

Green Party takes heat over mayoral race

Decision not to back candidate draws women's ire.

By ROB HOFFMAN
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

A few weeks after securing a place on the November ballot, Ann Arbor's Green Party is taking heat from two women spurned in their bids to run for mayor under the progressive party's banner.

Robin Alvarez and Audrey Jackson had submitted their names as potential Green nominees during the party's convention in Lansing on July 29. But party members rejected both candidacies, ultimately deciding not to back anyone.

"Both women claim the Greens feared hurting the candidacy of Democratic nominee John Hietje, who earlier this month asked the Greens to stay out of the mayor's race.

"Even if they didn't want one of (us), a

mayoral candidate should have been selected," said Jackson, who tried to run as a Democratic City Council candidate this year but was disqualified for insufficient signatures on her filing petitions. "It is clear that an agreement has been made about John Hietje and the mayor's race."

"I was railroaded from the beginning," said Alvarez, a left-wing activist who gained notoriety for her arrest during the violent anti-Klan protest of 1998. "I

believe the Greens sold out."

But party leaders say Jackson and Alvarez were passed over because of their lack of history with the party, not because the Greens didn't want to act as spoilers. Neither woman had ever attended a party meeting until a week before the convention.

"We didn't feel comfortable running someone we didn't know in a high-profile

See GREEN, D2

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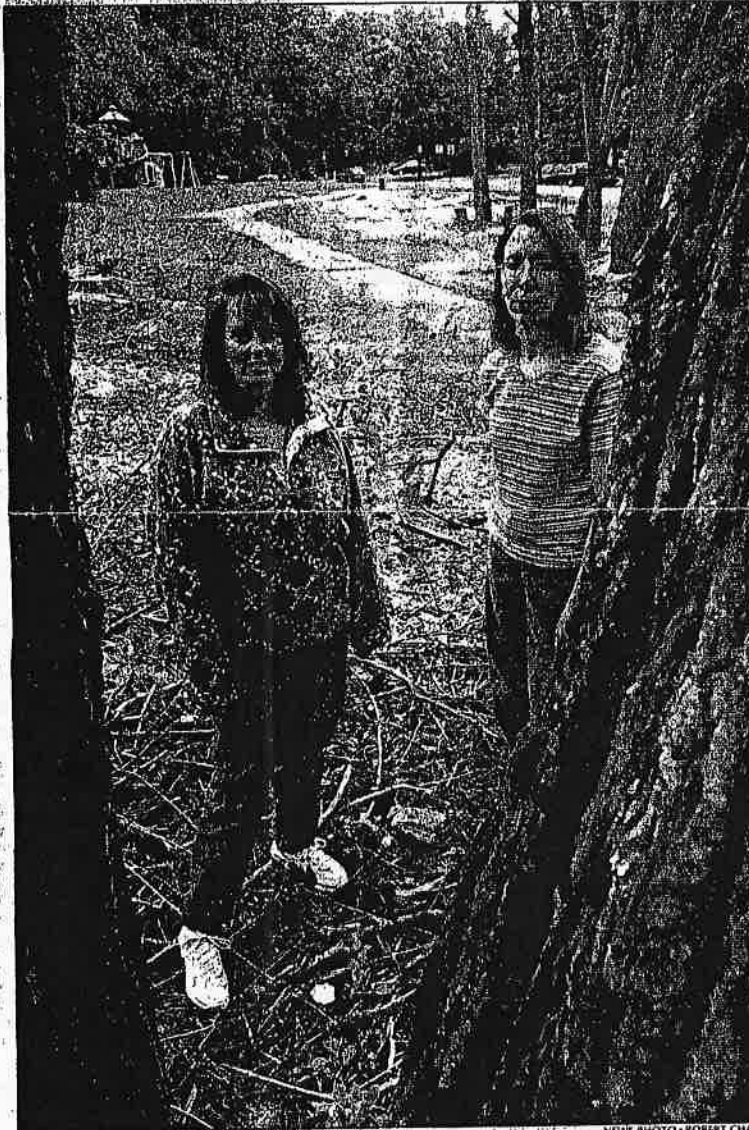
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Neighbors protest tree cutting



Marcie Keat, left, and Amy Marcinkowski say city crews cut down too many trees in Cloverdale Park.

