

Freeway could help boost shopping center

By Tim Smith
staff writer

For a few years, business in the Lathrup Landing shopping center at Evergreen-11 Mile has been stuck in low gear, much like traffic in nearby I-496 construction detours. Several tenants decided to find new homes.

But now, with construction done and freeway completion nearing, businesses are returning to the strip mall, its landlord said Tuesday.

"I truly believe that with the freeway's on and off ramps right there at Evergreen Road, the center will be a hot spot for businesses," said landlord Diana Kiellian, of Oak Park-based Lewiston Smith Realty. "It's a good location."

One sign of a business turnaround is the Nov. 1 opening of a karate school in the former Evergreen Fruit Market.

The 4,500-square-foot facility has been vacant since 1937, when the former owner died.

BESIDES THE Southfield Martial Arts karate school, Kiellian said a kiosk business recently opened to the center. Its owner cited improved visibility over his shop's former location, on the southwest corner of Evergreen-11 Mile.

And two other businesses, including a realty and a flower shop, may be operating by the end of the year, Kiellian added.

When the karate school and new shops are in place, 17 of 19 center slots will be filled, the landlord said. One of the remaining vacancies has 5,020 square-feet of space.

Although the former fruit market had been closed, Lathrup Village officials did not pressure Kiellian to fill that and other vacancies, she said.

Any pressure to fill those slots came from remaining businesses "because they needed an increase of traffic in the center," Kiellian said.

"A couple businesses moved out due to slow business because of (I-496) construction," she continued.

"They couldn't and wouldn't wait." THAT CONSTRUCTION hindered access into the center's 300-space parking lot, Kiellian said.

"For a while, Evergreen was closed with the center's only access from 11 Mile. Then 11 Mile was closed with the only access from Evergreen," she explained.

There now are two access ramps into the lot both off of Evergreen and the freeway service drive, the landlord said.

City administrator and building inspector Gerald Stoebe said it was "not up to us" to find a new tenant for the former market, which for a time had been boarded up.

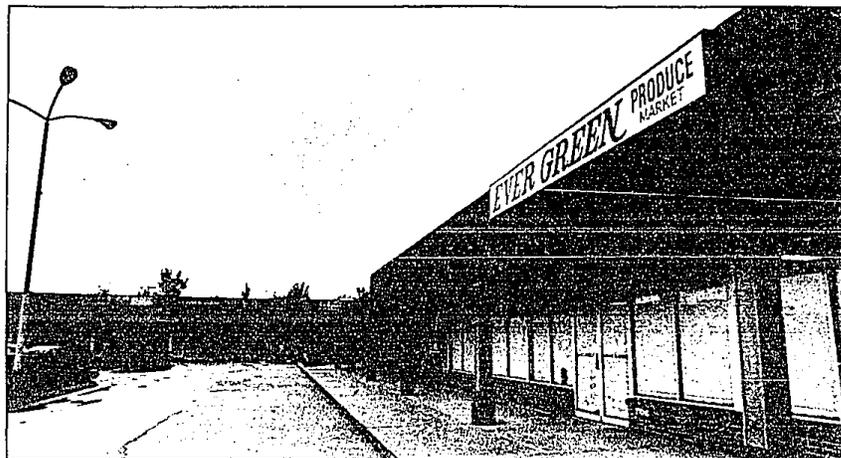
"That is a most valuable piece of property, and I think the landlord had to be very careful about what tenants to bring in there," Stoebe said.

However, to pave the way for the karate school, Stoebe said the city held a special site hearing and issued a building permit.

THE LATTER was needed for extensive renovation work required to convert the closed market into a karate school, Stoebe said.

Meanwhile, Locksmith Inc. owner Barney Slobin said he likes his new location and is enthusiastic about having the karate school as a neighbor.

"It's not bad so far," Slobin said. "It has much better visibility than the other one. You couldn't see in there and the walk-through traffic wasn't any good."



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Lathrup Landing is gaining new life with shops, including a karate school in place of the produce market, filling vacancies at the mall.

He opened his Lathrup Landing business Oct. 1 after moving from a small retail strip on the southwest corner of Evergreen and 12 Mile in Southfield, where he spent three

years. Slobin said the karate school will help the center's other businesses because it will draw "a good mix of people, mostly businessmen."

With new businesses, the center is being spruced up, Kiellian said. She said that the center's exterior was

repainted in 1988. And landscaping improvements are planned for next spring.

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CITY OF FARMINGTON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS (Summary)

A regular meeting of the Farmington City Council was called to order by Mayor Tupper at 8:00 p.m. on October 2, 1989, in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan.

PRESENT: Campbell, Hartsock, Richardson, Tupper.

ABSENT: Yoder.

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Deadman, Director Lauboff, Director Billing, Code Enforcement Officer Koozcel, City Attorney Doobee, Adm. Assistant Schalla, City Clerk Bushey.

Minutes of the previous meeting of September 18, 1989, were approved as written.

Minutes of other Boards were received and/or filed.

Council granted the requested outside sales permit to Thrifty Flowers of Farmington on Orchard Lake Road.

Council tabled the request of Nelson/Ross Companies for a sign variance at the Village Commons on Grand River until the next meeting.

Council granted the request from Village Commons Associates for an extension of lease signage at 33770 Grand River.

Council granted the request of Cab Pack No. 331 for the outside sale of pumpkins in the Arbor Drug parking lot.

Council proclaimed Medical Assistants Week from October 16 - 20, 1989, and Medical Assistants Day, October 18, 1989.

Council ratified the new 3-year contract between the City and the Public Safety Dispatchers effective July 1, 1989 through June 30, 1992.

Council authorized the execution of an agreement for a traffic control device at Farmington Road and Shiawassee in the amount of \$11,374.00.

Council authorized the closing of the city parks and Raphael Street during the period preceding Halloween.

There were no public comments.

Monthly bills were approved for payment.

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

RICHARD L. TUPPER, Mayor
JOSEPHINE M. BUSHEY, City Clerk

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