Parents group unsure

Is there change at Center for Human Development?

By SHERRY KAHAN

More than a month has passed since charges of widespread abuse of its mentally retarded residents were leveled at the state-run Plymouth Center for Human Development.

Since that time the media has been holding up a magnifying glass to the facility, the director has been banished, staff members have been suspended and a big name task force has begun a probe.

But has anything changed inside the facility? And will the task force without power to require individuals to give testimony be able to carry out a successful investigation?

Approached with these questions were members of the Plymouth Association for Retarded Citizens, the group which has struggled for two years to end abuse. Through its successful court cases the organization has begun to make inroads.

Their answers were a mixed bag with some seeing signs of improvement and others noting that problems still exist. One member, Sandy McGuire indicated a lack of faith in some of the persons chosen by the governor for the task force.

Plymouth assocation members will present their findings and their feelings at a meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 11 in Harrison Elementary School, 28811 Jamison, Livonia. The event is sponsored by the Northwest Communities Association for Retarded Citizens.

"NEW CASES OF ABUSE are still coming before the center's fact-finding committee," reported Mary Brimhall of Redford Township vice-president of the association, which is made up of interested citizens and parents of residents of the Plymouth

The association has been given the opportunity to have its members serve on this committee. She added that committee members had to sign a paper before investigating a case so that facts remained confidential before a final determination is made.

Will this tie the hands of the association in its effort to end abuse? "I feel we will have to look into this question," Mrs. Brimhall replied. "We will have to see what recourse we have."

"My son has received no injuries lately," said Mrs. Jimmy Nelson of Southfield. "He had been scratched on the face and neck before, and we were unhappy with the care he got when he had pneumonia.

"But I have noticed the attendants are out of the office and back in the play rooms, playing with the kids. I could see they were making an effort."

"WHEN I VISITED last Christmas, the attendants were cold and abrupt," observed a Garden City resident, who preferred not to give his name because he feared retaliation against his relative. "On Good Friday, they were very friendly.

"However, they still hadn't cut his hair, and he wasn't wearing the clothes I brought in for him."

"Evelyn Provitt is doing an excellent job as acting director," said Barbara Moore of Redford Township. "But we are concerned about who is coming in as director."

(Former director William Womack was removed from office by Governor Milliken.)

"Things are a little bad right now because so many have been suspended," continued Mrs. Moore. "They are hiring new employees because they are supposed to raise the ratio of attendants to residents."

WHILE MANY MEMBERS of the Plymouth association had a mixed reaction to what was taking place within the controversial complex, one of them was very singleminded about the investigating task force.

"It was the impression of association members that we would be members of task force," stated Mrs. McGuire, of Detroit. "The governor told us we would be observing and monitoring it. But last week we found our members referred to in the minutes as guests. So I wrote a letter to the governor and asked him to clarify our role.

"His response was to deny us membership on the task force. I feel we should be members. We could accomplish more that way. We could vote on crucial questions.

"And who has a greater interest in the Plymouth center than our members, many of whom have a child living there?

"Instead the task force consists of John Dempsey, the director of the department of social services; Dr. Vernon Stehman, director of the mental health department; the commander of the Michigan State Police; Detroit Councilwoman Erma Henderson and Wilbur Cohen of the school of education of the University of Michigan, and a representative of the Civil Service Commission.

"THE FOUR DEPARTMENTS represented on the task force are the same departments that haven't been able to work out this abuse situation for two years."

"In January 1977 we won, through a law suit, major concessions from the department of social services involving investigating and following up abuse cases," she continued.

"The department wasn't doing its job, in our opinion. After finding abuses in the Plymouth center, it didn't take any action. It said that was the responsibility of the mental health department. Mental health said it was up to social services and the state police said that one of the two should handle it.

Mrs. McGuire urged those who have information on abuse at the center to testify at a public hearing 10 a.m. to 5 pm. April 20 in the 21st floor auditorium of the Executive Plaza B uilding at 1200 Sixth, Detroit. Similar hearings on abuse will be held in xansing and Ann Arbor.

Mrs. Moore applauded the concept the a monitor committee, which has been won through a suit brought by the association against the center and the mental health department.

"The monitors can drop in any time during the day or night," she said, "and no one will know when they will be coming."

She also favored a more careful check of each resident's medical records, especially drug overuse. "Some kids don't sleep at night," she noted. "I don't know why they're so hyper, but it might be because of the combination of drugs."

SHE ALSO HOPES that staff members will start to stick around when parents and volunteers come to visit the residents.

"Parents come in and the staff just disappears," she observed. "I've heard from many volunteers that they are not too helpful to them. The staff leaves them with a lot of residents and no help. I've had the same experience as a parent. I never felt I was welcome.

Some of the foster grandparents have the feeling that the staff feel the grandparents are spying on them, she added.

Mrs. Nelson, who favors the presence of both monitors and parents in the building, hopes that the staff members won't think that they are constantly being checked on.

Let's call it making sure everything is all right," she said.

She added that parents could be monitored, too, because there are many who never visit their children, "and you can't expect someone else to pick up your obligation and work on it."

Stingrays sponsor fundraising drives

The Michigan Stingrays are sponsoring a swimming and diving marathon, 3-11 p.m. April 25 at Harrison High School, Farmington. The swimming and diving club active in the Farmington, Southfield, Birmingham and West Bloomfield area teaches competitive swimming and diving.