Request for removal of brush sparks tree removal — and controversy.

By SUSAN L. OPPAT
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Amy Marcinkowski and Marcie Keat are a couple of tree huggers, and proud of it.

And that goes for a lot of their Cloverdale Park neighbors who stand out even in a city that has won national recognition for its devotion to trees.

So when a city arborist who actually lives in the northside neighborhood, and his crew, cut down some of the park trees late last month — when the neighbors only wanted some scrubby brush taken out to keep the area safe — well, that was cause for a meeting.

It all started when Keat called the city to complain about scrub brush and overgrown vines choking a tall stand of willow and box elder trees in front of the little neighborhood park. It allowed teens, unseen at night behind the brush, to smoke crack cocaine and marijuana, get drunk and throw bottles at her home and others.

The park, with new playground equipment planned by neighbors and installed by the city last spring, is a lot like the working-class neighborhood during the day — quiet and, literally, full of trees. A huge rock in one corner of the park is wide enough and flat enough to seat seven. Mothers change their infants' diapers on it.

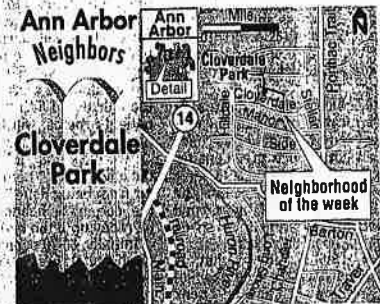
Trees shade all the streets around the park — Cloverdale, Stellar, Manor — and hug the park itself.

So Keat was specific when she called the city. She and her neighbors wanted brush — and only brush — cut down to make the park safe.

Nowhere on the city's work order for the project was it indicated that anything other than brush and dead trees would be removed, although Forestry Manager Paul Bairley wrote on the form, "We do not want to remove excessive amounts of brush, because we have gotten complaints from residents who enjoy and prefer the seclusion these shrubs provide."

Marcinkowski and Keat checked daily in the last

See CLOVERDALE, D2



DON FABER
FABER'S
WORLD

Tennis event nets funds to fight cancer



Contractor: Natural gas line wasn't marked

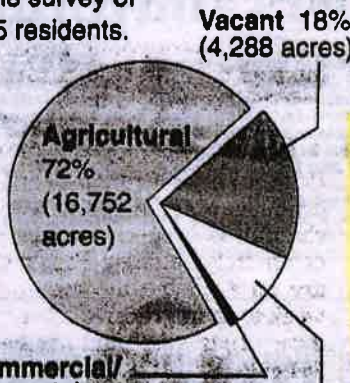
By CHONG W. PYEN
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

The contractor putting in a sewer main in Northfield Township had not been informed of a

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the last decade. Another 34 percent growth rate noted that the vision proposal township in the er actually com- to figures from township issued 17 or new dwellings), and in the first year just two. and that the desire and is deeply in- ship residents, he have farmers who ns protected." He rmers may want to the future to pay nents as a child's n or because they ing high taxes and ofits. rld," he said, "You of bread at the gro- hat the farmer gets wheat."

Township is used, according to a June survey of 365 residents.



Commercial/Industrial <1% (17 acres)

Single-family housing 9% (2,095 acres)

Note: Percentages are rounded

Source: Birchler Arroyo Associates
NEWS GRAPHIC • MARK THOMPSON-KOLAR

Fish said the new land use master plan will be developed over the next nine months during several planning commission sessions. He said the township hopes residents will take an active role in the process, starting with a "visioning" meeting Sept. 26.

former hospital

ely. He said the com- inger performing any dures at its hospital Lenawee County, and hat building is unde-

rest Health Medical ing, a medical clinic ls hoped would move nowhere in sight.

kwood Healthcare pital in April, it made e city of Ypsilanti to pace for two years in uilding for a clinic to who might have used yer.

ferred the space," said n, a spokeswoman for. It's up to the city to who wants to use it.

no one wanted it. "It 1" that no one took eryl Farmer.

said her first thought oseph Mercy Hospital urchased, because it essure off their main rior Township.

pital is not interested, man Lesia Golden. y have several pro-

grams and services in Ypsilanti and they're not at capacity," she said.

