

# Neighbors step up to stop sidewalk

By Dave Varma  
STAFF WRITER

Homeowners in one Farmington Hills subdivision would rather keep their trees and wildlife than accept a new sidewalk.

West Franklin Estates homeowners association representative Mark Silverberg told city council members last week that the neighborhood is "unanimously and vehemently" opposed to plans to complete a sidewalk

from 13 Mile to 14 Mile on the east side of Farmington Road.

Their concern, he said, is that the neighborhood's trees and wildlife sanctuary would be threatened by the new sidewalk, which would "destroy the natural beauty and property value in the area."

In response, Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said the city wasn't going to force the issue: "If they don't want it, we've got a lot of other places that want them."

Requests for sidewalks in the city outpace the city's ability to meet them, Vagnozzi said.

Silverberg, who is former president of the homeowners group, said he was still planning to get his neighbors to sign a petition to stop the sidewalk and ask the city for objective data supporting the need or demands for a sidewalk in that area.

Plans to complete the sidewalk were outlined by city public services director Tom Biasell at the special city council meeting at Fire Station No. 2 Wednesday. It would be built along the backyards of residents who live along Fear Ridge, connecting with a sidewalk already in place.

Silverberg also complained about the lack of notice to residents in the subdivision, which has 55 lots. He said they first heard of the plans at a meeting the previous night, where the opposition was unanimous.

Biasell said the city had a "fervent desire" to work with residents at West Franklin

Estates. "We try to work around the natural features," he said.

Biasell said the city's philosophy, in general, is to build sidewalks so residents aren't endangered by walking or riding on busy streets like Farmington. Despite the opposition, Biasell said, "If you build it, they will be used."

Later, Biasell said the project was only in the design stages. Only one homeowner was notified for the topographical survey recently because the city knew the sidewalk would only cross his property, rather than city right-of-way.

The city had received requests to finish that sidewalk, Biasell noted.

No council action was taken at the meeting.

Biasell said they would put the sidewalk plan together, then meet with residents. Eventually, the plan would go to the city council.

"It's a policy decision," he said.

## Hills volunteers honored Monday

Farmington Hills volunteers will be honored at a reception and brunch at the William Costick Activities Center on 11 Mile from 9-11 a.m. Monday, May 12.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the event will include enter-

tainment and the presentation of the "Diamond Award" by the Commission on Aging to the outstanding volunteer who is at least 75.

Those volunteers attending should call 473-1890 by Monday to confirm.

## Stolen vans recovered

Two of three vehicles stolen from St. Fabian's Church on 12 Mile April 26 have been recovered.

The three vehicles were all made by Chrysler Corp., which led police to believe that the thieves wanted them for parts.

A gold 1991 Dodge Grand Caravan, 1995 Plymouth van and a 1994 Dodge Grand Voyager were all stolen from the

church lot during an event.

The 1994 Dodge Grand Voyager was found in Detroit with the ignition punched, but otherwise in good condition, on April 27. The 1991 Dodge Grand Caravan was also found in Detroit Sunday, with the ignition punched.

The Plymouth, valued at \$20,000, was still missing.

## Babies from page A1

At the store earlier Tuesday, Bhatia said there is nothing wrong with the promotion. She likens it to a car dealership offering something free to people who test drive a vehicle.

As to requiring people to purchase a certain amount of merchandise, Veena said: "It doesn't make any difference."

A representative from the State Attorney General's office doesn't agree. "Tying" the purchase of one product in order to buy another is a violation of state and federal antitrust laws, said Chris DeWitt, spokesman for the state attorney general. A store could offer the item free or at a discount, but not contingent on buying another product.

"The actual tying of a purchase and then be able to buy something else that would not otherwise be available could certainly be considered illegal," DeWitt said. "The test is that this item is not available otherwise unless you make an additional purchase. That is where they would run into a problem."

The attorney general's office has not received any formal complaints about the practice, DeWitt added.

The manufacturer doesn't approve of the practice. A spokesperson at Ty Inc. in Oak Brook, Ill., that makes Beanie Babies had not heard of such a promotion.

"That is nothing we would endorse," said Laura Bice, a customer representative. "When we hear something outrageous like that, we ask that you put it in writing to Ty Incorporated..."


Bhatia said she did not consult an attorney before running the promotion.

"I don't have to talk to any attorney; I can do any promotion I want," she said.

The promotion has been popular. The Mother's Day special was expected to last until May 15, but supply and demand will cause the sale to cease sooner.

"I'm all run out of Beanie Babies," the owner said late Tuesday.

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