

Olde Town neighbors, city team up for cleanup

By JOANNE MALINSEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

Olde Town is about 500 yards worth of debris lighter.

"We asked them to clean up their yards and put things out that aren't in their regular trash pickup," said Mossie Kurzeja, treasurer of the Olde Town-Meadowbrook Heights Homeowners Association.

Olde Town board members and residents put their efforts where their mouths are recently — in cooperation with the city — to clean and spruce up their turf in south-east Farmington Hills.

Board members have made no secret that they want blight, such as commercial vehicles parked on streets, other unsightly problems in their area cleaned up. That in-cludes help through neighborhood cleanups, as well as city enforce-

ment of zoning and code regula-tions.

"This cleaned it up. You don't see the debris," said board president Don Loyland. "This will allow the city to come in and see what blight there is (remaining)."

Farmington Hills' Public Works Department did the heavy work. Once residents placed their items on the curbside, crews came along over a two-day period and picked it up. The city's trash hauler, Waste Management Inc., also was in-volved.

To get residents involved in the cleanup, board members, such as Kurzeja and Ida Ranebottom, board secretary, walked door-to-door, urging participation.

"Any homeowners' association can request a clean up. Some resi-dents did not take advantage of it," Kurzeja said. "But we asked them

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*Don Layland
homeowner president*

to clean up their yards and things that they can't get rid of in their regular trash pickup."

About 40-50 percent of the resi-dents participated, according to Dale Countegnan, director of city planning and community develop-ment. "That's pretty substantial."

The cleanup is one of several things board members are doing in conjunction with the city to remove the blight and maintain the older area.

"I am optimistic," Ranebottom

said. "Our stand with regard to our zoning is that if you don't partici-pate in the cleanup and you are ticketed, we will stand behind the city 100 percent (in enforcement)."

The city has used federal block grant money to defray the cost of a code enforcement officer's salary in southeast Farmington Hills for the past two years.

But residents — many who op-pose the use of federal money for the city employee — have contin-ued to complain that violations and

blight continue. Following com-plaints about the code enforcement program this past spring, city staff developed suggestions to help clear up violations.

"We're doing our best to work with Olde Town, particularly the board," said Dale Countegnan, plan-ning and community development director. "We need to educate them to what we are doing."

City staff and board members now meet quarterly to discuss cer-tain violations, for example. Resi-dents also have offered their help in court with letters supporting en-forcement.

At the meetings — one is sched-uled for this month — city staff and board members also discuss the status of certain code violations, as well as other issues, including what else can be done to improve Olde Town.

"I think Farmington Hills knows

there's a homeowners association down here and know it's active," Layland said. "Communication is what's important. It takes both sides. If you don't tell them what the problems are, you'll be ig-nored."

Kurzeja says she supports open communications and the coopera-tive efforts. "I don't think anything we've asked for is unreasonable. Is it unreasonable to not want com-mercial vehicles parked in your neighborhood?"

The board, however, is also look-ing beyond just the residential area. Kurzeja said talk now involves re-claiming sidewalks along the major thoroughfares such as Grand River where concrete — not grass and landscaping — runs from the curb to businesses.

"We want the sidewalk back. We want grass so cars can't park there," she said.

Mysteries of science explored

Is it magic or science? You can decide Wednesday, Aug. 10, as Scheer Assembly Productions cap-tivates audiences during "Mysteries of Science" as the second annual downtown Farmington "Summer Fun Series" rolls into its ninth week.

The 15-minute show, developed in cooperation with Dow Chemical Scientists as part of the company's

winning "Touch Tech" program, touches how household items can be used to perform science tricks that appear to be magic. Items like water balloons, baking soda, glass jars, and paper are used to illustrate sev-eral principles of chemistry, phys-ics, and natural science.

Doug Scheer, host of the program that also incorporates music and comedy, said, "The most appealing

part of the show is that kids are learning without realizing it. It looks like magic and it's all sci-ence."

Scheer has appeared throughout the United States, performing over 500 shows every year.

"Mysteries of Science" will be performed at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

The "Summer Fun Series" is held every Wednesday throughout the summer, and is a program of events including a variety of perfor-mances and interactive experiences for families.

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ducted a surveillance of the house. The car and the driver were later taken to the police department.

"We believe he was the driver of the EXP at the time of the shooting," Nebus said.

The man, whom police believe was the shooter, was arrested early Friday morning in Detroit. "They (suspects) are claiming self-defense because they're alleg-ing that the victim (Coleman) pointed a replica of a pistol at them in the parking lot," Nebus said.

Police believe Coleman

thought the two men in the Ford EXP were in an earlier fight and consequently pointed the fake pistol at the men, which in turn led to the shooting, Nebus said.

On the night of the shootings, police received a series of 911 calls between 10:52 p.m.-11:05 p.m. The calls reported a large fight inside the center filled with 400 partygoers who were attend-ing a "Shake What Ya Mama Gave Ya Jam" dance. Within minutes, a second call came in re-ported a disturbance in the park-ing lot, followed by a third call,

reporting that two people had been shot, Dwyer said.

A fourth call reported a second shooting inside Mercy Center. "That never took place," Dwyer said.

When police arrived they found Coleman and Coakley shot near the back door of Mercy Center. Because of panic in the parking lot — with many of the par-tygoers ages 13-23 rushing to get away — and concern that prob-lems would escalate, other police agencies were called in.

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