

# Home day care OK'd with limitations

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Regulations allowing in-home child day care in Farmington Hills are now on the books.

But operators of the larger, group day care homes can continue to operate until the Farmington Hills City Council approves a method of easing them into the new regulations.

Without much ado — a year and a half after months of controversy over in-home day care — the Farmington Hills City Council Monday enacted an ordinance amending existing child day care in residential areas. The amendment will take effect April 13.

The amendment allows in-family and group home child day care in residential areas, with certain restrictions. Family homes allow a

maximum of six children and group homes a maximum of 12. The amendment restricts group homes to major and secondary roads.

Despite the council's action Monday, many questions — particularly regarding the city's two day care group homes — remained unanswered. Yet no one — proponents, opponents or council members — questioned the plight of the city's

two state-licensed group home operators — until long after amendment enactment.

JUST PRIOR to the meeting's adjournment, Councilman Terry Sever asked about the status of the two group home operators — whose homes are on interior subdivision streets — in light of the new regulations.

Sever asked that the two group home operators be allowed to maintain their current number of children, with efforts made toward abiding by the new amendment. Though the state allows group home operators to care for a maximum 12 children, the new city rules prohibit such homes on interior subdivision streets.

"Your concern is covered," city attorney Paul Bibeau said. A resolution adopted when council introduced the zoning amendment last week still stands. Under the resolution, the two group home operators will not be prosecuted for violating city ordinance, Bibeau said.

City and legal staff are expected to develop a method for "grandfathering" these operations into the new regulations for council consideration sometime in April, Bibeau said.

But councilwoman Jody Soronen made it clear she opposes exceptions for the two group home operators. "I personally feel 12 is too many on an interior street. Don't undo what we have enacted," she said.

MAYOR BEN Marks agreed with Sever. A week earlier, Marks told the council he could not find a difference between the family homes with a maximum six children and group homes with a maximum 12. Though he wanted some changes in the ordinance amendment, Marks last week said he would agree to introduce it so it was on the books and "vulnerable" for change.

The new amendment allows family day care for a maximum six chil-

dren and the provider must be the occupant of the home, licensed by the state and registered with the city. Family day care homes would be limited to operating from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., must be at least 500 feet from another and cannot have signs advertising the service.

Greater restrictions are imposed on group day care homes, which have been considered the most controversial because of the maximum number of children allowed.

The amendment would require all group day care homes to be on major or secondary roads — not along subdivision streets. Group homes also must operate under the same regulations required of family homes.

The council's action upheld the Farmington Hills Planning Commission's earlier recommended amendment with one exception — Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) review for group home operators.

At last week's meeting, council members agreed that they would prefer group home operators to be reviewed by planning commissioners. But when council enacted the amendment this week, no reference was made to either planning commission or BZA review.

THE PLANNING commissioners' recommended BZA approval for group homes to determine whether the home would negatively affect traffic or adjacent residences.

Marks said Monday that group home review would be considered by city and legal staff and brought to council in April.

## Little choice

### District judges receive salary increase

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

The carrot and the whip.

That's what 47th District Judge Michael Hand called the state-subsidized judicial salary system in which local governmental units pay more if they refuse to authorize salary increases.

After postponing a decision two weeks ago, the Farmington Hills City Council Monday authorized a 15 percent — from \$71,632 to \$82,720

— salary increase each for judges Hand and Margaret Schaeffer.

But council members had little choice unless they were willing to foot the majority of the two judges' salaries. The salaries are split by the state and cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Under this year's state-authorized increase, each judge will be paid \$48,530 from the state and \$34,190 from the cities. Through a judicial salary standardization plan, however, the state will help the city pay

their local shares with \$25,075 for each judge. That leaves the cities responsible for a total of \$11,115.

But the salary system has a quirk. To be eligible for the state subsidy, the cities must authorize the maximum funds are budgeted — \$27,720 — allowed by the state Legislature.

IF THE Farmington Hills City Council had refused to grant the judges the maximum salaries allowed, both cities would have lost the total state subsidy of \$50,150. Because the state subsidy was increased this year by more than \$8,000, the cities would have lost \$28 per judge this year if the Hills council had refused the increase.

"It's not a viable choice. You do it or you lose money," Councilwoman Jan Dolan.

The council postponed a decision on the judges' salaries two weeks ago after Dolan said she believed the 15 percent salary increase was "out of line." Other city employees (the judges are state employees) received an average 4 percent salary increase in 1986-87. Because Hand and Schaeffer were not in attendance at that meeting, council postponed the decision until Monday.

Council members Monday also followed the Farmington City Council's

lead in adopting a resolution automatically authorizing the maximum local share approved by the state Legislature in the future "as long as the state-approved judicial standardization payment is increased and adequate funds are budgeted."

The cities' standing resolutions ease the process of authorizing judicial salary increases because the state authorizes salary adjustments at the beginning of the year while the cities' operate on a July-June fiscal year.

DISTRICT JUDGES' salaries are based on 85 percent of a Michigan Supreme Court judge's salary. "If the Supreme Court judges' salaries go up, ours follow," Schaeffer told the Hills council.

Under the state's 1987 recommended maximum salaries, Circuit Court and Recorder's Court judges will receive \$68,480, Probate Court judges, \$62,720.

### School board deadline near

Five people, including incumbent Susan Rennels, have taken out nominating petitions for the one-four-year term opening on the Farmington Board of Education.

No one has filed yet, however, reports Betal Duschinski, Farmington Public Schools business support services supervisor.

Election day is Monday, June 8. The opening term will run from July 1, 1987, to June 30, 1991.

Prospective candidates must be at least 18 and registered voters. Property ownership is not a requirement for candidacy.

Petitions, signed by at least 20

registered district voters, must be filed by 4 p.m. Monday, April 6.

Those turning in complete petitions can withdraw from the non-partisan race before 4 p.m. Thursday, April 9; thereafter, their names automatically will appear on the ballot.

Petitions are available from Duschinski at the Lewis B. Schuman Administrative Center, 300 Shawwassee, Farmington, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays. She's also available to assist candidates with information about filing and campaign finance laws.

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