

# Hot exchange

## Housing board's role debated

By Joanne Maliszowski  
staff writer

Talk about proposed senior adult housing on the donated Hanaway property in Farmington Hills has sparked debate over the inactive housing commission.

George Roberts, a Farmington Hills housing commissioner, last week questioned why the housing commission has not been involved in the city's plan to seek proposals from developers for senior adult housing on the Hanaway property.

The discussion broke into angry words between Roberts and councilman Joe Alkateeb when Roberts compared the council's effectiveness to that of the Detroit Lions.

"I'm to assume that 2 1/2 years of silence have indicated a policy change I should have seen in my crystal ball," Roberts said.

In the past, he continued, the housing commission was involved in housing project discussions, including how the city might develop the city-owned Hanaway property.

Roberts demanded to know how and when the policy toward the housing commission's involvement had changed. Mayor Ben Marks told Roberts the housing commission was involved when the city was considering building its own senior adult housing.

"THE ONLY time the housing commission got involved was in the planning of the project," Marks said, adding that the commission does not have a role in disposing property to a private developer.

City manager William Costick offered his opinion. "I don't see a role for the housing commission, George, because we're not going to own it (development on Hanaway property)."

Councilwoman Jan Dolan reactivated the housing commission in the mid-70s to study the Nardin Park proposal after Marlon-Oakland West had come to town. At no time, however, did the city council give the commission any money or au-

thority, Dolan said. "It has not met on a regular basis. There hasn't been action the council's taken to send back (to the commission)," Dolan said.

Finally, Marks provided Roberts with an answer. "The policy has not changed. The policy is not being adhered to."

Still, some council members suggested eliminating the commission if there's no need for it. But Marks pushed aside the issue to take a vote to authorize city administrators to send out a request for proposals to developers interested in the Hanaway property.

"We can address the viability of the housing commission at another date," Marks said.

In early 1988, Roberts, also a member of the housing rehabilitation loan board, will be faced with making a decision on which board he wishes to serve. City council policy prohibits board and commission members from serving on more than one board at a time.

## Septic tank study set for Goldsmith

By Joanne Maliszowski  
staff writer

The Oakland County Health Department will be asked to conduct one more study of the septic tanks on Goldsmith in the southwest corner of Farmington Hills.

"Resolve it once and for all," city councilman Joe Alkateeb said, about the continuing dispute over whether to install water and sewer and pave Goldsmith.

The issue of whether to pave the half-mile long dirt road and to install sanitary sewers and water has gone back and forth over the last few years. Petitions both supporting and opposing improvements have been as plentiful as Goldsmith residents' requests to be placed on the city council agenda.

Council decided to ask the health department to conduct another study — this time in the winter — to determine whether the existing septic tanks are causing a health hazard.

Council's action was a response to the latest request for water and sewer, which residents previously said was needed before the street could be paved. But the almost \$13,000 project fell short of the required 51 percent show of support from residents.

THE HEALTH department conducted studies of the septic tanks in the spring. "The health department reports that all septic systems are functioning properly and they do not have any records of well problems prepared by city engineer Skip Ottwell."

Alkateeb suggested another health department study in the winter when water levels generally are higher. But that suggestion contradicts the health department's stance.

"(The health department officials) indicated that if there's a problem, it's more likely to show up in the heat of the summer," assistant city

manager David Call said.

While some Goldsmith residents complained that they had just spent money to either improve or install a new septic tank or well, others complained theirs would not last long.

"How much longer is it going to hold out?" one resident asked about his 50-year-old septic field.

Throughout the continuing debate over Goldsmith, many residents have opposed paving, water and sewer because of the high costs. Many of the residents live on five-acre parcels. For assessment purposes, those residents would be assessed for four units. Water and sewer would cost an average \$1,458 and paving \$4,322 per unit.

THOUGH AT least one resident asked the city council to make the improvements economically possible for the neighborhood, Call said that would probably require the city paying about \$500,000 up front, which is prohibitive.

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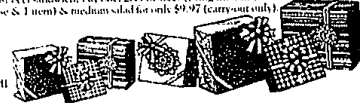
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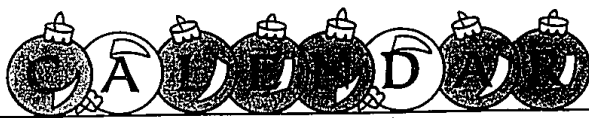
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