

### Farmington Observer

(USPS 187-840)

Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric, 225 E. Main, Farmington, MI 48024-0910. Second class postage paid at Farmington, MI 48024-0910. Postmaster: Send address changes to Observer & Eccentric, 225 E. Main, Farmington, MI 48024-0910, telephone 844-1130.

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

One year (12 issues) \$12.00  
Three months (3 issues) \$3.75  
Six months (6 issues) \$7.50  
Home delivery service per copy \$1.00  
Per copy \$1.00  
Yearly \$12.00

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# Oil exploration taps concerns

By BILL COFFERT  
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills City Council must deal with an issue that seems to be bubbling just below the surface.

In fact, oil and gas exploration in the city is at least 8 years old. But West Bay Exploration Co., with Michigan headquarters in Traverse City, is now planning to build a well head on property east of Haggerty Road between Eight and Nine Mile Roads.

Hills planning commissioners approved the site plan, 6-2, at the Nov. 9 meeting. The site plan, along with other considerations, will go before the city council before any drilling can begin. "Our job was just to evaluate the site plan," said Planning Commission Paul Blizman. "They are planning an exploratory well to see if they should have producing wells."

Blizman said the company

**■ 'Our job was just to evaluate the site plan. They are planning an exploratory well to see if they should have producing wells.'**

Paul Blizman  
Planning Commissioner

would have to obtain Michigan Department of Natural Resources permit. The city council will hold public hearings before it can take any action.

Although the company has wells and collection systems in the area, including at the Northville Regional Psychiatric Hospital and Kensington Metropark, residents approached about angle drilling that would effect their subdivisions have often complained about the practice in a

residential setting.

Planning Commissioner Jack Rajkovich, who along with Commissioner Glen Fritschacker voted against approval, said oil and gas exploration is not appropriate for Farmington Hills. "This is inappropriate both aesthetically and functionally for our city," Rajkovich said. "It realistically doesn't have a place here."

And Hills resident Ruth Moolhman, a member of the city's historical commission, said she was concerned about the potential effect on two historic homes in the area.

"It doesn't fit in well with the ambience of our community," she said. "It is going to have an impact."

Planning Commissioner Mike Sweeney, who has many years of engineering experience in the petroleum industry both in Michigan and Texas, said people

should not compare the current situation with what they have seen on TV or in the movies. Sweeney, who worked for Tenco, said if the operation were approved, it would not include traditional oil derricks, but more modest saw horse well heads.

"I asked the questions I needed to because they weren't showing the equipment I thought they would need in their site plan," he said. "I was satisfied with their answers."

Sweeney and Commissioner Brenda Kandt said they believe the issue is now appropriately in the hands of the city council.

"I would like to see what the city council does with it," Kandt said. "They'll have to look above and beyond the site plan."

Sweeney said that whatever the result, he doesn't expect crude spewing over Farmington Hills neighborhoods.

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His hobby is soccer. He has many soccer championship awards.

Kyle plans to go to college after he graduates from high school.

Managing money and learning to deal with people are some of the skills he has learned from his route.

Kyle is the son of Ronald and Barbara Moteyer. He has two brothers, Gerard, 23 and Brett, 20.

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