

COHA surveys on development

Residents' input asked

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A coordinating group for Farmington Hills homeowners associations wants to know what residents think about development.

The Council of Homeowners Associations is conducting a survey with neighborhood groups as part of a recently formed subcommittee that will delve into development and gauge how it affects existing residents.

"We want to talk to people in various neighborhood associations and find out what their experiences have been like," said Andy Nickelhoff, COHA's first vice president who lives in Westgate subdivision.

Though 95 percent of the city is developed, several in-fill projects — those built between existing subdivisions — continue to cause a great deal of concern with residents and rancor at Farmington Hills City Council.

A developer and city settled on a 27-house development on Power Road through a consent judgment, despite protests from nearby residents. The outcome is troubling, Nickelhoff said.

"Under the most restrictive zoning, the development still would've gone through with a few less houses," Nickelhoff said. "It doesn't belong there at all. It sticks out like a sore thumb. It doesn't go with the area."

"That tells us there's an inadequacy in our zoning to address

the problem."

The survey asks respondents if they've had contact with developers during the past five years and whether the experience was positive. COHA officers want to develop a database of developers and whether they have a track record of keeping promises made to existing residents.

People are also asked to rank pending projects — Super Kmart on Orchard Lake and 14 Mile and West Bay oil drilling in the southwest portion of the city — in order of concern.

Surveys are due Dec. 12. Information collected will be shared with COHA's 44 to 50 members and other associations, possibly including other Oakland County homeowners' groups.

COHA may eventually try to collect information on court rulings and judges' decisions on development issues, said Ed Spring, COHA member and Springfield-LaMura subdivision resident. That is "real preliminary," Spring added.

"We don't feel the homeowners' voices have been lost," Spring said. "We had a discussion with different association members were talking about what you can do in certain situations."

The survey isn't intended to be anti-development, either. "We don't want to say, 'You can't develop in Farmington Hills,'" Nickelhoff said. "We just want to say: One, we don't want to change the characteristics of the neighborhood; and, two, that it not overload the existing infrastructure."

Not too cold for fun



Before the snow flew: Brisk temperatures didn't bother 4-year-old Ben Krome of Farmington, who got a push from Marie-Louise Begtsson at Shiuwassee Park last week before the snow began to fall.

STAFF PHOTO
BY TOM HOFFMEYER

Sub teachers pay hiked, more wanted

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The new rate puts Farmington at the top of the substitute pay chart for comparable, surrounding districts.

Tuesday's decision by the Farmington Board of Education to raise the pay for substitute teachers was ripped by several veteran classroom fill-ins, who didn't think the increase was sufficient.

"We have worked for them for years and feel it's a slap in the face," said nine-year district substitute Marsha Kifferstein, shortly after the board voted 5-1 to increase the hourly base rate from \$10.10 to \$10.35. A sub who works a full day will earn about \$75, up from \$73.23; subs with 10 or more days in the same assignment also will receive a 2.4 percent increase to \$100.81 per day or \$13.91 per hour.

Sub teachers Jerry Young, who unsuccessfully implored board members to further study the issue, and Judy Palett said they didn't think the raise — which

takes effect on Dec. 1 — would attract quality fill-ins for an increasingly difficult and demanding job. There are 185 substitutes now on a roster regularly tapped into by the district.

"When you give us a \$1.75 (per day) raise," Young said, "that's not much."

But, according to district personnel director Larry Lobert, the new rate puts Farmington at the top of the substitute pay chart for comparable, surrounding districts. Short-term subs in Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and Walled Lake, for example, earn daily rates of \$69, \$71 and \$69, respectively.

Lobert, during and after the meeting, also detailed a \$5 per

day bonus for those substitutes who worked 60 days the previous year, an effort to reward loyalty and dependability.

"Fifty of our subs will qualify for the previous year's pay differential," Lobert said.

That incentive is hoped to keep the district's substitute pool from declining too severely. There has been some what of a decline in the available pool, Lobert said, because Farmington is hiring substitutes for its full-time teaching staff.

Kifferstein said the substitutes, who do not belong to the teacher's union, were disappointed about the board's decision for another reason — they thought they were told they would have another chance to discuss wages with district personnel before a proposal went to the board. Lobert said such a promise was never made.

"We didn't make that commitment," said Lobert following the meeting. "I did listen to their input. But I don't want to get into an argument about that."

There was never a notion that we were going back and forth" with talks.

Most of the board members (Joseph Skove was absent) backed the proposal. But Jack Inch wasn't thrilled about it.

Inch, a college professor, said the \$10.35 per hour rate "is not a wage for a tremendously difficult job. No way would I have ever substituted. I don't want to solve other people's problems in the classroom."

"If we're looking for substitutes, the amount of the raise per day is minute and the \$10.35 per day bothers me. I don't know what the solution is."

He added that someone could get a job in the labor market and make just as much money without the hassles and headaches.

"This is a case where the private economy is in competition with us," Inch continued, noting that there are jobs out there that are "a lot easier than coming in and meeting a different group of kids every day."

After the meeting, Lobert emphasized how valuable to the district substitutes are.

"We surely value what they give to us, because we couldn't run the schools without them. It's as simple as that," Lobert said.

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Identifying that you have hip pain, may itself represent a challenge.

Pain in the leg you consider as coming from your hip, can actually start from the trochanteric bursa, a pinched sciatic nerve, or the back itself.

Physicians determine you have hip pain by the pattern of discomfort and its radiation, and by the way you walk on the painful leg. Hip pain starts in the groin and radiates down the anterior thigh. In addition your gait consists of a short hopping step on the painful side, with your foot big stiff. Your body does what it can to get off the painful hip joint as fast as possible.

Hip pain can come after an injury or result from wear and tear activities as occurs in the knee and shoulder joint. In addition the hip joint is susceptible to blockage of the artery to the head of the hip itself. With such an occurrence, you have the sudden onset of pain that grows worse daily and eventually continues even when you are off of your foot. If you have cancer and develops hip pain, your doctor must consider if the cancer has spread to that site.

At times, for reasons unknown, fluid accumulates in the hip joint. Distending the joint capsule creates pain resembling that from a fractured hip.

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