

Bluebirds from page 1A

"It got our interest," said Teets, who visited Bolton and was stunned when he saw the rare bluebirds nesting on the property. "We decided the park would be a great place for the bluebirds."

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ness. But some of the bluebirds who moved in have started families. While the mother bluebird incubates the eggs, the father bluebird feeds the mother. The first brood should fledge (begin to fly) by Memorial Day.

Club monitors boxes

If located properly, the threat from house sparrows can be removed. "Location and the size of the box has everything the bluebirds are looking for," Teets said.

The boxes are paired — one for bluebirds and one for their pals, tree swallows. Tree swallows and bluebirds won't live next door to their own kind. They like to integrate.

"In effect, you're giving us one box to the tree swallows," said Steve Teets, also a club member. As neighbors often do, the bluebirds and tree swallows become pals and will protect each other's nests.

By late March, club members noticed that bluebirds had arrived at their new home. The male bluebird usually locates the box for the female. "He will wait for his little lady friend. If she accepts the home he has found, they're in business," Teets said.

Not all the boxes in the park have

Generally, bluebirds have two broods a year. The first brood often helps feed the younger brood. They will nest here and leave for the winter. Those who survive, particularly those born here, should return next season.

Club members have been assigned boxes to monitor. The information gathered will be given to the North American Bluebird Society, formed in 1978 to re-establish the birds.

Area residents have bought their own bluebird boxes and put them up in their yards with success. But the Farmington area isn't the only place where bluebird projects are underway. The Oakland County Parks Commission about six years ago started its own projects at Independence Oaks, for example. Parks in Troy and Bloomfield Hills also have bluebird projects. They have been successful, according to commission member Fox.

Don't get close

No doubt the bluebirds are great to see. But club members urge park visitors to keep away from the nests and boxes. The birds cannot be disturbed and there is no reason to approach the birds. You will get a better view from the trail. Besides that, park officials are keeping a watchful eye.

"The best way to view them is with a pair of binoculars," Teets said. "We could succeed or fail based on people tampering with the boxes."

The club bought 10 boxes and Teets donated six and a bluebird trail was established in the park. There's rhyme and reason to where and how the boxes are located.

The boxes must be placed in a meadow, not around trees. But the box should face a large shrub, for example, so when the time is right, baby bluebirds who are learning to fly have somewhere relatively safe

Rezoning from page 4A

as office. She believes they could sell their lots for more dollars if office or commercial zoning became a reality on the thoroughfare.

Donohue wouldn't offer a specific opinion on that request. "If the city were to appeal, I would anticipate that Mrs. McMahan would appeal the damage claim," which was for \$500,000 before interest, he said.

But Donohue believes there is still room for negotiation with the consent judgment. "If we do anything as far as single-family, multi-family or RCE (elderly hous-

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*John Donohue,
city attorney*

ing), I don't think that will do anything to affect the consent judgment proposed."

The McMahan property lies 442 feet on Orchard Lake Road, about

1,000 feet south of I-696, and across from the entrance to Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge campus. Property adjacent to the McMahan acreage is zoned single-family residential.

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