St. Joseph runs the Neighborhood Health Clinic at 201 S. Hamilton St., which serves some patients with limited funds and no health insurance. It also operates medical offices in the Haab Health Building, 111 N. Huron St., with doctors specializing in primary care, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine and pediatrics.

The McAuley Breast Center is in the Washtenaw Medical Arts Building, 3075 Clark Road. St. Joseph also runs the student health services at Eastern Michigan University.

The University of Michigan Medical Center also is not interested in the offer, said Kara Gavin, a spokeswoman for the hospital system.

U-M-backed practices already take up much of the space in the medical building at Beyer, a site the university has named the Ypsilanti Health Center.

The two-story medical building has a little more than 25,000 square feet. There are eight units, and seven are occupied by medical services, including the Oakwood Pharmacy on the first floor.

Schermerhorn said Hieftje — a former chairman of Recycle Ann Arbor and Huron River Watershed Council member — attended a local meeting and asked the Greens not

Continued from D1

CLOVERDALE: Arborist cites concern for security

week of July with the crew, and were reassured that no healthy trees would be removed. Marcinkowski checked one last time and left her home at 11 a.m. July 26. When she returned that afternoon, an entire stand of six or seven trees, and another eight in another stand, were down and gone.

"I was horrified to have this beautiful little island taken down," she said.

Despite the order for cutting only brush and dead trees, the city work crew cut at least six additional mature box elders, William Lawrence, city manager of forestry and horticulture, confirmed.

Lawrence described the 20- to 60-foot box elders as "junk" trees, short-lived, vulnerable to disease, not even particularly attractive.

Veteran city arborist Cameron Knight, whose crew cut the additional trees, said his overriding concern about the park was security. He cut the trees and brush to provide that. The neighbors said he also told them cutting the additional trees was the best thing for the park — and he wouldn't have to return every year to cut more brush.

Marcinkowski, Keat and neighbor Braxton Blake loved the grove of trees, both for the look they gave the park, and the home they provided to birds and other wildlife. "People wanted those trees," said Blake, who lives around the corner from the park on Stellar.

Lawrence cited calls from some residents of the neighborhood who actually wanted more of the trees cut down, but the trees supporters dispute that claim.

"We know the people here," Blake said. "We don't know who would want the trees down. The city would just like to avoid controversy. They're saying it's a mistake, and not explaining what happened. We need more than that."

The neighborhood had already rallied around a "greenway" behind Cloverdale Park that the city and state wanted to pave with a reconfigured ramp off M-14 at the Barton

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drive exit.

So it was no challenge to recall 15 neighbors to meet with Lawrence and Bairley on July 28, and demand to know how the unauthorized tree-cutting had happened — and exactly what the city was going to do about it.

Bairley promised that the city will replace the cut trees with six-inch-diameter ash and linden trees, fast-growers that will grow two or three feet taller per year than the ones that were there.

Knight said the replanting will "make the park look like a park, instead of a vacant lot."

"This will be more parklike landscaping, easy to maintain and perhaps not become a security issue in the future, which was the intent of the whole operation," he said.

"Security is paramount, you want to be able to see the playground from many angles, even in the darkness. We weighed all the hows and whys, and what would be best, and chose to do what we felt was the right thing, in the interest of security and park improvement.

"I use that park quite a bit myself. Sometimes to improve things, to come in with a new landscape theme, you have to start anew. It's hard to start anew, but ultimately it will have a much nicer look."

Despite the dustup over the tree-cutting, Blake calls the neighborhood "a delightful place to live."

"We recognize each other, wave, and are concerned about trees, the greenway, safety, and general upkeep. We actually look out for stray animals.

"We are politically active. We are working people. We are concerned, and we vote, and are willing to fight for what's best for Ann Arbor — and I think that's also what's best for our neighborhood."

The new trees and grass are scheduled to go into the park this fall.

Reporter Susan Oppat can be reached at (734) 994-6823.

Continued from D1

to subtle CAS: Way to recover