

The Farmington Observer

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Suspect charged with shoplifting

By Tim Smith
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In two days' time, a suspected armed robbery of a Farmington gas station turned out to be a case of shoplifting.

But 37-year-old Gregory Gilmour, of Berkley, still faces possible jail time, following his arraignment Thursday, Jan. 20, before 47th District Magistrate Joan Dudley.

Gilmour was charged with shoplifting, said Farmington Public Safety Cmdr. Maria Putt. If convicted, he could receive the maximum penalty of \$600 fine and 93 days in jail.

A not guilty plea was entered

on his behalf, Putt said. Gilmour awaits an examination in 47th District Court, set for 8:30 a.m. Friday, Jan. 28.

Bond for Gilmour was set at \$2,000 or 10 percent cash (\$200). As of Friday, Gilmour had not posted bail and remained in the Oakland County Jail, Putt said.

Originally, a police press release stated that the Sunoco gas station at 31233 Grand River was victimized about 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 18, by an armed robber — who stole two cartons of cigarettes, valued at approximately \$70.

But before the suspect could be arraigned, an investigation indicated a gun had not been recovered

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ered by Southfield police when they made the arrest Tuesday near Telegraph and Nine Mile roads. Farmington police officers also didn't find one when they did a search of the vehicle driven by Gilmour.

The county prosecutor ultimately didn't have sufficient evidence to charge Gilmour with armed robbery. In fact, Putt acknowledged, last Thursday's charge indicated that "this was not considered a robbery" at all.

During the preliminary police investigation, a witness stated that a man pulled out a black

handgun and ordered that he be given two cartons of cigarettes.

Putt reiterated last Thursday that the witness, a gas station employee, thought she did see a handgun used during the crime.

Putt added that the "flurry of activity" at the time of the incident might have contributed to the employee's original statement.

Another witness told police a man left the gas station in a beige Ford Taurus and provided police with a description of the suspect and license plate number. After that information was broadcast via police radio, the suspect was arrested without incident.

Walgreens from page A1

Schafer of Phoenix Land Development had to prove his project qualified for the Planned Unit Development designation, a requirement of city zoning ordinances.

Used only when projects meet certain criteria, the PUD allows one development to encompass a mix of existing zoning districts. Officials believe it will work well in concert with the property's special redevelopment classification under the city's master land use plan.

"Use of the PUD will help promote the goals of the Special Planning Area," said Planning and Community Development Director Dale Countegnan, explaining the parcels present challenges because of the size of the lots, ownership patterns and insufficient width and depth to meet the ordinance.

Countegnan said plans presented by Phoenix Land Development call for the demolition of a single family home, the Breadbasket Deli and Quaker State Mini-Lube, businesses that are expected to relocate.

According to Schafer, eliminating several entrance points to the existing properties will improve traffic safety. While the project falls short of the required parking, the owner of a neighboring apartment complex has agreed to a shared parking arrangement for some of the unused spaces on his property.

He said the PUD was also needed because of setback issues created when the drive-through window was moved to accommo-

date residents' requests that it be placed as far to the west as possible, so it wouldn't have such a direct impact on their properties.

"This use will actually lessen traffic," Schafer said, "because you'll have one major user, rather than several different ones."

While Schafer argued that the project meets each of the PUD criteria set by law, city planning consultant Claude Coates' evaluation recommended against it.

"The problem we had with this issue is we didn't feel the site plan met some of the criteria in the ordinance," he said.

In addition, he felt the land use would conflict with others in the area. When commercial properties penetrate into residential areas, Coates explained, parking districts should be used as a barrier.

"We felt it needed better buffering for homes on the east side of the site," he said. "I think the site plan would have to be quite different to qualify for the PUD. If it was zoned B-3 and if there was enough parking for the apartments, the physical layout could be accommodated."

Neighbors who live nearby don't object and point to the less desirable and more intense uses that could come if the property had only the B-3 commercial zoning. They came to Monday night hearing to speak in favor of the PUD.

Old Town Homeowners Association Board member Carol Boyd said her group appreciated work-

ing with Schafer.

"The developer accommodated us by turning the building and getting it as far away as possible," she said. "He's done everything he could to make this an acceptable project, and the homeowners association is for it."

Massie Kurzeja, who said she's normally not in favor of PUD zoning, told officials she was initially skeptical. Schafer's willingness to work with residents won her over.

"Commercial redevelopment is very important to cities that have older and middle-aged suburbs," she said. "The city that gets its act together best will succeed. Vacancies breed neglect, neglect breeds blight and blight drives away businesses and homeowners."

While council members expressed some concerns about an adjacent parking lot, barrier walls between the business and apartments and even some general opposition to Planned Unit Developments, the vote to designate the PUD was unanimous.

"I think this project is something this neighborhood has been looking for," Councilwoman Vicki Barnett commented.

"If you can convince Massie Kurzeja to speak in favor of this PUD, I will support it," Councilman Jerry Ellis added.

The project will come before officials again, once site plan details like landscaping and parking have been finalized.

C'ville kids pass MEAP

By Larry O'Connor
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When it comes to social studies, Clarenceville High juniors tend to know a little more than their peers statewide.

More than half of the district's 65 11th graders passed the Michigan Educational Assessment Program test.

Some 17 juniors — or 31 percent — met Level 2 state standards to pass with merit. The same number of students earned a Level 3 endorsement by correctly answering enough questions to meet the basic requirement.

None of Clarenceville students tested achieved Level 1, which exceeds state standards. Only 0.5 percent of 81,001 juniors statewide hit the Level 1 mark.

In all, 34 Clarenceville students — or 62 percent — passed the social studies MEAP. Those figures compare favorably to state results where 58 percent received an endorsement.

"Our high school students did an outstanding job," Superintendent Tom Toltan said. Some 21 district 11th graders — or 38 percent — failed the test. Those who want an endorsement can retake the MEAP up to three times.

The revamped social studies test was administered for the first time last spring.

This social studies test includes multiple choice, extended answer and short essay questions.

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