

# Apartment

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Haron and other commissioners received, at their homes, invitations to the grand opening of a similar apartment complex in Rochester. The event included refreshments and a prize raffle.

"I personally view that as improper conduct by Village Green," Haron said. "I don't know the motives. It could just have been a gross error in judgment by the director of development."

While Haron felt the breach enough to abstain from voting, Commissioner Robert Bruckner did not. He said he hadn't even opened the mailing because it didn't come from the city or the planning department. The commission's consulting attorney didn't see a conflict, he said.

Chairman of Village Green Properties Jonathan Holtzman said his company had no intention of trying to influence the vote. Invitations were sent to neighboring homeowners, too.

"It is our way of doing business to present similar projects in other cities," he said. "We would never do anything to compromise anybody."

Holtzman stressed his company doesn't go into any community without first meeting with homeowners, city and planning officials. The company would plan a series of neighborhood presentations before bringing plans to the commission. The Rochester project, he said, was a successful rezoning because the company worked with neighbors and the city.

Several projects had been previously proposed for the 32-acre site, Holtzman said, which is complicated by woodlands and wetlands. The company would build 250 apartments, rather than the more than 350 that would be allowed by multi-family zoning.

Under the existing, single family zoning, up to 100 homes could be built on the site, west of Lujon and east of I-275.

Because the commission was only considering a request for rezoning, developers didn't present specific information about the complex. However, Holtzman said, it would maximize the amount of woodlands and wetlands left untouched, leaving 65 percent green space.

Plans call for a community

**"I personally view that as improper conduct by Village Green. I don't know the motives. It could just have been a gross error in judgment by the director of development."**

**David Haron**  
—Planning commissioner

marketed to what Holtzman called "renters by choice," with an average income of around \$85,000.

"This group of proposed renters are currently living in Farmington Hills, and they want to sell their homes and downsize," he said.

The buildings, each housing nine apartments, will look like single family homes, with attached garages, wood and brick exteriors, copper window treatments and high profile roofs. They won't look at all like Village Green of Farmington Hills on Haggerty, built in 1988, Holtzman said.

Commissioner Glen Fleischacker asked why the company hadn't considered applying for planned unit development zoning, which would include a development agreement that would guarantee the company's promises. Holtzman said Village Green would willingly pursue that option.

"Consistently, we enter into covenants with next-door neighbors that guarantee what we will build," he added. "We are long-term owners."

While the apartments would provide some buffering against the freeway for single family neighborhoods, commissioner

Paul Blissman asked what would be done to buffer the freeway from the apartments. Holtzman said renters are generally more interested in easy access to major thoroughfares for employment and shopping.

"We add extra insulation and layers of glass for sound conditioning," he said. "We're also looking at lots of ideas with berms and trees."

Traffic impacts also concerned residents and commissioners, even though Holtzman said the company's traffic engineers would present detailed studies showing how renters' traffic patterns differ from those of homeowners. City planning consultant Claude Coates couldn't speculate on what traffic impacts might be with cars from an additional 250 or more residents.

However, he said, traffic already stacks on the ramp at Eight Mile. During peak traffic hours, cars pass through at a rate of two every minute.

Coates said the city's master plan shows single-family zoning for the property, and the last time the site was reviewed, the planning commission determined that was a reasonable use. Layouts submitted years ago showed 57 and 61 homes, although Holtzman said the proximity to the freeway, the ordinance would allow cluster housing, up to 100 units.

Fleischacker offered a motion to set a public hearing for the rezoning request; however, he said, developers would have to convince residents and consider PUD zoning before he would vote in favor of the project.

The rezoning request will be considered at a public hearing at the commission's June 22 meeting.

# Act

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Words, Words," to be directed by FHS senior Nick Ward and "The Actor's Nightmare" by Christopher Durang. The latter play is being directed by Patti Wheeler, another senior at the school. Ward and Wheeler are also directing for the very first time.

Gwynn said he was encouraged by FHS language arts teacher Leanne Young to complete his play for the program. "She asked to see it first, and I guess she liked it."

According to Gwynn, an 18-year-old who hopes to study drama at Michigan State University, "Three Little Words" is about one of the most-used sentences in the English language — I love you.

**What if?**

Gwynn, whose parents are Alexis and Richard Gwynn of Farmington, said he began writing the play at the beginning of his junior year, sparked by a

conversation.

"I talked with my friend a lot about how everybody says 'I love you' real frivolously," Gwynn said. "And I thought of the opposite. What if people didn't say it enough? What would happen?"

Hence, Gwynn's play focuses on a wedding between characters "Ed" (Nate Meyer) and "Samantha" (senior Devon Leigh) and about how the bride-to-be "has a problem" saying those three little words.

"Ed's second-guessing himself, as most people do before their wedding day," Gwynn said. "And he begins to investigate how she hardly ever says it. Then, his parents want to meet his bride-to-be."

It doesn't help "Ed" that his brother, "Will," plants some seeds of doubt in the mind of the nervous groom. "Will feeds his fears by saying it's real important" to say the three-word sentence.

Other main cast members include "Samantha's" parents: her nagging mother, played by sophomore Ashley Marshall; her control-freak father, portrayed by junior Adam Pierce.

The costume director is senior Meghan Osborne, while junior John Sloan III composed "You're in My Life," which Sloan described as a mixture of jazz and rhythm-and-blues.

In talking about the process of writing his play, Gwynn said he first decided his central theme and then wrote the ending to the play. Later, he backtracked to fill in the various plot elements.

"I wrote the ending and then I decided, 'What do I do with this to make it great?'" Gwynn said. "It's a work-your-way-backwards style."

With a one-act comedy behind him, next up is to complete a full-length play, probably in the psycho-drama genre.

# Park

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Tuesday night.

"According to the Oakland County Animal Control Office, in 1999 approximately 4,000 dog licenses were issued for dogs in Farmington Hills," wrote Margaret Masuzawa. "That could mean at least hundreds of dogs are waiting for a play area close to home."

Masuzawa pointed to the success of similar parks in other communities. Hills parks, however, have always been closed to pets, according to Director of Special Services Dave Boyer.

"The only place they're allowed

**"The only place they're allowed in this area is Shiawassee Park in Farmington."**

**Dave Boyer**  
—Special services director

in this area is Shiawassee Park in Farmington," he added.

However, Boyer said, Shiawassee is open and located on a highly visible corner, while most Hills parks are enclosed. Commission members cited concerns

over enforcement, liability and other residents' enjoyment of the parks in their discussion.

Acknowledging those points, councilwoman Vicki Barnett still asked the issue be discussed and considered in a limited way.

"We claim our parks are for everybody," Barnett said. "I'd like to try at least on an experimental basis to have a park where dogs can be on a leash."

Monday night's meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. in the council chambers at Farmington Hills City Hall, 31 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

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