



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

The stumps mark where five trees once stood behind the Twin Orchard office on Rockdale, east of Orchard Lake Road.

Neighbors upset about trees

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— that have been removed — remaining where nature put them.

But he's also required to make sure drainage flows properly. A wall also must be put behind the building. It would have traveled through where the five trees stood.

That, Downes said, was the problem. DALE COUNTEGAN, Farmington Hills community development and planning director, said that removing the trees not only violated the city's tree ordinance, which requires prior permission, but also violates Downes' site plan.

"They approached it: 'do we do the wall or do we cut the trees.' That was their fatal mistake," Countegan said.

Even if Downes had applied to remove the trees, which he didn't, Countegan said he would have been denied. The site plan shows the trees were to remain. Now that the trees are gone, however, Downes is re-

quired to replace the trees.

Those trees behind Yanke's house were to serve as a buffer or fence, which meant that, according to a variance obtained by the residents, Downes wouldn't have to put a required screening wall there. Downes gave up four parking spaces for that.

Downes and his partners say they have every intention of making things right. But they need time and they especially need good weather. And the city and residents plan to hold them to it.

"We are working very intently with the city to atone for my sin even though it may have been a logical thing to do," Downes said. "It was logical to us. But that's not the way the city wanted us to think."

Downes doesn't have a permanent certificate of occupancy because site work remains. That includes cleaning up debris, finishing the wall, the underground pipe to carry the water to the roadway ditch, grading and the wall by Trombly's. The building, however, is safe to occupy.

I-696 noise shield sought

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ers when an area meets certain criteria, including noise at a certain decibel limit and the cost cannot exceed \$15,000 per household.

In the case of Highway 96, the state didn't want to put in a noise berm because it would cross a wetland and they believed the cost would exceed \$30,000 for the two houses.

The cost indeed is expected to "be slightly more than" \$30,000. The city will pick up the difference. To avoid

the wetlands, city officials plan to bend the berm along the west property line of the westernmost of the two houses.

That's just not enough for Schulkins. He says many residents along the freeway are suffering. "You just don't get any rest in this house. You sit in our living room and you swear the cars are going straight through here."

Schulkins is hoping neighbors will help him get the ball rolling. And he's not sure that once he completes the petition drive whether he'll go to the city council or straight to the state.

"I'm not defending MDOT. You can hear the noise, but it's to what

degree you can hear the noise," Blaisell said.

THAT MEANS the noise where Schulkins and other neighbors live must meet MDOT's decibel level. If it does, the cost of fixing that problem can't exceed \$15,000 per household. And only those houses that were built before the announcement of the 1989 widening of I-696 count.

The same criteria, Blaisell said, has applied to three other spots in Farmington Hills along the widened freeway. Work is expected this summer for a berm along Camlet Court and a wall along Farmington Meadows, south of I-696, between Middlebelt and Inkster roads.

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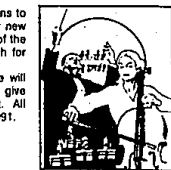
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THE LONG WALK HOME (PG)
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10:00, 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:00, (11:30)

SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (R)
10:00, 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 7:00, 9:15, (11:30)

TOY SOLDIERS (R)
10:00, 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 7:00, 9:15, (11:30)

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY (R)
10:00, 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 7:00, 9:15, (11:30)

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The point is that anything that can't help, well may hurt. Don't take arthritis supplements unless clearly needed. All remedies carry not only a cost but a risk.

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