

"THIS GOOD EARTH"

By JUDITH BERNE

Land use is possibly the most important segment of the ecological circle which surrounds us today.

While conservationists have been shouting about preserving forests and wild life, boating and fishing enthusiasts complaining about the quality of the waters and all of us who breathe criticizing the character of the air, the key to it all — land use — has largely continued unchecked.

"If the land is abused, those interested in ecology are not served," according to Fred Doner, a member of the board of the Citizens Council for Land Use Research and Education (CLURE). The Citizens Council is currently questioning the proposed extension of Northwestern Highway and has called for a halt in land acquisition until a proper environmental impact statement has been filed by the State Highway Commission.

"PROPER LAND USE controls the quality of land and water, the quality of the air, topography and the growth of flora and fauna. Obviously, if an expressway covers 100 acres of land then it is no longer ecologically sound," Doner said.

Doner, a resident of Franklin, recently headed a successful drive by "Mission Possible" — a group of Franklin residents — to get citizen authorization to buy four acres of land in the center of the village which was slated for development.

By the required two-thirds majority plus 12 votes, 900 Franklin citizens voted to pass the ballot pro-

posal which would mean an increase in taxes for all Franklin property owners.

The acreage, a sort of village green, is composed of a large hill which in winter is covered by sleds and in summer the romping play of small children. There is a ball field and a naturally wooded area. An historic house, the Hunter's Whip,

built in 1838, is also on the site.

"While no one knew exactly what would be built there, some people had seen plans for condominiums on the hill; at one point a super market was proposed in place of the Hunter's Whip," Doner reported.

Recently the Franklin Village Council purchased the major portion of the land from owner George Wellington Smith and is optimistic about buying the rest.

"UNTIL RECENTLY the ordinary citizen looked no further than his backyard fence," Doner believes. "Improper land use is caused by unrestrained developers, unresponsive city government and unconcerned private citizens.

"And the laws have not helped. One law requires notification of new building to owners who live within 300 feet of the property. Sophisticated planners as well as neighboring citizens know that the impact of a structure extends far beyond 300 feet, often for miles."

Doner points out that the recent defeats of the proposed Taubman shopping center in both Farmington and West Bloomfield were cases where citizens fully realized the tremendous impact such a center

would have upon their cities. "It further shows that citizens dedicated to responsible planning can make a difference.

"If we can have responsible planning in the suburbs, it may force the developers back into the cities where new building is needed," Doner continued. "A beautiful Taubman shopping center would be of tremendous benefit to the city of Detroit.

"When Southfield was built, it helped cripple the city of Detroit. Both SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) and the Oakland County Planning Commission have reported that massive development further out would cripple both Detroit and Southfield.

"There is a 15 per cent rate of unoccupied office space in Southfield now," the CLURE board member continued. "More building such as along a proposed expansion of Northwestern Highway is absolutely unwarranted. If there's such a thing as planned obsolescence, that's it."

THE CITIZENS COUNCIL believes that our present tax system rewards unrestrained development by giving tax incentives to those who invest. In addition the tax burden for people living near areas being de-



THE CHARM OF FRANKLIN VILLAGE is widely appreciated by those who live there as well as those who come from surrounding towns. (Evert photo)

FOUNDERS FESTIVAL BARGAINS!

BONSAI JUNIPERS
In Stoneware Planter

Ideal year round conversation piece for homes, apartments, condominiums

\$12.95

Were \$19.95

All Potted Rose Bushes
Were \$2.95 to \$4.95

\$2

RUSSIAN OLIVE
3' to 4'
Were \$4.95

\$2.95

CLOSE-OUT Special

REDWOOD HANGING BASKETS
With 2 Blue Rug Junipers

\$11.95

Were \$16.95

LOOK FOR OTHER BLUE & YELLOW TAG SPECIALS!

STEINKOPF NURSERY

20815 Farmington Road, Farmington
(just North of 8 Mile, across from Big Boy)

Open Daily 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. 474-2725 Closed Sunday

