



Elderly proponents of the special senior housing district kept tabs on the development of the proposal at the Farmington Hills Housing Commission meeting, Tuesday evening.

Repairmen battle cold, keep Farmington warm

As temperatures plummeted, causing water pipes to freeze and furnaces to work harder, Farmington repairmen discovered that they were far from being the loneless people in town.

Furnace repairmen, plumbers and oil jobbers admitted that the cold spell was a mixed blessing, bringing plenty of work and additional problems.

"We've suffered additional stresses and strains. We had to put up with additional hours to keep people from running out of oil," said Charles White, co-owner of D & W Oil Co., Farmington.

"Last year, our busiest period was in January, when we worked a six-day week. This year, we've been working six to seven days a week since November. And we've been working 12-14 hour days," he said.

Cold weather problems also extended themselves to the plumbing business.

"WE'VE HAD TO PUT on a couple of fellows when the repair calls began falling," said Donna Ouimet, of Cardinal Plumbing, Heating and Sewer Service, Farmington Hills.

"We had calls from Westland and Wayne but we tried to help the people closest to us first. If someone didn't have water, we tried to get to them first," she said.

Although furnace repairmen reported 30-40 calls a day, some potential problems were avoided by the timing of the cold wave.

"When the cold weather hit, we were up to date on our repair calls. There was an increase in the repair calls with the cold weather, but it wasn't as bad as a lot of people thought it would be," said Cliff McCourt, co-owner of Day and Nite Heating and Cooling Co., Farmington.

Most who faced the cold weather blues had to cope with frozen water and oil heater pipes.

Some chilly residents were puzzled over why their furnaces weren't furnishing as much heat as they did last year.

Although some homeowners complained that following President Jimmy Carter's suggestion to dial down caused their water pipes to freeze, Mrs. Ouimet disagreed.

"ONE WOMAN called us and said that her pipes froze after she followed the suggestion to turn her heat down. Actually wind freezes the pipes more than the temperature does. That wind we had carried the cold into places that it wouldn't get normally."

People were more apt to have their water pipes frozen if the pipes

were in the west or northwest corners of the house.

"It depended on where the pipes were located," she said.

Homeowners were advised to wrap the pipes to keep them from freezing, or to allow the faucets to drip to keep the water circulating.

Another hazard faced by homeowners with frozen water pipes was the possibility that the lines might break after they thawed.

Copper pipes seem more susceptible to breaking, according to Mrs. Ouimet.

"Not only water pipes were freezing, according to McCourt, who was asked to thaw out a record number of oil pipes."

There were a lot of frozen oil lines in outside tanks," he said. "That usually happens when condensation from water in a half-filled tank sinks to the bottom because water is lighter than oil."

"When the water gets into the line, it freezes and then the homeowner doesn't have any heat," he said.

OWNERS OF OUTSIDE oil tanks can avoid the problem by keeping the tank filled during the summer, when condensation can occur or by wrapping the lines with heat tapes that are available from hardware stores.

If the outside lines do freeze, McCourt advises calling a repairman instead of trying to thaw it out with a propane torch.

"There is a fire hazard if someone tries to thaw out the line and does it the wrong way," he said.

"It's really not a complicated procedure. It's more of a nuisance call. And it costs the owner about \$40."

Like homes equipped with oil heat, those heated by natural gas also faced some well-publicized problems this winter.

In addition to increased costs, homeowners discovered that their heating systems weren't keeping them as warm.

"There's a greater heat loss during temperatures of 20-30 below zero," said McCourt. "Furnaces have more cold air to warm."

"We'd get calls from people who have their furnaces up and aren't warm enough."

"IT'S SOMETIMES a waste of time for us to go on a call then if their filters haven't been changed, we recommend that they change them," he said.

Thermostats turned down to 65 degrees are easier on furnaces, he admitted.

"Then the furnaces heat, they shut off, then heat. It's easier on the

motor," he said.

After a television program advocated the use of fuel saving devices, such as flue dampers, McCourt's company received inquiries about them.

"We received a lot of calls on the fuel saving devices. But they haven't been approved by the City of Detroit yet or by Underwriter Laboratories or by an insurance company. So they aren't available to us yet," he said.

With the increased cost of maintaining a natural gas heating system, the trend away from oil heating has stopped.

"We've been in Farmington for 14 years," Mr. Court said. "When we first moved in, 75 per cent of the heating was done with oil and 25 per cent was natural gas. Now, it's the opposite."

"But people, who two to three years ago would have converted to gas, are now reluctant to switch."

"Oil is coming back," he said.

THERE ARE NEW devices for oil furnaces that burn the fuel more efficiently," he said.

People who would rather keep their oil heat could have the last word, they ought to fight against it tooth

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Cyndi Haight, daughter of Mrs. and Mr. Louis Haight, 32933 Hargrove Ct., Farmington Hills, is among 23 young men and women seeking the titles of "Sno-King" and "Sno-Queen" during a Winter 77 winter carnival activities at Northern Michigan University. A sophomore majoring in psychology, Miss Haight is sponsored by Payne Resident Hall Association in the contest.

Tax aid is available

The free tax aid program sponsored by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Farmington Hills Chapter 2088, will offer assistance to senior citizens in preparing their 1976 federal, state and home-estate tax credit forms.

