

# Proposed sign laws called too restrictive

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Too restrictive, especially for small businesses, is how critics describe proposed changes in Farmington Hills' sign regulations.

"I would like to see a little expansion of the window signs. This is how the small business advertises," councilman Ben Marks said. "I think you're being restrictive. I think you're being repressive."

Other council members joined the chorus. "I'm concerned when government tends to over-regulate," councilman Terry Sever said. Farmington Chamber of Commerce officials agreed. "We do feel it's very restrictive and we have concerns for our smallest businesses," executive director Jody Soronen said.

The use of paper window signs, for example, is the least expensive form of advertising especially for small

businesses that generally cannot afford consistent advertising in the media, Soronen said.

In a letter to the city council, chamber president Bob Heinrich asked whether the aesthetic improvements the proposed regulations would attempt to achieve were worth the potential economic problems that would face business and store owners.

THREE COUNCIL members —

Mayor Jean Fox, Aldo Vagnozzi and Nancy Bates — favored the proposed regulations but couldn't convince their colleagues. Fox said the regulations are for "things that in the long run lead to blight in a community."

With the other four council members opposed, the three advocates asked that at least the intent of the changes — if not the percentages of which signs could cover facades and windows — could be maintained. "Sever is willing to compromise. I might be willing to compromise my feelings with some of yours to get a better ordinance..."

Council members agreed to postpone the issue and schedule a study session to review and make the proposals less restrictive.

"I don't think Farmington Hills will go through blight in the next year because we don't have an ordinance regulating window signs,"

councilman Jonathan Grant said.

The greatest criticism was of the proposed regulations for window signs. City manager William Costick suggested separating regulations of wall and window signs though no one bought it.

"We've gone this far we ought to move forward with a standard we can all live with," Costick said.

The city manager also expressed concern about any differences in sign regulations between Farmington Hills and Farmington. "I am concerned about Farmington adopting one set of standards and we adopting another set of standards."

FARMINGTON officials are still working on their proposed sign regulation changes.

Some council members appeared surprised when city attorney John Donohue said that existing uses would be grandfathered. "Then is

there another way of handling the problem?" Vagnozzi asked.

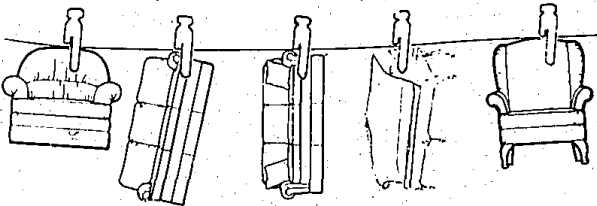
Donohue suggested that if the changes are adopted they should be left in the zoning ordinances and see what happens in a year.

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, could not 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.

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## obituaries

### IDA E. BEAN

Mrs. Bean, 92, of Farmington Hills died December 20 in William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak.

Born in Mt. Clemens, Mich., Mrs. Bean was a homemaker. Survivors include her daughter, Barbara Nedrow; sisters, Ethel Reese and Leola Schroeder; two grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Services were December 22 at the

Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. David L. Sherwin of Redford Presbyterian Church officiating. Burial was in Glen Eden Cemetery, Livonia.

### JENNIE OVERLY

Mrs. Overly, 95, of Farmington Hills died December 20 in Boulevard Temple Methodist Home, Detroit.

Born in Defiance Co., Ohio, Mrs. Overly was a homemaker.

Survivors include her husband, Henry G.; son, James; daughter, Janet Smith; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Services were December 24 in Nardin Park United Methodist Church, Farmington Hills, with the Rev. Dr. William A. Ritter officiating. Burial was in Grand Lawn Cemetery, Detroit.

Arrangements were made by the Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington.

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Save on selected fall and winter mens-tailored clothing, sportswear, furnishings, shoes and womenswear. When you shop with us you receive expert fittings and alterations, skillfully completed by our own on-premise tailors. Plus, guaranteed satisfaction. We stand behind our products and alterations 100%. We're not satisfied until you are.

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Westridge Shopping Center  
Warren Bldg. between Warren & Westburg  
LANSING: 424-0000  
On Saginaw Hwy. across from Lansing Mall