

# Wood Creek parents join boundary debate



**'Our children have made friends. We're on a different time schedule, and they tend to associate with the children they go to school with.'**

— Cheryl Bocknek  
Wood Creek parent

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Excessive growth on the district's western side prompted the committee's findings, which include the option of a new school. A possible site mentioned for this option is an 11-acre district-owned parcel near 11 Mile and Halsted. Freedman voiced his support for this concept at a recent parent meeting.

Trustee James Abernethy questioned the long-term effects of the boundary change recommendations. Scott Bacon, boundary study committee member and administrative assistant, explained the district had a long-term problem that would need to be addressed.

"Long range, it would seem we're going to have a problem," he said. Suggested changes for Wood Creek elementary boundaries in-

clude: moving an estimated 28 students to Forest during the coming school year in an area bounded by 13 and 12 Mile and Haggerty and Halsted roads; and moving an estimated 73 students to Eagle during the 1987-88 school year in the southern portion of an area bounded by 13 and 14 Mile and Orchard Lake and Farmington roads.

For Longacre, the original proposal called for moving about 72 students from an area bounded by Nine and 10 Mile and Haggerty and Halsted roads to Flanders Elementary. Several other options, including portable classrooms at Longacre, building of a new school, the reassignment of all kindergarten students from Longacre to Flanders and the movement of other sections will be considered by the board.

IN SPECIAL education, a propo-

sition transferring a classroom from Flanders and another from Kenbrook to other locations is being considered. One parent at Tuesday's meeting said her sixth-grade special education child has been taught at six different schools. She requested the program be centralized and stabilized at one school.

It's difficult for children who "have a hard time functioning socially anyway" to be subjected to lengthy bus rides and moved each year, she said.

Board President Susan Rennels told the group of her daughter's move when the Shawnee School closed, and that her daughter and son attended different high schools. "I think the children fit in very soon at the new school" after a move, she added.

The recommendations will handle

immediate needs in all buildings except Larkshire and Gill elementary schools, according to the committee's report. The committee suggests boundaries for Larkshire be studied during the 1987-88 school year and that Gill be studied the following year.

Committee members stressed the district tries to keep friendship patterns together, by not dividing neighborhoods or picking one neighborhood from within a section.

"There isn't a boundary area that is ever guaranteed for any period of time," Freedman has said.

Areas in the district where students have already moved once or twice will not be considered this year, Freedman said.

No change in boundaries is recommended for middle and high schools, the committee report said.

# Hills mayor explains his planning commission appointments

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replace Hovanessian and Radele, but the appointments were not unanimous. Only reappointment of one-term commissioner Mary Avery was confirmed unanimously. In January, Avery was one of the commissioners Alkateeb planned to replace.

Councilman Terry Sever and Councilwoman Jody Soronen opposed the appointment of Vanhouten, 45, current treasurer and past vice president of the Inland Homeowners Association.

THOUGH MAINTAINING her unhappiness with Alkateeb's appointments, Councilwoman Joan Dudley told council she would vote for Vanhouten because of her credentials and because the planning commission needs a greater representation of women. Council members Dunn Wolf, Ben Marks, Jan Dolan and Alkateeb joined Dudley in support of Vanhouten.

Valvona's appointment was confirmed in a 4-3 vote. Soronen, Dudley and Sever were opposed. Valvona is a member of the Farmington Hills Building Authority and is the owner and ex-

ecutive officer of the Valvona Corp. and Pi-Con Inc., both of Farmington Hills.

In asking Alkateeb to reconsider his appointments to the planning commission, Hovanessian reminded the mayor that in his original recommendation Jan. 27, he and Avery were to be replaced and Radele was to be reappointed.

"This was not acceptable to many council members and the matter was deferred," Hovanessian said. "I do not see a sound reason for any of us to be replaced. We each have nearly perfect attendance records and we participate conscientiously in commission proceedings."

Hovanessian also reminded Alkateeb that in a letter he received from the mayor just prior to the Jan. 27 meeting, Alkateeb "wrote that he would not nominate me again because the planning commission needed a person in this commission with a background in construction."

THAT'S IRONIC, Hovanessian said, because in 1980, it was Alkateeb who asked him to apply for the planning

commission because of his expertise in structural engineering. He is a state-registered professional engineer, holds a doctorate in engineering and is department chairman at Oakland University.

When council members in 1980 disagreed over Hovanessian's appointment, "it was you (Alkateeb) who strongly urged me not to withdraw," he said.

Responding to Hovanessian, Alkateeb said, "I'm sorry you are taking this personally. Your contribution to this city and planning commission are duly noted and very appreciated." But, Alkateeb added, "Personally, I feel the planning commission needs some new blood."

In discussing her unhappiness with Alkateeb's appointments, Dudley maintained that with the appointment of Vanhouten and Valvona, one-third of the planning commission would be represented by people living within a square mile of Middlebelt — near Alkateeb.

"Geography is not a consideration. It never has been," Alkateeb responded, adding he considered appointees' quali-

fications, not their addresses.

REGARDLESS OF geography, Soronen warned council she would vote against both appointments.

"If there is going to be a new policy covering length of terms, not only planning commissioners, but others, we should discuss it at the table. And we should give fair warning to those we appoint."

Dolan, on the other hand, urged council to get down to business and support or oppose the mayor's appointments.

But it was Sever who fueled the fire with comments about making deals and trying to garner support for appointments behind the scenes.

"We're admitting this was done politically and not for the best interest of the city," Sever said. After making changes in whether it would be Radele, Avery or Hovanessian who would be replaced, "it remains to be seen whether the new appointments are more qualified."

