

Committee to discuss I-275

Farmington and Farmington Hills residents wanting to make their voices heard about the noise on I-275 should mark Feb. 22 on their calendars.

At 9 a.m. on that day, the Michigan Transportation Commission hosts its monthly meeting in Lansing and the agenda

includes study of a revision to the state's noise abatement policy and the I-275 noise problem.

The committee meets in the Bureau of Aeronautics auditorium, 2700 E. Airport Service Drive. Public input is allowed at the end of the meetings, which typically last a couple of hours.

Beauty from page A1

the nine-member body dwindled to two members in the last 18 months.

City Manager Frank J. Lauhoff said the Beautification Commission has not been popular among the people who volunteer to serve on various city commissions and committees. Other commissions, he said, such as the Governor Warner Mansion Development Committee "don't seem to have a problem attracting membership."

City Council members plan to ponder the Beautification Commission's lack of attraction for volunteers, make changes

accordingly, then reincarnate the commission.

"We believe that it is important that time be spent reviewing the operation, goals and objectives of the commission with the intent of finding new community members willing to volunteer," Lauhoff said.

The Beautification Commission has been responsible for the annual beautification awards and The Remembrance Tree program, and the council wants those programs to continue, Lauhoff said.

Farmington resident Suzanne Paul, now a member of the

Downtown Development Authority, was on the Beautification Commission in 1998-99. She opined that perhaps the commission lacked the prestige that other commissions and committees possess.

"Maybe it seemed a little less high profile than the other commissions," she said.

Lauhoff said that City Council members will phone former Beautification Commission members in the near future to ask what can be changed to make the commission more attractive to volunteers.

Plan from A1

Grandfather clause

Parents' comments followed the presentation of recommendations by the Limited Elementary Boundary Study Committee.

According to the plan, outlined by committee co-chairs Mary Joyce Reader (principal at Flanders Elementary School) and Section 8 parent William Hill, students in 2001-02 would attend school at Hillside and Forest elementary schools or opt to remain at Wood Creek (if entering fourth grade next fall) because of a "grandfather clause" that will be in place for two years.

Younger siblings of grandfathered students would be given the chance to remain at Wood Creek for that period, to eliminate families having to send children to more than one school. Some urged extending the grandfathering

period so that any current Wood Creek student could stay there through fifth grade if they wanted.

The recommendations also included forming a Wood Creek committee, "to look at how this change will impact the school and the needs of the students."

Students in Section 8 who now attend schools of choice (to be closer to home) would have an opportunity to enroll at their new home school, whether it be Forest or Hillside.

Melinda Lansky has children now attending first and third grade at Wood Creek. Next year, her older child could remain there because of the grandfather clause. She still has to decide whether or not to relocate her younger child next year.

"Will I have one child at one bus stop and one at another?" Lansky asked the board.

Square one

Several parents opposed to the recommendations expressed concerns that they were not adequately informed about the fledgling plan, or that Wood Creek did not have a sufficient "voice" on the committee.

Some asked the school board to consider tabling the issue; a decision is currently scheduled for the board's Tuesday, Feb. 27 regular meeting.

Birch said parents were not advised when the 20-member Limited Elementary Boundary Study Committee was formed, adding that violated the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

School board Vice President Linda Enberg, running the meeting due to President Frank Reid's absence, countered that the open meetings act applies to board committees, but not one appointed by school administrators.

School officials said they take the issue of communication seriously.

Trustee Bobbie Feldman, who lived in Section 8 for 16 years, told the gathering she sees "both sides of the coin. I want to be able to hear both sides of your impassioned pleas."

"I want to meet with the committee and digest what we heard tonight," Maxfield said after the lengthy public discourse. "In the next week, Section 8 parents will hear from us in writing."

So will families without children in the district, as a survey to all households is expected to soon be sent out.

About the recommendations potentially splintering Section 8, with next-door neighbors going to different schools, parent Charise Fulton noted that about 55 percent of residents there are already going to a school of choice or private school rather than make the long trip to Wood Creek.

Parent Jill Glenn told the board that the redistricting of Section 8 was backed by most Barrington Green subdivision residents who responded to a previous survey.

She said about 175 of 250 homeowners supported a change, largely because of the safety issue.

Last month, Reader said Section 8 families began attending Wood Creek in 1990, when boundaries were realigned for the then-new Hillside.

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