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The rezoning included Schwartz's nine lots.

Schwartz came before the city council in December, 1988, to object to the rezoning and then to the Zoning Board of Appeals in January, 1989, and asked for nine variances in order to build. He was denied.

Schwartz took the nine lots and divided them into six lots each 80 feet wide, with a remaining lot at 66 feet wide. He told the city during a zoning meeting that the lots were split nine years prior to his acquiring them.

There are 28 lots in the Elm Grove subdivision that conform to the RA-3 zone and 33 lots that don't conform, according to Lee Blizman, zoning supervisor at an April 7 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. Blizman and city attorney Derk Beckerleg declined comment

on the court case.

Schwartz intends to build a house — with two baths, a family room, kitchen, three bedrooms, and a full basement — similar to others he built on the street. The house would be 1,420 square feet, and "would improve the neighborhood," Schwartz said.

Wilk is willing to buy Schwartz's odd-size vacant lot. But he is not willing to sell Schwartz 14 feet of his homestead to allow the builder to have a conforming lot. Other than the requested 14-foot variance, the house would conform to all other setback requirements, Schwartz said.

Builder Robert Schwartz, Michael's son, has talked about selling the lot to Wilk, "but I can't remember if he ever gave me a formal offer," Schwartz said. He and Wilk

would probably be on "different planets" when it came to price, Schwartz said.

"We build very good homes," Robert Schwartz said. "We improved the neighborhood. I don't think we will downgrade the value of his house. I'm sorry it's come to this point."

Michael Schwartz maintains that when he bought the land, it was to build the nine sites. He incurred considerable expense, he said. He applied for permits in March 1988 and the rezoning did not occur until after the engineering had begun. He stressed that he has a \$4,000 paving assessment against the disputed lot.

For different reasons, both Wilk and Schwartz believe the city made a mistake on this one.



CITY WARREN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Zoning tiff: Robert Wilk, a Farmington Hills roofer and builder who resides on Watt Street in the Elm Grove subdivision is leading a group of residents who are fighting builder Michael Schwartz, who is suing the city for not giving him a variance.

Schwartz says the city never gave him any direction on how to appportion the lots after the rezoning. Because there are no homes across the street, Wilk feels that granting the

variance would set an example for another builder to seek similar variances.

"I'm the representative on the street," said Wilk, whose neighborhood has no formal homeowners association. "I feel like I'm being closed in. They will be cutting trees and building a lot."

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she said. "My main concern is the money. I think we need to better use what we already have."

She listed the city's annual calendar, local cable access channels and the Observer as good communication sources already in place.

The six-page, two-color newsletter is expected to cost the city about \$4,800 for each edition, not including photographs used, according to quotes given to the city. The cost would include design, editorial direction, writing and printing of 6,000 copies.

Councilman Richard Tupper said he has been actively pushing the idea of a city newsletter for six or seven years. "Obviously, I'm glad," he said. "I think if we keep it short and to the point . . . that it'll serve the purpose we intend it for. I think we should give it a good shot."

Tupper said he views the newsletter as an informational tool, telling residents what city laws entail, when to get permits, and offering information about the local police and fire services and things like leaf pick-up. Many of these items cannot be handled effectively in the city calendar, he said.

"They start preparing the calendar in October — there's no way you can predict what will be of public interest," he added.

Marketing Communications Council's Ron Baker, a Farmington Hills resident, said he is looking forward to Farmington's newsletter effort, calling it "clearly different" than newsletters in other municipalities. "The city's really interested in getting straight information to their residents," he said.

He expects topics like legislation affecting residents, recycling and law enforcement to be included in the publication.

MCC will organize "focus groups" comprised of city residents to get feedback before launching the newsletter. Additional focus groups and surveys may be done after publication to get opinions about it.

Hartscock said the council will likely continue to look at other communication avenues, including local cable television.

Seminar set on job loss

Thousands of Americans are caught up in "Downsizing in the 90s" and the stress can be unbearable.

Addressing that concern, the Oakland University Continuum Center will host an evening workshop, "Dealing With The Stress Of Job Loss," Wednesday, July 29, from 7-10 p.m. on campus.

Roberta Dailey will present this seminar suitable for adults who have lost a job, or anyone awaiting the budget cut axe to fall.

Workshop topics include the normal, overwhelming anxiety that accompanies the thought of job loss and spontaneous reactions to being unemployed.

Participants will identify six kinds of stressors and examine how, extended over time, their effects can be a loss of physical and emotional well-being. A hardness evaluation and personal stress reliever profile are part of the program.

The fee is \$39; MasterCard or VISA are accepted. Register before July 27 by calling 370-3033.

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Reaching out to the people of our community.

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