

On Hills border

Southfield eyes mobile home district

By JACKIE KLEIN

SOUTHFIELD— There's a mobile home park district in the city's future. But the Southfield City Council Monday tabled the proposed mobile home ordinance until March 10 to allow planners to tighten controls.

Although City Planner Donald Gross insisted the ordinance isn't designed to apply to any specific parcel, he admitted it was instigated by a petition for a mobile home park on the east side of Inkster Road between Ten and Eleven Mile roads.

In November, developer Bernard Soble filed a lawsuit against the city for failure to provide a mobile home park district in its zoning ordinance.

The lawsuit asks that the city be restrained from preventing the use on Soble's 22-acre Inkster property. The proposed ordinance, however, contains a minimum site size requirement of 25 acres.

According to city attorney Sigmond Beras, the supreme court has ruled cities can't foreclose mobile home parks. Southfield has two trailer courts which were constructed in township days as non-conforming uses.

"We haven't had a request for a mobile home park in years, so we didn't provide an ordinance," Beras said. "Now we're forced to comply or the

courts will select areas for the location of mobile home parks.

"When we create a mobile home district, we'll be in a better position to regulate and control potential sites and maybe even existing ones."

Beras declined to comment on Soble's pending lawsuit but said if the petition goes through regular channels, residents would have a chance to speak at planning commission and council hearings.

Myron Greenfield, who has lived in the Inkster Road area for 38 years, opposed mobile homes as "units that don't pay their way in taxes." He mentioned lack of utilities to serve Soble's proposed mobile home site.

ANDREW JACKSON, another Inkster area homeowner, said Soble could pick up an additional three acres to fit the site size requirement of the proposed ordinance.

"We have beautiful homes on more than an acre of land and we can't see a trailer park in that area," he said. Charles Rosa, a Farmington Hills resident living next to Soble's site, opposed creation of a mobile home park district.

"WHY THE SUDDEN pressure to adopt this ordinance?" he questioned. "Step A leads to step B and a seemingly innocent move, slickly pulled off, could mean full steam railroad-ing."

James Shannon, representing the Farmington Hills Churchill Commons Subdivision Association, said Southfield's neighbors to the west want notification of all adjacent boundary zoning petitions.

Attorney Arthur Rubiner, who represents Greenfield, made his fourth appearance to discuss holes in the ordinance.

"Each of the four drafts were better than the last, but I suggest the job is still incomplete," he said. "The ordinance needs more input, and your source material was dictated by the mobile home industry, not a municipal or residential group."

"A mobile home park is another phrase for low cost housing. A better drafted ordinance would be less of a catastrophe to single-family homeowners. It should have built-in notice provisions and a court-tested rating system to insure the best mobile homes possible."

Rubiner urged provisions for community clubs and other amenities and prohibition of "old, run down, beat up trailers" attracting persons not homogeneous to the area.

"Mobile homes should be ornaments instead of eyesores to the community," he added.

Gross said the rating system suggested by Rubiner includes some subjective criteria and older units are precluded because of the minimum 1,000 square feet of floor area required in the ordinance.

Single-family homes would be permitted in mobile home parks he added.

John Downs, who has owned the Southfield Downs Trailer Park for 20 years, said, "I don't recommend a permanent residence in the middle of a mobile home park because it would damage it. And as far as I'm concerned, this ordinance should not be retroactive."

ODDILMAN NELSON Chase called the ordinance "too ludicrous to be meaningful."

"The density of a 25-acre site has a great impact on residents, and those living within 1,500 feet of a proposed mobile home park should be notified. The zoning ordinance currently only requires notice to residents within 300 feet."

Councilman Martin Hollander suggested a newly constructed ordinance providing sign regulations, wide pub-

lic notice, a community building, a manager on the premises and state fire control standards.

Councilman Philip Peterson objected to a mix of mobile homes and

single-family residences; older block stands; weak landscaping requirements and failure to provide for construction of utilities in mobile home parks.

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