaired students at the time of his arrest, is being held without bail.

Attorneys have indicated that the case is not expected to go to trial before early next year, though no specific dates have been mentioned.

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sides agree to accept the findings in the forensic report, they could proceed Dec. 14 with a competency hearing on whether Bonelli should be tried.

"I don't know what is going to be in the report," Miller said. However, he added he would be surprised if the report finds Bonelli incompetent for trial.

"He knows what's going on," Miller said of Bonelli.

HOWEVER, Wittenberg has said he might seek an independent evaluation of Bonelli's psychiatric condition if the state report says Bonelli is competent for trial. That could set the stage for a confrontation between attorneys, because Miller has said that prosecutors want to move forward on the case for the sake of Fracchia's family.

Attorneys also are expected to clash on whether Bonelli should be