Alkateeb reminded Sever that he sent letters both in January and this month regarding his recommended appointments. The letter asked council

members to call Alkateeb if they disagreed or had concerns about the appointments.

Sever and Dudley did not call Alkateeb about the appointments.

"I didn't call you over the weekend because I don't discuss council business over the phone," Dudley said.

AFTER SEVER'S charges, Alkateeb said, "Mr. Sever, I will not even accord you the courtesy of responding to what you just said."

In an interview Tuesday, Alkateeb continued to take exception to Sever's charges of backroom politics. Alkateeb documented the procedure — one used by council since 1979 — that he used in selecting planning commission appointments.

After making an attendance list of all members and then grading each on their commission work, Alkateeb decided in January not to reappoint any of the three — Hovanessian, Avery and Radele.

"I HAD mixed emotions about Radele," Alkateeb said, explaining why at first he was going to only replace Av-

ery and Hovanessian. "I said maybe I should leave him on as the historian."

Under a procedure for mayoral appointments that Alkateeb said was started in 1979, he sent a memo with his recommended appointments to each council member, asking for their reactions. "I heard from one council member only. So I assumed all is well."

Hovanessian, meanwhile, "insisted I reappoint him," Alkateeb said. On Jan. 27, when the appointments were to be made, Alkateeb decided to postpone the issue and again review his list of appointments.

"I felt it was harsh on Avery," he said. "I decided she should be given another chance." Alkateeb decided against reappointing Hovanessian, he said, because "he was totally out of tune with the planning commission."

Finally, Alkateeb said he recommended Vanhouten because he believes more representation by women is needed on the commission. When he had made his recommendations, Alkateeb, as he had previously done, sent a memo to council — one week prior to the council meeting — asking for reaction.

# Mobile home residents speak out in defense of perceived rights

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ished in the city agendas as well as the local newspapers, Wolkind said. While some park residents own their mobile homes, they rent the lots on which the homes are located. "They wouldn't be (notified) because they are not owners," he added.

When rezoning is requested, property owners near property up for rezoning are notified of the request by letter from the Farmington Hills City Clerk's office. Notices also are published in local newspapers, as required by law.

Referring to the possibility that park residents may be required to relocate, Wolkind said, "We would be willing to give them 90 days from the date council approves the rezoning. It's not like we are trying to hurt innocent people."

AFTER THE planning commission's public hearing tonight, the rezoning request must still go in preliminary form before the city council and then again during a public hearing. If the rezoning is approved, mobile home park resi-

dents would have at least until the end of July to relocate, Wolkind said.

Silver also charged that the park's management is still encouraging residents to buy the mobile homes they are renting. The management also is still accepting new tenants into the park, she said.

By encouraging tenants to buy the mobile homes, the management would not have to pay to move the homes if the property is rezoned, Silver charged.

Supporting Silver, two mobile home park residents confirmed the difficulty and the expense of moving the homes. Other mobile home parks in Oakland County will not accept the homes in Oakland Hills because of the homes' small size, said a resident who lives with her husband in Oakland Hills. "Those people have no where to put their mobile homes."

ANOTHER OAKLAND Hills resident told the council that she was told by park management that the park was being remortgaged, not sold and re-

zoned. "If there is a relocation, who is going to pay for it?" she asked.

Alkateeb told other council members that he attended a meeting of the Farmington-Farmington Hills Democratic Club last week during which mobile home parks were discussed. "I do plan to sit down with the city manager and go over some of my notes," Alkateeb told Silver.

In a resolution adopted last week, Democratic Club members said they strongly protest "any action that the Farmington Hills Planning Commission and City Council might take to deny the occupants of the Oakland Hills Mobile Home Park to live in a stable community."

In their resolution, members also referred to mobile home parks "as a viable alternative to expensive permanent housing and reiterated state law that prohibits discrimination of mobile home parks in favor of other development."

MEMBERS ALSO referred to the al-

leged status of Oakland Hills residents — the fear of being evicted if rezoning is approved — as well as the park management's encouraging residents to buy their homes in light of the rezoning request.

Some council members sympathized with Silver and Oakland Hills residents, and acknowledged that the issue should be studied.

"We know it (rezoning request) has been under consideration for some time," Councilwoman Jan Dolan said. "I was unaware the residents didn't know."

Dolan also asked if city officials could initiate a relocation impact study to ensure that the mobile home park residents would have comparable housing should they be forced to relocate. "This has happened in other states, I know," she said.

City attorney Paul Bibeau said city ordinance and state law do not require an assessment of comparable housing for mobile home residents prior to sale. The city does not have the authority,

Bibeau added.

SILVER TOLD council the first step in helping the residents would be notification of the rezoning and the possibility of having to relocate.

"I commiserate with what's going on," Councilwoman Joan Dudley said. "I can't see the difference between mobile home owners . . . and apartment dwellers or any other multiple (housing resident)."

The city informs condominium owners of rezoning requests. If city officials assume the responsibility of notifying mobile home park residents of rezoning requests, then they perhaps would be also responsible for notifying apartment renters, Dudley said.

But Silver said that mobile home owners are similar to condominium owners. "A mobile home owner certainly owns a home. I hope none of you think a mobile home is a caravan that can be easily carried away," she said.

Turning the focus on planning

The Planned Use Development concept will be discussed by Farmington planning commissioners and council members during an April meeting.

The special council meeting was requested by commissioners following two property developer requests to the planning commission for use of this concept.

Council members and commissioners will meet April 15 at 7 p.m. at city hall,

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