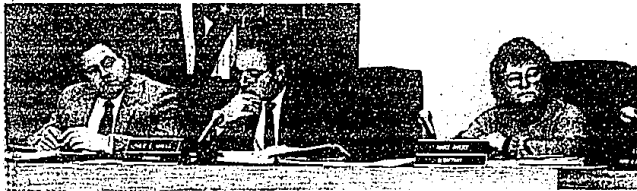


Forum will focus on home child care



BOB SKLAR /staff photographer

Farmington Hills planning commissioners Mary Avery listen to discussion at Thursday John Traflet (from left), Philip Arnold and night's meeting.

Continued from Page 1

Hills from offering professional baby-sitting in residential areas. The day care controversy surfaced in December after Feldman argued with a violation notice from the zoning department — was denied

In-house care is promoted

Joanna Maliszewski staff writer

Members of a new Farmington Hills organization — Parents to Legalize In-House Child Care — have established a plan of action to address the child home care controversy.

The non-profit organization, which is carrying the banner for legalized child home care, has established short- and long-term goals designed to promote the continuation of residential day care.

Education is at the top of the goal list, as well as attempts to encourage parents, child care providers and residents to push the issue with the help of meetings, plus, bumper stickers and information materials.

The organization's long-term goal is to "develop a tri-county network for home child care that will offer support and develop strategies for ensuring and promoting the continuation of licensed home child care," according to organization handouts.

Topping the plan of action is an "old-fashioned town meeting" from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7, at the Farmington Hills branch of the Farmington Community Library, 2737 12 Mile. The purpose of the meeting is to provide both city officials and residents an opportunity to ask questions about and to discuss home child care.

RESIDENTS ARE also invited to attend the organization's general meeting 7-10 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, and Monday, March 30, in the Farmington Hills library branch.

Organizer officials, including Erlene Feldman — who has asked city officials to develop an ordinance legalizing professional baby-sitting in Farmington Hills — have predicted what they call a position paper, documenting the need and legal right of home child care.

Citing the Michigan Court of Appeals and state law, organization members conclude that "a child care home licensed by the state of Michigan should be viewed as a permissible residential use" under the Farmington Hills zoning ordinance.

"The residential nature of, and public service offered by these facilities should not be overlooked. Child care homes should not be prohibited by any interpretation or application of the Farmington Hills zoning ordinance," according to the position paper.

Organization leaders also maintain that city regulations should not be more restrictive than state requirements for home child care. Lowering the number of children per child care home will have the effect of putting them out of business because of the ever-increasing cost of insurance. . . . More unlicensed and unregulated homes will result and continue."

IF THE number of children allowed in each day care home is reduced (or restricted to not more than 10) while demand remains the same or increases, "more child care homes will result, both licensed and unlicensed."

"Reducing the number of allowable children per home will not serve the public interest or need, and will have a detrimental impact on the local community."

Leaders also urge city officials to weigh the validity of neighbors' complaints about the homes with the benefit of the homes.

"The detrimental effect of further restrictions should be considered before any further recommendations are made," according to the position paper.

a variance by the city's board of zoning appeals.

FELDMAN WAS put on notice by the city because of a neighbor's complaint last June about excessive traffic. She was found to be out of compliance with city requirements that a child care facility border a primary or secondary road, that the operator have at least one acre of land and that there be at least 5,000 square feet of outdoor play area.

Feldman has suggested a proposed ordinance change calling for "state-certified quality home day care" as a "permitted accessory use of land in an RA-1, or single-family residential zone" and that such use is not subject to special conditions."

After Feldman took her crusade to the Farmington Hills City Council, members asked the planning commission to study the issue and draft a proposed ordinance.

At planning consultant Claude Coates' suggestion, planning commissioners proposed establishing home day care as a separate category in city zoning ordinances rather than grouping it under provisions for home occupations.

Regulations governing home occupations — the city has 49 home occupation classifications in its ordinances — don't quite fit standards considered necessary for home day care. Coates said. "The standards that are needed are relatively clear," he added, referring to those listed in the proposed ordinance.

OPTIONAL RESTRICTIONS — operation hours, age limit, screening, size requirements for outdoor play area — that were discussed might be difficult to control through zoning ordinances, Coates said.

Though commissioners included the larger, group day care homes to serve up to 12 children — in the proposed ordinance, Feldman said she is unconvinced they will follow through with this. According to state regulations, when more than six children are being cared for, an additional adult is required to be on staff.

Feldman is state-licensed to care for a maximum 12 children in her home on Minglewood in the Holly Hills subdivision. Though it sounds reasonable to restrict day care to

only six children (with no additional staff person in the house), Feldman said, she could not afford to continue home care services.

With only six children, she could not afford liability insurance — that she says increased 300 percent last year — or additional help. Limiting the number of children to six would also eliminate latchkey children, who arrive later in the day for only several hours, Feldman said.

IF PLANNING commissioners do not follow through and allow day care for more than six children, many professional baby sitters will continue to operate secretly, Feldman said.

Quoting Wayne State University statistics, Feldman said there are 10 unlicensed day care providers for every licensed provider. "They (planning commissioners) are not looking at the negative effects of these restrictions," she said, adding that a restrictive ordinance will continue to force many child care providers "underground."

