

Hills council gives thumbs up to build two new subdivisions

BY ALICE ASHMORE
STAFF WRITER

More high dollar homes are slated for construction in Farmington Hills as the city council gave preliminary approval Monday to the development of two new subdivisions.

Sam Baki of Baki's Unique Home Builders got the approval for two developments to be known as Whispering Woods and Whispering Meadows.

Whispering Woods, a 21-acre parcel located north of 12 Mile Road and east of Halsted, will provide 19 home sites. The lots

average 23,400 square feet in area.

"It is a unique site with a lot of walk-outs. The homes will be priced at \$700,000 and up," Baki said.

"We've made accommodations for both wetlands and detention areas in the lot averages," he said.

The development comes with little or no opposition from the surrounding area.

Bernie Ludwig, who lives adjacent to the proposed development, spoke on behalf of HHH, a Halsted Road homeowner's association.

"We support this plan for a number of reasons," Ludwig said. "These are going to be big, beautiful homes with low density."

Baki noted that no trees outside the "building envelope" on each home site would be cut down.

The plans for Whispering Woods call for 323 replacement trees to be installed as part of the tree replacement program. One additional tree per lot is also required by the plans submitted to council.

Council member Jerry Ellis congratulated Baki on the site

plan. "These are going to be beautiful homes."

Whispering Meadows caused council some concern because of its proximity to I-69. The 9.5-acre property is located on the north side of Howard Road, east of Halsted Road. The freeway runs directly behind the home sites on the north end of the property.

The proposal calls for nine home sites on an average of .9 acres that front Howard Road - a designated natural beauty road.

Councilman Chris McRae said, "My concern is 696. Who in their

right mind is going to build a house with a freeway in their backyard?"

"People will buy them and pay through the nose for them," countered Council member Jon Grant.

Baki told council the lots would be priced beginning at \$125,000 each, and homes would begin at over \$400,000.

Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates said she had been to Lansing three times in recent months to address the noise issues related to I-275. "Just as long as these people don't buy homes with a freeway in their

back yard and then expect us to do something about the noise."

"A 15-foot greenbelt will be behind each house and around the wetlands," Baki said. "We are placing lots of trees in the development." He said the trees would help to abate the freeway noise.

Baki had sought to put a wall behind the development, but the Farmington Hills Planning Commission rejected the idea.

Grant told Baki, "I appreciate that you have found a market niche that fits the area. I couldn't be happier to see this on Howard Road."

Police runs for charity a success

The Farmington Hills Police Department's 12th annual "Cops For Kids 10K and 5K Run/Walk for MDA" drew 165 participants recently to benefit an organization that funds treatment and research for children and adults with neuromuscular diseases.

According to Assistant Chief Richard Niemisto, the final costs haven't been tallied, so he couldn't say exactly how much money was raised for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

"We are predicting at least \$5,000 will be donated and per-

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haps as much as \$6,000," he said.

That would bring the department's total contribution over the life of the event to more than \$47,000, he added.

Winner of the men's competition in the 10K run was Niku Negru, a native of Romania who just happened to be in town visiting family, Niemisto said. He finished with a time of 31:18. The women's winner was Nicole Stema, with a time of 45:22.

In team competition, Hills officers placed second this year to Troy, followed by Pontiac and a team from the Michigan State Patrol. In Class B, Royal Oak topped last year's winner, Ferndale, which placed 2nd. Monroe finished 3rd, followed by Oak Park and Huntington Woods.

The 10K race drew 117 runners overall; 46 participated in the non-competitive 5K event.

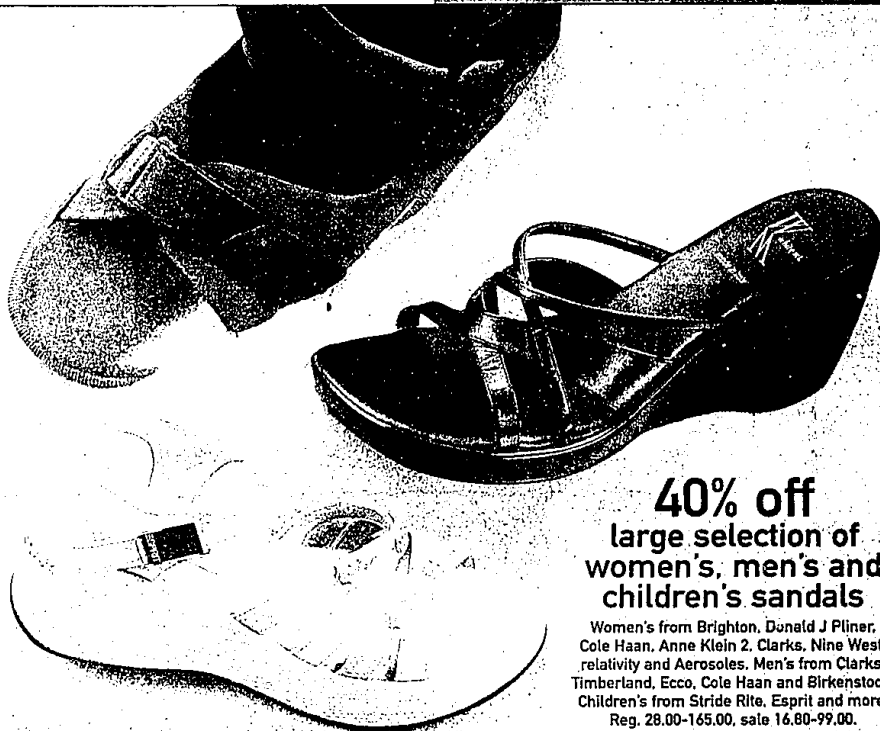
Court from A1

percent of the cost of the court, with Farmington bearing 12 percent of costs.

Walsh said the formula was based on a number of factors including caseload.

Farmington Hills council member Jerry Ellis said, "I gagged when I saw this (cost), too, but I think we have one chance to do this right for the next 50 years."

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