

Hills wants input on changes in sign laws

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills planning commission-ers want to know what store and business owners think about possible changes in signs.

"If there is something we are overlooking, they have an obligation to tell us. We urge people that have a strong opinion, to come and tell us," planning commission chairwoman Joanne Smith said.

Commissioners and planning staff were disappointed a week ago when business owners didn't show up for a public hearing Sept. 27 and tell commissioners what they thought of some proposed changes in the city's sign ordinance.

"That has to tell us they don't care (about the proposed changes)," Smith said. "But I think they do."

Zoning supervisor Lee Blizman was equally surprised by the apparent lack of interest, although she received some phone calls. "Is this tacit consent? How do we know what they (business owners) need unless they come forth."

Local government is best where they can have a say-so, where they can have a part in making laws that govern them.

The proposed sign changes are scheduled for more discussion at a future study session sometime after October.

COMMISSIONERS want to coordinate rules for temporary signs with other sign regulations, Blizman said. "They want it to be a whole package so they get a larger view of what will happen with all signs."

The kind of temporary signs commissioners are thinking of include those used for short-term events, such as church festivals.

The proposed sign changes are expected to give business owners a set of rules to be followed in using exterior wall signs and signs on windows.

Copies of the proposed detailed changes are available in the city's planning/zoning offices.

The city now requires a permit for wall signs (such as a store name) but does not regulate the number or size of signs. The size and number of temporary and permanent window signs also are not regulated.

Unlike wall signs, however, the city has not required a permit for window signs.

Under the proposal, exterior wall signs and window signs will be regulated by size and number.

The proposed changes vary in the city's different zoning districts. In the B-1 (local business) and B-3 (general business) districts, wall signs, including permanent window signs, cannot exceed 10 percent of the area of the facade on which the signs are placed.

In the B-2 (shopping center-type district), B-4 (also a shopping center-type but with access drives) and ES (expressway services) districts, the percent of the facade that can be covered with signs would be increased to 15 percent.

THE SAME goes for the LI (light industrial) district. But window signs would not be permitted in this district.

Changes also are proposed with temporary window signs, such as the type a store owner uses to advertise a sale. They would be allowed only in the business and expressway service districts. A permit wouldn't be required.

All window signs, temporary and permanent, would not be able to exceed 10 percent of the window area, including door windows.

"We are urging people to have a strong opinion and to come out to our meetings," Smith said. "So many businesses have done a beautiful job with their signs. We want to know what they think."

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Study of secondary school boundaries to begin

Two groups began studying boundaries of Farmington high schools and middle schools this week with the aim of equalizing student populations and building up.

They plan to be done with the study and have a recommendation for the school board in early December.

The boundary study was commissioned by trustees following a fall facilities study report that cited severe overcrowding at several schools, specifically at Power Middle School and North Farmington High School.

Two public meetings are scheduled to get comment and review preliminary study plans. Child care services will be provided at both meetings.

• Thursday, Oct. 18 at 7:30 p.m. at Warner Middle School, a meeting will be held to gather public input.

• Monday, Nov. 19 at 7:30 p.m., a second meeting will detail the group's tentative boundary plan.

A 17-member committee will study the middle schools, while an 18-member committee will look at high school boundaries.

A joint meeting of both groups was held Tuesday afternoon to receive information and begin work. Their timetable over the next two months includes touring buildings, meeting with principals, sub-committee meetings and discussions and a final report which is slated

to go to the Farmington Board of Education on Dec. 4.

THE GROUPS will use building enrollments, projections, floor plans, demographics, maps of area cities, current district boundary maps, and information on special education programs in their study.

The middle school study committee includes school/community relations director Pamela O'Malley, East Middle School principal Bill Martin, and parents Jayne Wochomurka and Kathy Stricher, who worked on a recent elementary boundary study. Also on the committee are: Dunkle parents Mary Fayne, John Golazewski and Carol Wilson; East parents Patricia Hagemann, Mary Jo Halleck and

Nancy Vessell; Power parents Debbie Cornwell, C. Luckaschetter and Mary Taylor; and Warner parents Carol Ayers, Maxine Harwin and Diane Richmond.

The high school study committee includes building and student services director Don Cowan, Farmington High School principal Gerry Potter, staff development trainer Sean Whalen and parents Bev Bahr and Linda DeMayo, who participated in the recent elementary boundary study. Also on the committee are Farmington High parents Jan Bennett, Ruth Mitchell, Mary Sue Munter and Laura Myers; North Farmington parents Roger Lyon, Verla Davis, Linda Bruckelner and Mary Barnes; and four Harrison High parents who will be named this week.

2 local businessmen elected to MAPA board

Two Farmington-area businessmen William E. Ponkowski and Craig B. Smith, have been elected to the board of directors of the Michigan Automotive Parts Association

by the association general membership.

As members of the board for the 1990-91 term, they will provide leadership and direction for the 656 association members.

Ponkowski is vice president of Glendale Auto Supply, an independent

auto parts business with two Orchard Lake Road locations.

Ponkowski has served as an association board member for the last two years. He has been affiliated with the family-owned business since 1971, the last seven years with Glendale Auto Supply. He resides in

Union Lake with his wife Roseanne and their two children.

Smith is president of S-G Imported Car Parts, an independent auto parts business with locations in Farmington, Ann Arbor, Warren, Pontiac, Berkley and Alton Park.

Smith has served as an association board member for three years. He has been affiliated with the automotive aftermarket since 1969, the last 14 years with S-G Imported Car Parts. He resides in Farmington

Hills with his wife Barbara and their three sons.

The Michigan Automotive Parts Association consists of 656 retail and wholesale auto parts stores, warehouse distributors, rebuilders and associate members representing the independent automotive aftermarket in Michigan.

Among the services the association offers its membership are education and training programs, financial services, insurance programs and legislative influence in Lansing.

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