

# Dispute resolved after car-buyer pickets dealer

Emmanuel Casenas of Novi just wanted to buy a Jeep Wrangler. Instead of taking home his new car, he found himself — with some friends — walking an informational picket line of his own making Tuesday. He was protesting what he believed was unfair treatment by local auto dealer Bob Saks in Farmington Hills.

"Despite Casenas' protest, there's a good chance all will end well, because a Chrysler representative happened to be in the dealership when Casenas protested.

"In the long run, we took a bad situation and made it a good one," said Frank Lopez, Bob Saks Jeep Eagle general manager and vice president.

The problem began when Casenas picked out a Jeep — that at the time was being sold under Chrysler's plan for 7.9-percent financing and a rebate — and put \$100 down and signed an agreement to purchase.

When he returned to finalize the deal Casenas was told it had to be renegotiated. But Lopez said there was a reason for that. The Chrysler incentive program expired between the time he gave a down payment

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— Frank Lopez  
vice president and general manager,  
Bob Saks Jeep Eagle

and the time he returned to the dealership.

"I JUST want to let other buyers beware of this kind of activity," said Casenas, a former West Bloomfield resident who was picketing the entire length of the Saks motor mall with four friends. "I've tried to deal reasonably with the owner. When I was buying I was their (the dealership's) best friend."

Coincidentally, while Casenas picketed, Chrysler district manager Tim Keenan was in the dealership.

"He (Keenan) told the salesman we would honor it (7.9 percent financing)," Lopez said, adding the rebate, however, could not be honored. "We told him this was an issue of good will."

Casenas could not be reached to confirm the dealership's decision. But a family member late Tuesday said he and the dealership did negotiate.

Casenas still doesn't have the car he wants because he has yet to meet some Chrysler credit requirements. But Lopez believes the incident will resolve on a good note.

"Sales are down as it is. We don't need bad publicity. We want to make business," Lopez added.

Casenas told the Observer during the picket that he intended the informational picketing to last "a couple of hours" on the public sidewalk running along Grand River in front of the business. He said he cleared his plans with the Farmington Hills police before hitting the pavement.



Emmanuel Casenas of Novi (left) and his friend, Mike Stokey of Westland, take to the pavement with picket signs Tuesday in front of the Bob Saks motor mall on Grand River, east of Drake, Farmington Hills. He was protesting a dispute with the dealership.

SHARON LEMIEUX/Star photographer

# Peltz-MDOT land is heart of parks millage request

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

The fate of the 72-acre Peltz-MDOT land is the heart of an expected springtime renewal request of the

Farmington Hills half-mill parks and recreation tax.

On that the seven Farmington Hills City Council members agree. But there is still disagreement and uncertainty as to whether the required parks and recreation master plan and an action plan to accompany any parks and recreation tax request takes form.

"Unless we are specific... we don't have a chance in hell of passing this millage," councilman Jonathan Grant said.

City Manager William Costick agreed. "The residents want assurance (development of ball fields and soccer fields) is not going to be in certain places (on Peltz-MDOT)."

Costick asked the council to review his rewritten version of the parks and recreation action plan after he heard comments that parks and recreation commissioners have not been specific enough.

Costick planned to take his revised plan — with increased costs to commissioners at their regular meeting Tuesday. A public hearing on the five-year parks and recreation plan is scheduled before the planning commission at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 24.

PARKS and recreation commissioners' proposed five-year \$14 million plan — expected to be financed

with voter-approved tax money — exceeds the estimated \$6 million the half-mill tax for five years would generate, Costick said.

Commissioners, Costick said, are beginning to consider extending a half-mill tax to six, seven or eight years. "We can't sell a program that's going to fall short," Costick said. At eight years, a half-mill could generate \$9.6 million. It's hoped state grants could also be used to finance projects.

The five-year half-mill levy expired July 1990. Though no date has been scheduled for a public vote, city officials expect to schedule it for April or May so the tax can be levied in July.

Commissioners' five-year action plan includes proposed land acquisition, development of Little League and soccer fields, cultural and senior adult programs and facilities, money toward a teen center, Heritage Park

improvements, ballfields on the Peltz-MDOT, south of I-696, west of Farmington Road.

The proposed plan also addresses bike paths, golf course expansion and acquisition, new vans for senior adult programs, purchase of a snow-making machine for Heritage Park and an outdoor swimming pool, which council members already say they want deleted from the plan.

But there are plenty of issues about the proposed parks and recreation plans and particularly Peltz-MDOT that have not yet been addressed. Another study session will be scheduled to discuss the Peltz-MDOT land.

COUNCIL MEMBERS are wondering whether they collectively accept landscape architect John Grissim's report on how Peltz-MDOT should be developed and how it should be protected.

They are still uncertain whether to reserve a portion of the land south of I-696, west of Farmington Road, for a new and expanded library, an issue voters in the future are expected to address.

"I'm not willing to say I want a library there. I think the citizens should decide that," said councilwoman Nancy Bates, who suggested reserving acreage on the east side of the Peltz property for a library, should voters agree to pay for an expansion of the facility.

And council members are asking themselves what should be done with the land — if anything — if a library is not built on the acreage.

"If the library is not built on Peltz-MDOT, then the land should not go for active recreation," councilwoman Jean Fox said.

Councilman Larry Lichtman, how-

ever, said he is uncomfortable with "bleeding out" land for the library. He's also uncomfortable with the Grissim report, adding that it is not what he expected it to be.

LIGHTMAN ASKED Costick if a consultant from city planners Villan-Leman, can analyze the report for another perspective. "I'm not suggesting we go out and get more full blown studies. He (Grissim) has his point of view, which is fine. There's different perspectives on development of any land."

Councilman Ben Marks agreed. "This was a particular plan from one particular mind."

Others said they thought the Grissim report would be followed. "I was hoping the Grissim report would be a basis for a final decision," Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said.

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