



Every Home. Every Week  
**newspapers**

13650 11 Mile Road • Warren, MI 48089 • 586.498.8000

## Rezoning remains hot topic

SEPT 28, 2005

By Jennie Miller  
 C & G Staff Writer

**FERNDALE** — Two weeks after more than 200 residents turned out in full force to protest a proposed change to the city's zoning ordinance, the issue remains a hot topic among city officials and residents alike.

But the proposal is not going away.

City officials admit that mistakes were made in the process. They admit a larger venue should have been provided for the public hearing on the changes that could potentially affect 1,600 homeowners. They also admit that changing a property from being zoned residential to being zoned parking is quite a bit to swallow.

"That's a big leap, and it'll probably be reviewed," said Scott Galloway, city council member, member of the Plan Commission, and attorney-by-day specializing in real estate litigation.

The changes initially proposed by the Plan Commission included changing the first and second residential properties immediately behind Woodward to parking, to allow for future developers to meet the needs of their businesses.

Other zoning changes include properties along north Hilton, south Livernois and West Marshall, which could be rezoned to mixed use, as well as parts of East Nine Mile for commercial use.

Residents were up in arms, with hundreds of questions and concerns regarding a number of issues: taxes, selling the properties, making improvements, building additions and rebuilding after a fire.

But city officials argue that if given more complete information about the zoning ordinance, the master plan and how individual properties will be affected by the changes, residents will hopefully see the light and understand what's best for the city.

"The whole reason we're trying to do this is to raise property values to get more taxes — it doesn't do us any good to destroy property values and decrease the city's revenue," Galloway said. "Everyone is working hard to make Ferndale a better place, but it's hard to convince someone to take a leap of faith with their home."

He's referring to individuals like Cate Vitkovic, a Ferndale resident who is concerned with how her property will be affected if rezoned to a parking district.

"This is my first house — I finally found the perfect house in the perfect location," she said, certain that the city's plans are not in her best interest. "I think it is a real sad state of affairs when this city can quash the American Dream so people don't have to walk to the bar."

But it is the responsibility of these officials to consider the future of Ferndale, said City Manager Thomas Barwin, and that is exactly what they're doing with this ordinance.

"It is important for a community to keep its tax base and be in a position to have investments come into the city," Barwin said. "My 10-year mantra is to do things that enhance property values. And that certainly is the intention of this plan. It is our every intent to keep moving in the right direction and add value to all properties here.

"It's no secret that we have a parking problem. Businesses cannot survive because of that issue."

But to jump from residential to parking districts is probably too harsh, and both Galloway and Barwin agree.

"We're going to be open-minded and flexible about this," Barwin said.

"We're going to correct the mistakes we've made as we go forward," Galloway said, adding that all concerns from residents will be taken into consideration by the commission.

Ads by Google

**K12 Districts HR Services**  
 Integrate Payroll & HR Systems Get Position Control under control!  
[www.digital-schools.com](http://www.digital-schools.com)

**Oaks Christian School**  
 Accredited Independent School Rigorous Academic and Art Programs  
[www.oakschristian.org](http://www.oakschristian.org)

**Michigan School**  
 Find top Colleges, Tech Institutes & Vocational Schools in Michigan  
[GuideToCareerEducation.com](http://GuideToCareerEducation.com)

**Pre-School At Tutor Time**  
 Prepares Kids For Kindergarten. Learn More On Virtual Tour.  
[www.TutorTime.com](http://www.TutorTime.com)

**Catholic Church**  
 Raise Money for Your Next Charity with Entertainment® Products  
[www.fundraising.entertainment.c](http://www.fundraising.entertainment.c)

Advertise on this site