



The city is nearby, but the woodland setting is peaceful for Diana Grattopp's ride.

## Jeers Mark Hearing on House Sale Fond Dream Reins at Last --Belle Isle Stables Open

BY THOMAS C. FOX  
Free Press Staff Writer

During a hearing repeatedly interrupted by shouts from a bitterly divided audience, the Detroit City Council Monday banned its real estate agents, home owners and buyers to have a controversial new home inspection ordinance.

The ordinance, which took effect June 30, requires home-owners wishing to sell their homes to have them inspected first by the city. The inspection cost \$2 for single-family homes and \$12 for two-family units.

More than 100 persons, many of them carrying signs asking for the repeal of the housing ordinance, packed into the 12th floor auditorium of the City-County Building. Nearly 20 spoke, some in favor, some against the ordinance. But as each did most of the reading, promised statements, they were often forced to stop due to heckling.

IN GENERAL, real estate agents and home owners, many of them elderly whites, were pitted at the hearing. Among those interested in blacks, however, many of them

Congressman Erma Henderson, a firm supporter of the ordinance, said its purpose



CHRIS WALTON, who went from used cars to horses.

BY KEN FIREMAN  
Free Press Staff Writer

When Chris Walton was growing up on his father's farm in Alabama, he used to ride a horse to school.

It was the start of a long love affair with horses, and it culminated last Saturday when Walton opened a new riding stable on Belle Isle, the first since 1963.

Walton, 31, said the stable's first weekend was a solid success. "We had over a 100 people out here on Sunday," he said. Most of them had been here on Saturday, and had such a good time they came back.

THE STABLE'S 50 HORSES can each be rented for \$5 an hour, seven days a week between 8 a.m. and sunset, he said. The horses can be ridden along several trails that wind through the island's picturesque woodlands near the stables on Lakeside Drive on the eastern end of the island.

Walton said that most of his customers on the first weekend were not experienced riders, and that most of his horses were gentle and well-trained to accommodate such novices.

"We had one guy, though, who insisted he was an expert," he said. "I was ready to believe him — until he got on the horse backwards. He couldn't figure out why the lead wasn't in front of him."

Walton said he dreamed for years of owning a horse stable while he was making a living running a used car lot on Livestock.

He said he approached city officials about opening a stable on Belle Isle several times but only got their approval this year after offering to finance the whole project himself.

"I've invested about \$80,000. All of it is my own money, and I leave the building from the city," he said. "The only help the city offered was to raze the area out in front — and they haven't even done that yet."

WALTON SAYS he plans to offer lay rides in autumn and single rides in winter. He has also purchased a small bus, which he plans to use to offer Detroit schoolchildren free field trips to his stable this fall.

One of Walton's four employees, Diana Grattopp, said the stable's new high-spirited horses are saved for more experienced riders.

# Horse stables on Belle Isle '76

Clipped By:



Lauren Tolbert  
Tue, Mar 26, 2019