The tax aid committee will be at the following locations:

On Feb. 16 at the Nardin Park Methodist Church, 29887 Eleven Mile; Feb. 22 at the American Legion Hall, 31775 Grand River; Feb. 17 and March 1 at the Farmington Library on Liberty Street; on March 8 at the Redford Township Library, 15150 Norborne, near Fenkel and Beech Daly.

The time of the interview is from 12:30-3:30 p.m. Participants must bring their 1976 Form 1040, and records of dividends, pensions, social security and interest amounts, and the value of their homes.

Housing commission amends senior zoning

Senior citizens might find themselves living in 60-foot high mid-rise housing units without benefit of a special zoning amendment.

The Farmington Hills Housing Commission scrapped its approach to a senior citizens zoning amendment during its Tuesday night meeting.

Instead, the housing commission went along with the City Planners' proposal that senior residences be included under RCE zoning which covers conventional mid-rise apartments.

But the housing group balked at approving a suggestion that the senior mid-rises be limited to certain areas along freeways or Northwestern Highway.

"In a mid-rise district there would be only mid-rise multiples," explained attorney John Donahue.

he argued against writing a separate special zoning amendment.

"THE CITY PLANNERS strongly support the RCE zoning," Donahue said. "They object to special zoning. They say that a special purpose zoning indicates a weakness in the zoning ordinance."

The new approach would be geared to already platted streets which are undeveloped, such as the street near Boisfort Hospital, south of Ten Mile.

The new approach would protect subdivisions against encroachment by developers who would use a senior mid-rise as a precedent to build higher multiple residences, according to housing commission members.

Members rejected the idea of limiting the placement of the senior mid-rises to Northwestern Highway and freeways.

"It would never be permitted under the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) guidelines," said commission member Bernard Christy.

Senior housing should be placed within walking distance to shopping centers, drugstores, banks and supermarkets, according to MSHDA guidelines.

"That would limit the places for senior housing in the city to nothing," Christy said.

REV. MEREDITH MOSHAUER, of the Nardin Park Methodist Church termed that part of the proposal "ridiculous."

Moshauer and members of the housing commission admitted that the fear of high-rise units does exist in the city.

"If they fear high-rise dwellings, they ought to fight against it tooth

and nail; it's their right," Moshauer said.

"We're for, mid-rises, not high-rises," said commission member Jan Dolan. "In order to get subsidy for this housing we have to go up. Sixty feet isn't that bad. Boisfort Hospital is 50 feet high and you can't see it sticking out."

Commissioners were mindful of the fact that the housing should be geared toward the less affluent elderly who want to remain in Farmington Hills.

Christy differed with other members in his belief that the housing was unnecessary in the city.

"Farmington Hills isn't interested in senior citizen housing. Most of the seniors that I've talked to would prefer to live among the young and the old, in places like Independence Green," Christie said.

But commission member Ben Marks reminded the group that they were looking at housing for the less affluent.

"I'M NOT CONCERNED about those who can retire on \$30,000-\$40,000 a year. If there's a need for affluent homes for the elderly we can put that in an addendum," he said.

Member William Flatley asked the group to remember high income residents.

"We have very high income groups here. If you go with low income housing, you'll be discriminating against the high income people," he said.

The proposal is scheduled to return to the planning commission for discussion at its March 1 meeting.

Moshauer, whose church members want the proposal to build their own senior residence in Farmington Hills, was optimistic about its progress.

"They aren't dragging their feet," he said. "We realize that this isn't a zoning for the Nardineers but for the people of Farmington Hills."

The Nardineers would be able to easily extend their option to buy church land until the amendment passes the City Council, he said.



Rev. Meredith Moshauer listens intently to the Housing Commission discussion of the senior citizen's zoning amendment which his church group, the Nardineers, wants.

In Farmington survey

Cab service is a hit

It costs the City of Farmington about \$3,000 per year to fund the senior citizens cab service, but City Mgr. Robert Deadman believes a December survey validates the need and effectiveness of the program.

"It is apparent that the Senior Special now provides a service to those senior citizens who do not have an alternate means of transportation other than waiting for an occasional friend or relative to provide them with a ride," Deadman said.

"The only complaint that any of the senior citizens had was an occasional long waiting period for a ride."

Deadman's office sampled 20 senior citizens, none of whom had a reliable alternate transportation method, and most were pleased with the service, he said.

Council members were particularly pleased with the survey results, noting the higher cost of Dial-A-Ride, employed by neighboring communities.

It costs us about \$1.20 per ride, compared to \$1.70-\$1.80 per ride that

Dial-A-Ride is running," Deadman said.

THE SENIOR SPECIAL taxi service, in existence since January 1974, provides approximately 200 rides per month to senior citizens at a cost of 50 cents to the rider.

The average number of rides dropped from peak use between February and April of 1975; probably because of the introduction of seven-day service, Deadman said.

Sample questions used for the survey were: How often do you use the Senior Special taxi service? Are the drivers prompt and courteous? What other means of transportation are available to you? Is the service a valuable asset to your mobility? And Are there any additions or improvements you would like to see included in the program?

Results indicate that most people using the service would not have any means of transportation except the taxi service, said Deadman.

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