For the meet, which is a fundraiser for pool equipment for the team's programs, swimmers will be asking residents and businesses to donate a sum for each length or dive which is completed.

Many of the young swimmers are aiming to complete the maximum number of 200 lengths, which is close to three miles.

CITY OF FARMINGTON
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Farmington City Council will meet at 8:00 P.M. MONDAY, MAY 1, 1978 in the Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, to hear all interested persons on the proposed Amendment to the Farmington Zoning Ordinance as follows:

ARTICLE II - DEFINITIONS
Section 5.9 Definition Pertaining to Building Use:
Add definition for Housing for the Elderly
ARTICLE 7 - SCHEDULE B
CBD CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT Section 5.62 Area in Sq. Ft.
Add density requirements
ARTICLE 7 - SCHEDULE C
MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING (1BR) in R4 DISTRICT
Add "and CBD CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
Amend Floor Area and Storage and/or Utility Requirements, and Off-Street Parking Requirements

All interested persons will be given an opportunity to express their views at the above time and place. A copy of the proposed ordinance is available for review at the Office of the City Clerk. Any other information regarding the above proposal is also available at the Office of the City Clerk.

NEDRA VIANE, City Clerk

Publish: April 13, 1978

CITY OF FARMINGTON
COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
(Summary)

A Regular Meeting of the Farmington City Council was called to order at 8:00 p.m. Monday April 3, 1978 by Mayor Richard L. Tupper.
Councilman Bennett, Buckler, Hartsock, Tupper and Yoder were present.
City Officials present were City Mgr. Deadman, Director Byrnes, Officer Maddison, Director Jones, Attorney Kelly and City Clerk Viane.
Minutes of previous meetings were approved as corrected.
Minutes of other boards were received.
Stye's Standard Service, 32410 Grand River, was granted a variance to the sign ordinance.
Mr. Virgil Cornwell was granted a waiver of the street width requirement from 31 ft. to 27 ft. for the proposed Tall Pines Subdivision.
Council instructed the City Manager to contact our representatives in Lansing urging the quick adoption of the Transportation Financing Package.
Resolution from City of Royal Oak regarding the location of a Medical Control and Communications Center for Oakland County EMS was received.
Proclamation issued designating May 15-June 15, 1978 as "Muscular Dystrophy Month".
Notice from Consumers Power regarding Public Hearing on proposed rate increase request was received.
Council introduced Ordinance No. C-428-78 which would amend the Zoning Ordinance Central Business District as it applies to housing for the elderly.
A Public Hearing was established to review proposed Ordinance C-428-78 for 8:00 P.M. May 1, 1978.
The following resolutions were adopted:
Determining the necessity for construction of a Sidewalk on Farmington Road adjacent to the Farmington Alta Loma Shell Service Station
Authorizing payment to contractors for work completed at the Public Services Facility.
Accepting Federal Highway Safety Sign Grants
Authorizing entering into contract with MSHC for sign upgrading program
Accepting the bid of Brick Faced Concrete Walls, Novi, Michigan, in the amount of $2,546.00, for the State Street Parking Lot Screening Wall.
Establishing the position of Court Warrant Officer.
Mrs. Nancy Leonard, 33309 Shiawassee, was appointed for a three year term to the Historical Commission.
City Manager Deadman presented the 1978-79 proposed Budget to Council.
Council scheduled budget study meetings for April 12, 19 and 26; and May 3 and 10, to be held from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.
A Public Hearing was established on the adoption of the 1978-79 Fiscal Year Budget for May 11, 1978 at 8:00 P.M.
The General Fund Financial Report for the 8 months ending February 28, 1978 was received.
Monthly bills were approved for payment.
The following ordinance was adopted:

ORDINANCE NO. C-427-78

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY OF FARMINGTON BY ADDING NEW SUB SECTIONS TO SECTION F 410.1 AUTOMATIC SPRINKLERS—CHAPTER 91, SECTION 9.302, TITLE IX OF SAID CODE

THE CITY OF FARMINGTON ORDAINS:
9.301 Modifications to the Adopted Fire Prevention Code.
Subsequent Articles and Section numbers refer to like-numbered Articles and Section numbers of the adopted Fire Prevention Code:
F 410.1 AUTOMATIC SPRINKLERS
ADD the following Sub Sections:
(5) Approved Automatic Sprinkler Systems shall be installed in all buildings of institutional occupancy, including buildings used for housing people suffering from physical limitations because of health or age, hospitals, sanitariums, infirmaries, orphanages, homes for the aged or infirm and housing for the elderly.
(6) Approved Automatic Sprinkler Systems shall be installed in all buildings exceeding three (3) stories in height.
This ordinance was introduced at a Regular meeting of the Farmington City Council on March 20, 1978, was adopted and enacted at a Regular meeting of the Council on April 3, 1978 and will become effective ten (10) days after publication.
The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 P.M.

RICHARD L. TUPPER, Mayor
NEDRA VIANE, City Clerk

Publish: April 13, 1978

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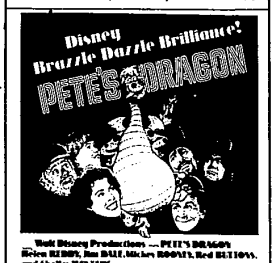

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