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change-of-address notices just yet, but they were pleased.

"It's still a call our board has to make. We have a strong indication that if everything works out the way we think it will, we will stay here," said Hans Weckerle, Bosch Braking Systems president. "We still need the OK from MEGA, which we still haven't got."

Michigan Job Commissions, Oakland County Executive's Office, Farmington Hills Economic Development Corporation and Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce — and some business owners — lobbied for council to rethink its position on tax breaks to companies in Bosch's case.

Their arguments helped sway council members. But perhaps not as much as the prospect of losing a "good corporate citizen" that wants to build a \$37 million 260,000-square foot facility here, which would create 450 new jobs in five years.

Bosch is being courted by Indiana where, by the state's estimation, it's \$40 million cheaper to do business. MEGA offers tax

incentives to make up the difference, but requires local participation.

A potential of \$30 million in tax credits overshadowed the Hills' \$400,000 portion. Council members wrestled with the philosophical issue like an over-cautious alligator nonetheless. Hills officials rationalized that the city will recoup \$400,000 through fees on permits and sewerage associated with the building. Since 50 percent of taxes are abated, the city would still receive \$66,000 annually from the Bosch expansion during the six years.

Once the abatement is up, the city would see \$339,000 in tax revenue — \$149,000 alone from the new facility. Bosch's presence and expansion would raise \$1.5 million for all taxing authorities not to mention the economic spin-off that 450 new jobs creates.

"We believe the costs are minimal; the benefits are substantial," said Councilman Jerry Ellis in support.

Council's action, though, means county, community col-

lege and public school taxes are also abated.

Farmington Public Schools operating revenue would not be affected, but the district's debt fund would lose \$98,920 during the six years.

Superintendent Bob Maxfield said in a letter that the Bosch abatement wouldn't hurt the district's ability to pay off debt. But if the city continued to grant abatements, it "could have an adverse effect," Maxfield added.

Council set the standard to deal with future tax break requests. They would only be considered if: Federal or state programs are involved; the city can recapture the loss through other means; and the business is a long-standing member and taxpayer in the community.

In Bosch's case, council added a term that requires the corporation to remain in the Hills at least 12 years — twice the abatement period — or repay the exempted tax money.

"It's a very stringent penalty, and we've agreed to it," said Stewart Mandell, Bosch attorney.

Councilwoman Bates wasn't sold. She also voted against the criteria for considering abatements.

"Future requests, that's what scares me the most," Bates said. "Once we start this where do we stop? Each request is going to be more difficult."

One audience member may confirm Bates' fears. Michael Buford, Hella North America president watched the proceedings with more than passing interest.

Council recently denied an exit permit for his Hella North America company to move to Plymouth Township, which is offering a tax break. He might make a similar request regarding Hella's sister company, North American Lighting.

"If the company stays and expands, it will certainly benefit Farmington Hills," Buford said. "If we move it, it's the same story."



"We believe the costs are minimal; the benefits are substantial."

Jerry Ellis
—councilman,
Farmington Hills

Teen party from page A1

get out of hand. We really do apologize. It was an emotional decision (to host the party) that should not have been made. We had no idea that what was going to happen happened."

According to Alexander, he wanted to apologize directly to other parents of students who attended the party.

"I messed up," he said. "And I want to talk to the parents. I don't want to be a bad guy."

One Farmington High School parent in attendance for their guilty pleas was Cathy Webb, who happens to be affiliated with Families in Action and is vice president of the board of education.

"Out of every negative comes a positive," said Webb in the hallway outside Parker's courtroom. "This was a real wake-up call to our parent community to pay attention, ask questions when your kids are going to a friend's

house for an evening or a party. Know the other parents, pick up the phone and call them. Find out what's going on."

Webb said she thought the remorse showed by both parents during their statements to Parker was believable.

"I think they sincerely feel bad about what happened," she said. "Things did get out of control and often that is the case when you have a party like that."

Overwhelming evidence collected by police detectives had something to do with the defendants pleading guilty — only two months after their attorney requested a jury trial. But attorney Rohn Mitchell also said Griffith and Alexander did not want to further upset the community apple cart with students and their parents being called to testify and be cross-examined.

"To save the obvious pressure, trauma and turmoil this trial

would have caused, Ms. Griffith and Mr. Alexander wish to end this matter and face their responsibility," Mitchell said.

Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Justin Davis reiterated what he said as early as last November's arraignment. There was no reason to even consider a jury trial.

"The detectives thought it was a straightforward case," Davis said. "They didn't think there was much of a trial issue and they (the defense) felt that way too, because they pleaded guilty."

Davis said there was "a lot of evidence, overwhelming evidence that showed they were guilty of that crime."

Much of that evidence was in the form of statements from teens who attended the party. Also that night, two party goers were issued citations for underage drinking.

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