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Compromise preserves park's natural name

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

■ Councilman Jon Grant suggested the compromise sign, which would use the "Woodland Hills Park" name suggested by the contest winner and add "a nature park" under the title.

The word "preserve" had Farmington Hills City Council members in a jam at Monday's regular meeting.

After what at times became a heated discussion, the council compromised on a proposal to change the name of the Woodland Hills Park by adding the words, "a nature park" on the proposed sign for the park on the west side of Farmington on the south side of I-696.

Jeff Stewart, a member of both the beautification commission and the parks and recreation commission, said calling the park "Woodland Hills Nature Preserve" would tell it like it is, not keep people out of the natural park.

"The word preserve just represents what the park is," he said.

But parks and recreation commissioners had compromised by a 5-4 vote to name it "Woodland Hills Nature Park."

Parks and recreation commission member Judy Antishan, who told council members she was speaking as a private citizen, not as a member of the commission, said she did not want the word preserve in the title because it would discourage people from using the park.

Antishan said after talking to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, she was concerned that if the park were a preserve, it might become off limits to residents.

"Some of us are afraid the use could be changed," she said.

But Masha Silver, a city council watcher and member of the committee that worked on the acquisition and development of the park, said parks in West Bloomfield (Nature Preserve) and Rochester (Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve) were popular destinations for their city's residents.

Silver also questioned Antishan's use of authority from the DNR because committee members had not been given any written information from the agency, a name of a DNR representative or any other authority concerning nature preserves. Silver did name names — Mayor Joanne Smith, Councilman Larry Lichtman and former parks and recreation chairman Dennis Fitzgerald — of those she said had advocated changing the passive nature of the park.

"I don't believe I have ever advocated bulldozing Woodland Hills Park," Lichtman said.

Smith said she had not advocated development, but like Lichtman, had considered it as a possible site for a new library. Fitzgerald called it a "silly issue."

"Whatever we call it, it's not going to be developed in an improper way," he said.

Councilman Jon Grant suggested the compromise sign, which would use the "Woodland Hills Park" name suggested by the contest winner and add "a nature park" under the title.

Ballot from page 1A

al," said Assistant City Manager Dave Call.

Call said no city money will be spent on campaigning for the proposal, but he hopes a citizens committee will step forward to push for the measure.

Police Chief Bill Dwyer and Fire Chief Richard Marinucci said they will do all they can to make sure voters understand the proposal and what the money will buy.

"We're willing to go out and meet that challenge," Dwyer said.

"We will refuse no invitation," Marinucci said. "Our role is to provide information and not advise a yes vote."

The city proposed the public safety tax as a way of providing additional manpower to both departments, a fifth fire station and other equipment. In its first five years, the tax would provide money to add 14 police patrol officers, a sergeant, dispatch supervisor, crime analyst and cadet. It would also provide eight full-time firefighters and four full-time shift commanders to give the city one round-the-clock full-time staffed, centrally located fire station.

Those changes would allow the city to better investigate and follow up on crimes, improve arrests and improve both police and firefighter response times, Call said.

CLARIFICATION

A story in the Aug. 3 Observer should have listed Jason Smith, 14, as the trumpeter who performed "Taps" last week at the Detroit Cooley High alumni picnic in Livonia's Rotary Park. This year's picnic included a celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

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MENS: Mon. 7:25 pm; Tues. 6:30 pm; Wed. 7:30 pm; Thurs. 6:30 pm; RETIREES Fri. 10:00 pm
MIXED: Sun. 3:30 pm; Sun (alt) 3:30 pm; Sun (alt) 6:00 pm; Sun (alt) 8:30 pm; Mon. 5:30 pm; Wed (alt) 5:30 pm; Wed 8:30 pm; Thur (alt) 5:30 pm; Thur 7:30 pm; Fri 7:30 pm; Fri (alt) 8:30 pm; Fri 9:30 pm; Fri (alt) 9:30 pm; Sat (alt) 6:00 pm; Sat (alt) 8:30 pm
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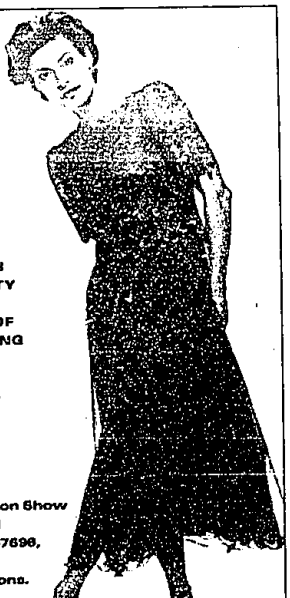
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