

## POINTS OF VIEW

# Power Road residents look to others to join their fight

On May 18 there was a meeting of the Farmington Planning Commission. On the agenda was a proposal for a high density residential development on the west side of Power Road, north of 11 Mile Road.

For those of you not familiar with the proposal, this small one-half mile section of Power Road is a gravel road that dead ends at Oakland Community College. The majority of its current residents (only 30 homes) live on large parcels with acreage, in this very low density area of Farmington Hills.

With 100 percent of its residents petitioning and unanimous approval of the City Council, this road was declared a natural beauty road last fall. This developer has been sent back to the original drawing board. But he will be back with another high density proposal. It seemed our requests for a more enlightened approach fell on deaf ears.

For those of you not there, you should have been. For more than two hours the residents, with voices cracking with emotion, declared their love for the area and for the treasure we possess.

People who never before spoke in public found their courage to speak out on this deeply felt issue.

## Many supported us

When we began our struggle several months back, we were concerned that no one would care about us since we are such a small road, but we needn't have worried. In addition to the whole-

hearted support of the Power Road residents, at least 16 other people from the surrounding area and throughout the city spoke on our behalf.

Among them were people from Howard Road (another natural beauty road) and COHA (Council of Homeowner Associations) joining in our plea to our city.

We were reminded how our beautiful rolling hills, woods and meadows are an asset to this entire community. With its low traffic volume, it is ideal for a stroll or a jog, riding a bicycle or a horse (yes, several people on our road still own horses). We are truly grateful to all who came and supported us.

The result of this meeting was a small but perhaps, fleeting, victory. The developer has been sent back to the proverbial drawing board. But he will be back with another high density proposal. It seemed our requests for a more enlightened approach fell on deaf ears.

## Developer's motives

His only concern is with fulfilling the minimal requirements of current zoning.

He doesn't care that the entire area, south of Oakland Community College to 10 Mile, Orchard Lake to west of Farmington, consists of individually built homes, far exceeding those minimum requirements. His motive, of course, is profit, to cram in as many homes sites as possible, desecrating our land and then leaving this community.

## GUEST COLUMNIST



JIM AND MAUREEN THEIRING

The developer told the residents, in a meeting with us last week, that he will only be developing the site: clearing the land, cutting down the trees, and putting in the roads, water and sewers, then selling the lots to others.

He even asked us if we wanted to buy some of these lots. That was pretty funny, in a sick way.

If, as the planning commission warned us, our ordinances allow this, then something is definitely wrong with our zoning.

This city is 94 percent developed right now. Will we continue to allow developers to rape and plunder our remaining parcels until nothing is left? How many more Timbercrest or North Power Road developments will it take to get our city's attention?

## Maybe a moratorium

Our master plan is currently being reassessed. Perhaps a moratorium

should be placed on some of these larger projects until this city and its residents decide what they want to become in the next century.

Something needs to be done to protect our quality of life, by preserving what makes Farmington Hills such a beautiful and a desirable place to live.

The stability of this city should be important to our business community also. People spend money on their homes if they are intent on staying, and customer loyalty can be preserved.

If the planning commission does not have the power to demand that developers, in an area whose character is already established, conform with that area, how are laws protecting us?

The city council has the power to change those laws. And we must demand that the time is now.

What happens next to our natural beauty road? It would seem that our argument that our fragile road cannot withstand the duress of heavy construction traffic, utility placement, and the onslaught of many more cars from this development onto our road, should be enough on its own to stop this high density project.

Anyone who regularly crosses the intersection of 11 Mile and Power during rush hours, can already attest how problematic that can be, and it will get much worse.

Most developments this size would be accessed off a primary road, not a secondary gravel road, much less a natural beauty road. Why can't this be required?

## Do residents count?

Don't our concerns about drainage, our septic systems or contamination of our wells carry any weight?

Our engineering department assures us there will be no problem, yet admitted that perhaps the health department information received was outdated and incomplete, after we pointed out obvious discrepancies.

If we do not stop over-development now, when do we? Is there a more deserving area to defend or a less deserving project now proposed? Our window of opportunity for this city is closing. Perhaps the time is right for our city government to start fighting back on our behalf. We have to stop bending over backwards to accommodate every developer that salivates at doing business in our community. For our next city council election, every candidate should make clear how they stand on this issue.

The North Power Road-Philbrick Farms Homeowners Association would also like to thank the Observer Newspapers for their support.

Join us please, citizens of Farmington Hills. Demand more from our elected officials. Perhaps little North Power Road can become the mouse that roared.

Jim and Maureen Theiring, Farmington Hills residents since 1984, operate their own business, Sunshine Installation Company.

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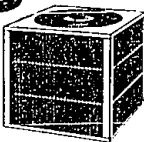
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