

Disclosure form delay irks resident

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills resident Masha Silver is annoyed that an integral part, a financial disclosure form, of the city's first municipal code of ethics won't accompany the finished document into council chambers next Monday.

"I feel like I'm being thrown a bone without any damned meat on it," Silver said Monday at the last meeting of the five-member ethics committee.

Silver is one of four residents who have served as watchdogs as the code was drafted. City manager William Costick, Mayor Terry Sever, councilmen Aldo Vagnozzi and Law-

rence Lichtman are committee members. Planning commissioner Philip Arnold is an ex-officio member.

The proposed code and integrity report passed muster with the four residents and committee members following a review Monday afternoon. The final draft will be presented to the city council for approval at 7:30 p.m. next Monday. A public hearing is not scheduled.

The proposed code addresses the annual requirement for city officials and city employees to complete a financial disclosure form for each business activity they conduct with the city.

THE PROPOSED code also prohib-

'I feel like I'm being thrown a bone without any damned meat on it.'

— Masha Silver
council watcher

its officials, employees, agents or representatives from participating in anything from which they receive a direct or indirect financial interest. They are required to disclose the "full nature and extent of their inter-

est" before, or concurrently as, they perform their duty.

Despite reference to full financial disclosure there is no reference to the need for a disclosure form. Several examples were made available to the committee though no particular form was drafted or chosen.

"It opens the door to a vast discussion," resident Al Rosen said.

Over Silver's complaints, the committee agreed to present the code without a final disclosure form. Costick will draft a form to be included later.

Silver requested a delay in presenting the code to the council. She suggested that the committee and four residents develop a disclosure form themselves, which would be presented with the code.

"This is a very important form. This is probably the most important part of the code of ethics. I don't think it should be left up to him (Costick). I don't think it's fair to be left up to him."

When Silver continued her opposition, Sever tersely told her to contact the next mayor, Jean Fox, and

perhaps she would form another committee to continue discussion.

"We're not going to bypass it," councilman Aldo Vagnozzi assured Silver.

LICHTMAN SUGGESTED that a disclosure form isn't necessarily needed. He said there is a "conceptual gap" of what the form should address.

The proposed code is designed to be preventive in nature rather than punitive and would apply to all employees, plus elected and appointed officials.

It addresses gratuities, preferential treatment, use of information, disclosure, outside business dealings, doing business with the city, suppression of public information and use of city property.

The accompanying integrity report addresses the need for integrity in city government, why it's important, personal reputations, the city's reputation, standards of behavior. Relationships with others, soliciting gifts of favors and accepting gifts or favors are also addressed.

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Debts shielded

Sale of nursing homes sought

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Seven nursing homes owned by the Farmington Hills-based Care Centers of Michigan have filed for protection under Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Code, according to information from federal court and the company's attorney.

Care Centers president Dr. Edwin Blumberg of Farmington is seeking buyers for all the nursing centers, said his attorney, Earle Erman of Southfield.

In the meantime, the homes continue to operate and patients or their families should not be concerned. "This absolutely will not affect the quality of care. That will continue," said Erman. "Actually, more cash is now available to operate the homes."

In a Chapter 11, a company continues to operate but is immediately shielded from creditors and debts, allowing the company to reorganize and structure a repayment plan. It can operate under Chapter 11 protection for an unspecified amount of time and must file regular financial reports with the court.

CARE CENTERS of Michigan subsidiaries filing for protection include: Oak Hill Care Center in Farmington, Williamsburg Care Center in Farmington Hills; Novi Care Center and Great Lakes Care Center, both in Novi; Livingston Care Center in Howell; Oakland Care Center in Royal Oak; and Lincoln Care Center in Detroit.

Two other homes, Greenbriar Care Center in Howell and St. Benedicts Care Center in Detroit, closed and are being liquidated through the bankruptcy courts, Erman said. When the facilities closed, patients were moved to other Care Center facilities that had extra room, he added.

Blumberg is also working closely with the Michigan Department of Public Health to ensure there is no problem, Erman said. "My client is working with them on a very regular basis," he said. "Their health requirements provide for placing patients if there is a problem."

"But we don't intend that to happen. We think the homes will continue to operate and be sold."

THE SEVEN Chapter 11 cases have been combined for administrative purposes in the bankruptcy division of the U.S. District Court in Detroit under Judge Walter Shapiro.

Top administrators at the Care Centers of Michigan offices on Orchard Lake Road could not be reached for comment on the filings.

The Care Centers of Michigan facilities employ about 1,000 people and have 1,865 beds for patients in Oakland, Wayne and Livingston counties. The company was in the news nearly one year ago, when the Internal Revenue Service froze the corporate assets, causing employees to go payless temporarily.

According to court records, the company's two largest creditors are the IRS, owed nearly \$24,000, and the state, owed just over \$15,000.

Specifically, Oak Hill Care Center received much publicity during the past year, when resident quadriplegic David Rivlin made the decision to have his ventilator removed so nature could run its course. After a court ruling, he was taken to the Brighton house of a friend, where he died in July.

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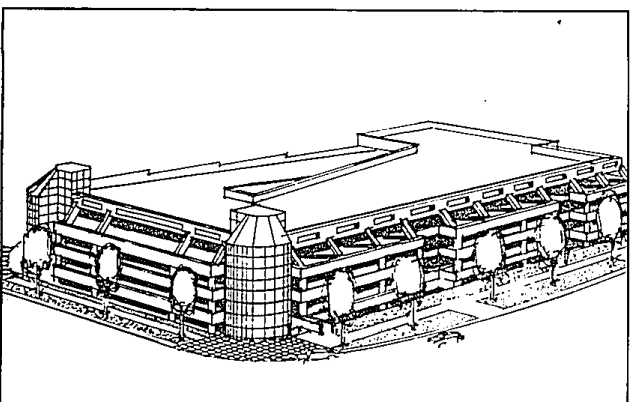
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