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Council votes down Halsted area project

BY KEVIN BROWN
STAFF WRITER
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Dozens of Halsted Hills residents looked on Monday at the Farmington Hills City Council rejected a 28-home building project that could have decimated a nearby wooded valley.

Council members also took the unusual step of rejecting the developer's request to delay a decision, because key members of their presentation team were unavailable.

Mayor Nancy Bates said several citizens who have fought the Barcroft Hills project were on hand to voice their opinions Monday, and that they should be heard.

The planning commission earlier rejected the plan proposed by developers Ivanhoe-Huntley, saying it didn't meet amended master plan requirements for the area.

"What disturbs me is you didn't hear the planning commission, you came back with the same plan," Bates said.

The council voted 7-0 to reject the plan. The action forces the developer to begin the planning review process again, if they continue to pursue a development option on the property east of Halsted and north of 12 Mile Road.

Halsted Hills Homeowners Association president Tom Wellinger said the average proposed lot size of 14,000 square feet does not meet the 20,000-square-foot requirement.

"Our concern is that their development is inconsistent with the original plan to preserve topography, vegetation and wetlands," he continued. The letter was co-signed by 24 association members.

"Eighty percent of the existing trees would have to come down. We ask tonight that you reject this," said Dan Jess, vice president of the Halsted Hills association.

Some nearby residents and council members noted that Halsted Hills homes were built on 20,000-square-foot lots, and that it made sense for adjacent development to follow that model, also stated in the revised master plan.

Councilwoman Vicki Barnett urged developer Kevin Christiansen, "We want you to have fewer units here and we know you can do it."

Christiansen urged city council to put aside a decision rather than reject the plan, saying some changes could be made. He said the firm has won awards for environmentally responsible development.

"No matter how you slice it, trees will have to be removed," he said, adding the current plan does maintain wetlands to the south.

Bates responded, "Your plan has fatal flaws."

Orchard Ridge Business Center hosts open house

Oakland Community College's Business Technology Center will hold an open house on Friday, Sept. 7, to introduce local businesses to the center's services, staff and facilities. The event will take place 12:30-3:30 p.m. in Rooms F203 and F215, Building F, on the Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills.

Free one-hour seminars presented by Quick Start Inc. will be featured on such topics as creating Web pages, using Front Page, animating PowerPoint presentations, creating three-dimensional spreadsheets in Excel, and using interactive queries in Access. Guests will be able to tour the facility, take a class, chat with the staff, and enjoy refreshments.

Participants are asked to register in advance. Admission to the seminars is on a first-come, first-served basis, based on pre-enrollment. For further information, or to register, call (248) 622-3618.

The Business Technology Center provides specialized instruction for businesses and individuals in a wide range of computer and business-related fields including preparation for Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer certification (as an authorized Microsoft academic trainer); certified financial planning; stocks, fixed investments, mutual funds and retirement plans; and short-term computer training services using the latest software in such areas as operating systems, communications, Internet, word processing, and desktop publishing.

The Orchard Ridge Campus is located at 27055 Orchard Lake Road, just south of I-696. Free parking is available on campus.

FAST from A1

keeping, rather than selling, stocks, Haapaniemi said.

"It gives you a little buying power," Glass added.

Basically everyone owns a percentage of the total. The charter members have more points than those who joined later.

The club is currently in deficit of \$2,000. Their portfolio of 21 stocks is worth \$13,600. Individual monthly contributions were boosted to \$35 from \$25.

"Next year we will probably be flush," Glass said "When they go down, we investigate why it happened. We talk about why it happened. We've learned a lot."

"Eventually we will make money," Haapaniemi said. "We are in the game."

Besides acquiring investment knowledge, the club is a way for them to see their girlfriends, Morrison said. "If I didn't have this to do once a month, I know I wouldn't see the girls once a month, especially in the winter. You don't really see each other a lot in the winter."

The group was active in this year's Founders Festival. Members volunteered their efforts, sporting red aprons which read "F.A.S.T. Women."

The majority of women are Longacre Elementary moms who either have or had children at the school. Annette Jones, a homemaker is president of F.A.S.T.

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