



Wood and more wood: Farmington businessman John Kanyo, above, opened his business April 1 and already needs more room. He hopes he can find a larger space in the Village Mall. At right, Kanyo makes birdhouses, shelves and other items of wood.



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LAMBERT

## Man's Farmington business comes out of wood work

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

A chance to chuck the day job to open a business: How wood "you be board?" reasoned John Kanyo whose Something Wood sits in Farmington's Village Mall. Mahogany and cedar aromas replenish the senses. Kanyo sits behind the counter, reading a novel set in 18th Century Scotland. Classical music filters through a speaker.

Customers come in quietly, carefully surveying the selection of ornate woodcrafts.

Kanyo, 40, worked as a sales manager (for an oil company until) found he traveled on one business trip too many.

Often, he'd leave on a Sunday and return on a Friday. He saw more of runways than his family.

One time he was nearly missing the birth of his daughter

when he was away in Indianapolis, Ind. He made it to the hospital five minutes before Jennifer, 6, was born.

Tired of being a frequent flier instead of a husband and father around the house, Kanyo quit. He opened Something Wood in the Grand River and Farmington Road center April 1.

"The way my wife (Diane) and I looked at it, the absolute worst thing that could happen is that I'd have to go and look for another position," Kanyo said.

He's already had to look, but it was in search of more space for his fledgling business. In October, Something Wood will move within the Village Mall.

Kanyo will carry highly sought collectibles such as Tom Clark's "Gnomes" and Timothy Wolfe's "Wood Sprites."

Wood crafts are his specialty,

though.

Kanyo has been working with wood since his teens at Allen Park High. He kept with the hobby, acquiring more power tools along the way.

Book shelves, baker racks and birdhouses are examples of his handiwork.

Several artisans have their wares on display in Kanyo's shop. A series of decoy ducks are the work of a Huntington Woods police officer. A bright yellow wood caboose was made by an artist who works on the railroad.

Along with a profit, Kanyo shares a kindred spirit with other woodworkers.

"There's a rich and warm feeling. It's an accomplishment when you've made something," Kanyo said. "Wood does smell good."

Woodworking is a form of relaxation, he said. Starting a

business selling woodcrafts can provoke anxiety.

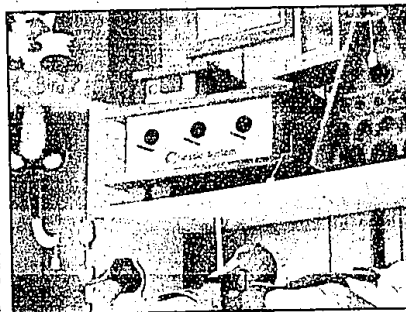
Slow times initially didn't pacify those fears.

"It was unnerving," Kanyo said. "I know I have to pay the rent in 30 days and nobody is walking into the store."

Things have been on an upswing since. Kanyo has been particularly heartened by the support he's received from other downtown Farmington merchants. The Farmington Bakery, for example, has fliers advertising Something Wood.

The business name, itself, has a history. When the Kanyos would go over their Christmas list, invariably it would be something wood.

"After so many years, you can give so many things made of wood," Kanyo said. "They start to say, 'Oh geez, thanks John.'"



On consignment: Area crafters have placed items for sale in John Kanyo's Farmington store.

## Planning commission urges Power Road pastoral zoning

BY JILL COVATTA  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills planning commissioners recommended rezoning one of the city's oldest and most pastoral areas to reflect that difference.

But the developer and property owners who have plans to build a 35-house subdivision on their property under current zoning won't take that decision lying down.

Planning commissioners approved the request of Power Road residents to change the zoning from RA-1 to RA-1A, a less dense zoning with 140-foot frontages and 33,000 lot sizes. Several residents spoke up in support of the change, including some whose houses or lots did not conform to the new zoning.

"I moved here 11 years ago to be in a lost part of Farmington Hills," said Bruce Cohen, whose property is non-conforming. "I'd like to keep it that way."

And most residents who spoke, including many who had lived along the Natural Beauty Road, agreed that the less dense RA-1A, which is the zoning of the neighboring subdivisions of Biddiscombe Woods and Quakertown Valley Farms is more appropriate.

The planning commission's recommendation to change from the RA-1 zoning, which requires lot minimums of 90 by 120 feet, to the more spacious RA-1A, must go to the city council for approval.

Supporters presented 90 letters of support and many speakers after by Kernicky, a 25-year

resident, made the case for the North Power Road Homeowners Association. Kernicky said 83 percent of the residents had signed petitions for the change.

He added that most of the residents have moved to the area within the past 20 years, to properties that are conforming and have newer wells and septic systems.

The Philbrick Tavern, which is on the road, was built in 1827 and Powerville, which was on the road, was one of the first communities in the area.

"This is where Farmington's heritage started," Kernicky said.

But Developer Joe Trupiano said changing the zoning after the property owners had bought and planned to develop the property under the RA-1 zoning, was unfair.

"The Power Road Association didn't establish what criteria by which we are governed," he said. "Farmington Hills does."

Trupiano said changing the zoning would not only deny him and property owners the right to develop the land, it would prevent 35 potential homes and the "normal people and taxpayers" that want to live in the city.

Louise Louis, a former Hills resident who wants to live in one of the proposed houses, went further, mentioning the "L" word.

"Power Road belongs to all of us," said the former Harrison High School math teacher. "We'd like to share the beauty. It's unfair to change the requirements, and we will litigate if our rights are denied."

Attorney Steve Kiousis, who represents the Oakwood Hills development, said the developer, whose site plan had been turned down once by the planning commission, would pursue the trimmed-down 35-unit development before city council.

"But we'll do whatever we legally can to protect our rights," he said.

City planning consultant Claude Coates said the proposed zoning change would better fit the nature and size of the lots along Power Road. And all but Commissioner Jack Rajkovich agreed.

"A good plan 10 years ago may not be the best one now," said Commissioner Glen Fleischacker, adding that the 1988 master plan changed the area from a more restrictive RA-2 to RA-1. "It makes sense."

"We should have lots of choices in Farmington Hills," said Commissioner Paul Blisman. "There should be diversity of housing."

Blisman said as a taxpayer, he was willing to take the risk in court that the zoning change would hold up.

"I don't want to live in a one-color town," said Commissioner Brenda Kandt, alluding to the prevalence of hardwoods along Power Road. "I like to see green trees that change color in the fall, that's what I like about Michigan."

Commission Chairwoman Jori VanHouten said the zoning change was "very reasonable."

"It makes great sense in an area which already has large lots," she said.



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## Hills council backs foundation

Farmington Hills City Council voted unanimously to support the formation of the Farmington Hills Community Foundation for Children, Youth, and Families.

The purpose of the foundation is to provide funds for the general benefit of the children, youth and families of the cities of Farmington Hills and Farmington.

The foundation will be formed by supporting and encouraging charitable, scientific, literary and educational programs that

will improve the physical environment, living, working and social conditions in the area.

The foundation will provide a mechanism to provide funds for such activities as the Decentralized Youth Program, Family Day in the Park, Family Night at the Farmington Hills Activity Center and other activities which focus on children, youth and families," according to Councilwoman Nancy Bates.

The formation of a foundation for the purpose of benefiting children, youth and families in the community has been recently proposed by the City's Commission on Children, Youth and Families.

The foundation will be an independent corporation with non-profit status, which will make it easier for both individuals and corporations to support these activities, according to Bates.