

# Council's for Seed, With Qualifications

By JOEL GREENBERG  
Herald Science Writer

The South Florida Health Planning Council voted Wednesday in favor of licensing The Seed drug rehabilitation program in Dade on condition that the program make certain improvements during the rest of the year.

The HPC decision will be forwarded to the State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, which grants drug program licenses.

The council's Drug Abuse Task Force had recommended that the Seed not be licensed in Dade for 1973. But more than 200 "Seed-

lings," their parents and boosters turned out at the Senior Citizens Center on NW Seventh Street to try to convince HPC board members otherwise.

The areas in which the Seed must show improvement within the next six months are: screening, better use of professional staff, making its policy board more representative, substantiation of success-rate claims, detailed public records of program costs and cooperation with other agencies.

The vote was 20 to 1, with Robert Trimble casting the only negative vote. "I didn't think it was technically ap-

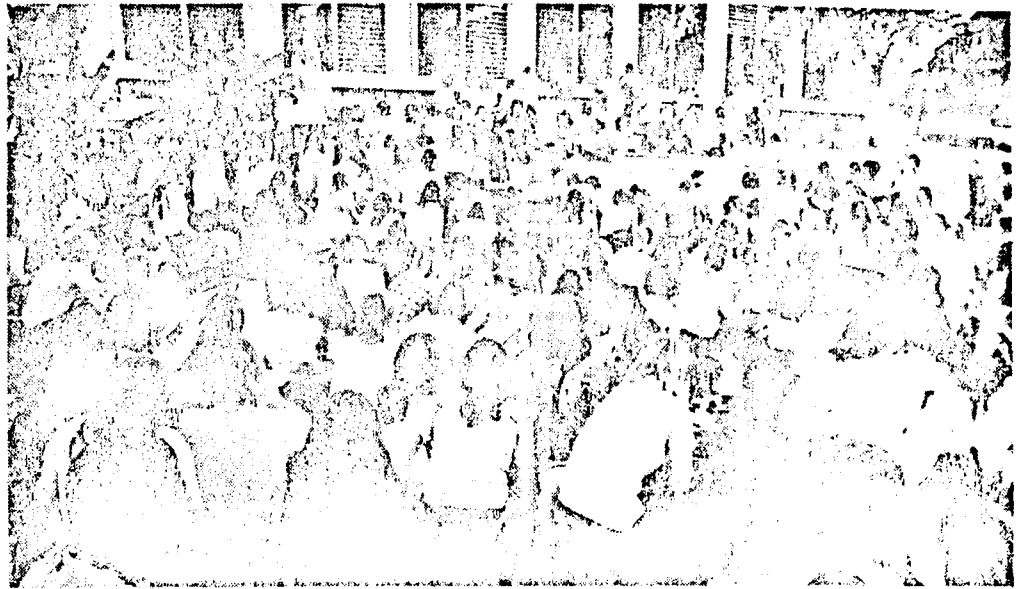
propriate to be voting on a substitute motion," he said. He felt the board should have voted on the original motion not to recommend licensing of The Seed.

Seed Director Art Barker said after the vote: "I'm very happy — I think we made an impression here today." Outside the building, the throng of "Seedlings" sang the program song and chanted, "We love you."

Barker said he would discuss the board's recommendations before deciding what action to take.

BOARD MEMBER A. Budd

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—Herald Staff Photo by MARLIN LEVISON

**'Seedlings' and Friends Gather on Lawn Outside Senior Citizens Center**  
*... inside, their cause — support for licensing the Seed — won a 20-1 vote*

# Council Backs Seed License

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Cutler, who made the motion for approval, included an objection to "pressure to silence state professionals" in Dade County. He was referring to the state's removal of regional drug coordinator Charles Lincoln from the Seed's licensing procedure.

Task Force Chairman Dr. Everett Shocket began the meeting by urging the board to vote against recommending the license. "We are protesting the secretive, political and threatening techniques that The Seed has used to move into Dade County," he said.

One-third of the three-hour meeting was set aside for public comment. Speakers, alternately pro-and-con Seed, were each given three minutes to address the board.

Favorable statements came from parents, judges and psychiatrists who had had contact with the Seed. Many of the unfavorable remarks came from persons connected with other Dade drug programs who claimed "uncooperativeness."

SOME, including task force members, complained that they had not been allowed to visit The Seed.

Steven Safron, director of the Dade school system's Project Dasein, said Seed members wanted to enter his program — which aims at "personal growth" and does not involve drug treatment — but were threatened with punishment by Seed staff members.

Barker later denied any threats of punishment, but acknowledged that he was against Seedlings participating in any other programs.

W. C. McCue, executive director of the planning council, said, "This is a responsible decision. If they (The Seed) live up to this, then it will be a positive program in the community."

Much of the criticism voiced at the meeting centered around The Seed's alleged secretiveness and the unwillingness to share its professed "love" with others.

"You can't be nice to just your own and treat others like dirt — you're either moral or you're not," said

Steve Greenberg, former director of Switchboard Inc. He said he never referred people to The Seed because Switchboard representatives were not permitted to visit the program.

EDWARD SWAN, chairman of The Seed advisory board in Dade, said all task force members had been invited to visit the program with the exception of those connected with other drug programs.

"They find fault immediately," he said. "They want to put their own way of doing things into The Seed."

One task force member, Dr. Jeff Elenewski, said The Seed's method of therapy helps many, but may also harm certain youngsters. "I'm concerned with the selection of kids, so that inappropriate ones can be weeded out," he said.

The technique of peer-pressure groups may lead to suicide if a child has a poor concept of himself, said Elenewski, a psychologist formerly with the Dade Department of Youth Services.

Dr. Lester Keiser, a

consulting psychiatrist for The Seed, said that when the Seed receives funding in Dade, it will have a psychologist or psychiatrist screen all incoming youngsters. Right now, staff members are screening and sending any possible problem cases to Keiser for evaluation, he said.

Circuit Court Judges Alfonso Sepe and Sidney Weaver both spoke in favor of the Seed. Sepe said he refers many youngsters to the Seed and urged the board to recommend licensing for the rest of the year.

"We need all drug programs in Dade so we'll be able to continue keeping hundreds of kids out of jail," Sepe said.

Robert Walker, a member of the task force, said that even if all the allegations against the Seed were true, the board should still recommend licensure because Dade is facing an acute drug problem and does not have the facilities to meet it. "We should not curtail any program which shows any promise," he said.