Home day care opponents have argued that professional baby-sitting is a business that should not be allowed in a residential area. They have also claimed that services, such as Feldman's, create too much traffic and noise in their neighborhoods.

Yet commissioners did not fully address some of the complaints against day care at their study session, preferring to wait until the public hearing in February. Day care opponents and advocates — many wearing big yellow buttons saying "Ask me about day care," and members of the relatively new Parents to Legalize In-House Child Care — were prohibited from public comment during commissioners' study session Thursday.

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN Philip Arnold assured residents they would have an opportunity to speak at the public hearing when commissioners would decide what, if any, restrictions would be placed on day care.

City planner Ed Gardiner told commissioners that two family day care homes have been closed by the city because of complaints. Gardiner said he was uncertain whether the homes were state-licensed. But at least three complaints were registered with the city against these homes.

"You have to remember that these are registered complaints," he said, adding many residents are unaware that such homes are still illegal in the city.

Though Coates at first suggested a minimum distance between home day care residences, some planning commissioners considered it unnecessary.

Coates referred to a map designating the location of the city's 20 family day care homes, five group day care homes and 27 child care centers (such as KinderCare). All of these homes and centers are state licensed.

"It shows one thing, there are

some that are quite close together," Coates said.

SOME COMMISSIONERS suggested that one resident on a street or in a block or subdivision offering home care should not preclude a neighbor from doing the same. "I don't think it's a matter of opening up a business," Poehlman said, adding he doesn't believe people buy a house in Farmington Hills to set up day care. Consequently, requiring a minimum distance between child care residences isn't essential because demand for services comes from nearby neighbors.

But commissioner Jeri Van Houten asked colleagues to remember some of the neighbors' complaints.

"You do have to remember this is going to impact the neighborhood," she said. If "house after house" offered day care, traffic and noise would be significantly increased. "I think there is a cause for having some distance."

Commissioner Joanne Smith disagreed. She said noise and traffic would be the same with child care as with neighboring families who have children. "I think we have to open our hearts and our minds on this," Smith added.

PLYMOUTH HOBBY & TEACHER'S CORNER
 Will now be located at
 882 West Ann Arbor Trail • Plymouth
 (Formerly Fox Photo)
 Open 10-8 Monday thru Saturday
 We will retain Fox Photo Film Processing

HAIR COMPANY
 WINTER SPECIALS
 PERMS \$19.95
 CHILDREN'S HAIRCUTS \$4.00
 27716 7 Mile Rd. 2 blocks west of Inkster
 Mon-Sat. 8 am-6 pm

Arthritis Today
 Joseph J. Weiss, M.D. Rheumatology
 18829 Farmington Road
 Livonia, Michigan 48152
 Phone: 478-7860

EMOTIONS AND ARTHRITIS

Do emotions play a role in arthritis?
 There is little doubt that the muscle tension associated with anxiety, depression, fear, or agitation will increase strain on anyone's joints. In turn, this strain, if prolonged, will cause pain and impaired function. In arthritic conditions such as fibromyalgia, in which muscle strain is part of the condition, further muscle tension, whether from physical or emotional sources, will cause the fibromyalgia to flare.

However, most types of arthritis involve inflammation occurring because of chemical reactions taking place within the joint. In turn, these reactions are the result of the body's immune response.

Studies have shown that anxiety and depression can alter the ability of the immune system to function, but these changes are small and not long lasting. Thus, arthritis may begin after an emotional event such as a death or serious financial setback, but it is unlikely that such episodes started the joint problem.

Drugs to stop inflammation, rather than to change one's mood, remain the mainstay of arthritic treatment.

Levi's

IN-JEAN-IOUS WAYS TO SAVE

GUYS' CORDUROY JEANS
 Boop cut or straight legs. Best selection in waist sizes 28-32. No all sizes available in all colors. Reg. 15.99
7.99

GUYS' SHIRTS
 Choose from our entire selection of woven shirts. Reg. 17.99
12.99

GUYS' BOOT CUT JEANS
 100% cotton denim in waist sizes 29-40.
15.99

GUYS' PREWASHED STRAIGHT LEGS
 100% cotton in waist sizes 29-38. Colored. Reg. 28.99.
18.99

BOYS' PREWASHED DENIM JACKET
 100% cotton in sizes 10-20. Reg. 29.99.
19.99

STUDENTS' COLORED DENIM JEANS
 Our entire selection of 100% cotton straight legs in grey, blue, tonewashed, bleached & more. Waist sizes 26-30. Reg. 25.99-26.99.
17.99

PRICES GOOD SUNDAY, JANUARY 25 THRU SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 1987
 VISA • MasterCard • Accepted

Sagebrush

1

OFF REGULAR PRICE AND MORE!

YOUTHWEAR
 Choose from select group of winter clearance items.
 • Sweaters
 • Shirts
 • Slacks
 • Jeans

PRICES GOOD SUNDAY, JANUARY 25 THRU SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 1987
 VISA & MasterCard Welcome

Sagebrush

WESTLAND MALL
 NEXT TO MEIJER IN ROYAL OAK

NEXT TO MEIJER ON FORD ROAD AT CANTON CENTER
 PARDEE AT EUREKA IN TAYLOR

WESTLAND MALL
 NEXT TO MEIJER IN ROYAL OAK

NEXT TO MEIJER ON FORD ROAD AT CANTON CENTER
 PARDEE AT EUREKA IN TAYLOR