



Dallas Fire & Ambulance moves into new building

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER
Post Staff

DALLAS - Dallas Fire and Ambulance, Inc. has moved into their new fire hall at the corner of Church St. and Center Hill Rd. The planning commission granted them an occupancy permit at its regular meeting last week, and equipment was moved over last weekend.

The fire and ambulance company is happy to finally hang their hats in the building. "We are obviously pleased to have finally received... (this) permit for our new facility. We would like to thank the Dallas community, all the many companies, agencies and individuals involved for their support and assistance," said Brett Slocum, fire chief, in a statement to *The Dallas Post*.

"(We are) extremely proud of the state-of-the-art facility that we and our community have built to house and operate its Volunteer Emergency Service. From its infancy, we said we would build not only a... facility for the future, but... a facility to 'fit' into the neighborhood and

be a building we and the community would be proud of."

But some members of the neighborhood say they cannot be proud of the fire hall because it does not adhere to the township's zoning ordinance. Vito and Dee Balice, who live across from the hall on Center Hill Rd., are fighting for more restrictions on the building.

Currently they are considering a lawsuit seeking equity action for violation of a zoning ordinance. The Balices and Bill Higgs, their attorney, maintain the preliminary plans do not correlate with the zoning ordinance with its parking and setbacks.

Higgs said the hall's setbacks are in the street and the parking is squeezed in so that cars must park in a line along the rear of the building and cannot get out of the spot unless the car in front of them was moved.

Higgs said they might appeal the occupancy permit, but stressed that the real issue is whether or not the preliminary plan adheres to the zoning ordinance.

He said they would like restrictions on the building's use. Currently they are getting their case together to go court, said Higgs.

Slocum maintains the plan is by the book. "First, no other building in the history of Dallas Township has been subject to the scrutiny and microscopic exam this project has been under from the infancy stages of the project to the end. We have fully complied with any and all rules, regulations, zoning laws, planning laws and whatever else you can think of, which the records clearly confirm. Second, Dallas Township Supervisors, the Planning Commission and Zoning Board have far and away exceeded the 'normal prudent' measures required to insure that no apparent, implied or possible conflict of interest occurred throughout the entire three and a half years of the project. Period," Slocum stated.

Robert Besecker abstained from voting because of his long involvement with the fire company and John Halbing, the newest commissioner, abstained because he felt he did not know enough about the project.

A community open house and formal dedication of the facility will take place March 29 from 1-4 p.m.

POST PHOTOS/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

The fire trucks left the old station on Main St. for the last time Sunday. But old trucks sometimes have accidents, and Pat Hozempa swept up oil spilled on the new station's floor, left. Company members lined up for a last photo, lower left. Brett Slocum, fire chief, was overcome by emotion when he spoke about the memories he and the department were leaving behind.



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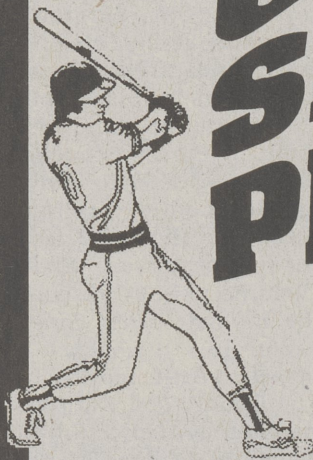


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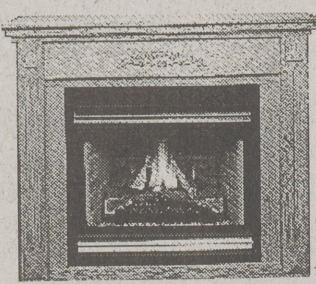
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