

Wholesale water hike prompts rate review

By Casey Hans
 Farmington officials prepare the city's annual budget, a major item they'll review is the 25 percent wholesale water increase proposed by the Detroit Water Board.
 Farmington faces the second highest water rate hike proposed for all communities served by the city of Detroit water system.
 If approved by the Detroit City Council, the increase to Farmington, and a

14 percent increase to Farmington Hills, would take effect July 1.
 Its impact on the users in Farmington will not be known until budget figures are completed, according to City Manager Robert Deadman.
 Budgets are traditionally presented to both city councils in April for review before the cities' fiscal years end June 30.
 "We should know the impact shortly," Deadman said.

"THE COST increase will probably be passed on to the consumer" in Farmington Hills, according to Dale Countegan, assistant director of public services for the Hills.
 Last year, Hills residents paid four cents per gallon. With the proposed increase, they will pay five cents, not including administrative costs, Countegan said. The county will add administrative fees to the increase before costs are passed onto the consumer.

Oakland County Department of Public Works is the administrative agent for the Farmington Hills water and sewer program.
 Farmington has not raised water or sewer rates "in several years," Deadman said. During the past four years, Farmington made additional efforts to keep the water system efficient and to keep sewer rates down, which has helped keep retail rates low, he said.
 Questions about the proposed increase, recommended by the Detroit Water Board, were raised at a January public hearing by several local municipalities.

A combination of the proposed 25 percent water hike and a proposed one percent sewerage rate decrease would cost Farmington an estimated \$53,000 — a net annual increase of eight percent, he said. Farmington Hills also is receiving a two percent sewage decrease.
 The only control local municipalities have on water rates, is residents' use. "The only thing that would help, is to keep people from watering their lawns," Deadman said of the summer months, when water use is high. The control comes in keeping usage down in the highest days and hours of use.
 Detroit officials look at a four-year usage average when reviewing rates annually. Fifteen rate-building factors

are considered, including the distance water travels, the elevation to which it must be lifted and the maximum day and peak hour demands.
FARMINGTON WHOLESAL water rates are currently \$3.24 per thousand cubic feet. The proposal would raise them to \$4.33.
 Wholesale water rate increases — and controversy surrounding them — is not new.

In 1980, Oakland County Drain Commissioner George Kuhn chaired the Citizens for a Regional Water and Sewerage committee, which fought to end annual water increases which had totaled 630 percent since 1975.

Grant sought for sports facility

By Joanne Maliszowski
 staff writer

Farmington Hills officials are taking a first step toward developing 15 acres at 13 Mile and Farmington roads for recreational and athletic use.
 City Council members last week authorized City Manager William Costick to submit an application for a \$155,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to develop the acreage. The 50-50 matching grant is available through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Total estimated cost of the city's project is \$310,000. The city would be required to finance the remaining \$155,000 of the project from the 1986-87 capital improvement budget, said Douglas Gaynor, director of special services.
 "If the city does not receive the DNR grant, we'll go back to council and ask them what they want to do," Gaynor said.

The city's plan for the acreage includes three regulation soccer fields, two baseball/softball fields, parking for 112 vehicles and a picnic area. The proposed facilities would serve residents participating in the city's recreation division programs, youth athletic organizations and residents, Gaynor said.

THE ACREAGE — donated to the city in 1977 — is on the northeast corner of 13 Mile and Farmington roads, just east of the Antioch Lutheran Church.

Development of the property into recreational and athletic facilities would meet some of the community needs discussed at a city-sponsored meeting with the area's athletic organizations last year, Gaynor said.
 "I am very happy," said John Bailey, former president of the Farmington

Soccer Club and current member of the club's board of directors, about the proposed development.

Gaynor told council that development of the proposed soccer fields "is of grave importance, because the Farmington Soccer Club may not be able to continue playing on its fields at 12 Mile and Drake roads — the club's home for the last seven years."

THE SOCCER club's playing fields sit on a portion of a 36-acre parcel, bought late last year by Little Caesar International for the site of the new company headquarters. Little Caesar owner Mike Ilitch — of Detroit Red Wings fame — purchased the property from the Farmington Public Schools for \$3.8 million.

Bailey is concerned about the timetable for development of the proposed park because the soccer club may have to move its playing location sooner than expected.

"There is some question now of whether we can play there in the spring (1980)," Bailey said. "We are still optimistic and have the feeling that they aren't going to have athletic facilities when they (Little Caesars) are done (building new headquarters)."

Originally soccer club officials expected they could continue using the soccer fields at 12 Mile and Drake through the spring 1986 season. But with construction on the proposed headquarters expected to begin sometime in the spring, playing the full soccer season at the site appears unlikely, he added.

LITTLE CAESARS pizza officials have not officially committed to maintaining soccer fields on the acreage. Yet they have said there could be a possibility that some type of recreational facilities would be included in their plans.

If the soccer fields at 12 Mile and Drake are available only for the spring season, Bailey said he prefers that the club begin the season elsewhere.
 "We can start the spring season. But we really can't start there. We have to start where we are going to finish the season," Bailey said.

More than likely, the 600-700 soccer club youths could use Farmington Public Schools facilities for the 1986 spring and fall seasons, Bailey said.
 "We have received positive support from the schools but no confirmation yet," he added.

Exhibit planned

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission's traveling photo exhibit will be on display in five southeast Michigan communities this spring.

The exhibit features seasonal color photos of Oakland County Parks and facilities, including Addison Oaks in Oxford, Glen Oaks in Farmington Hills, Groveland Oaks in Holly, Independence Oaks in Clarkston, Red Oaks in Madison Heights, Springfield Oaks in Davisburg, Waterford Oaks in Waterford and White Lake Oaks in White Lake Township.

Brochures for parks and special activities such as camping, swimming and nature study are available with the display.

For more information on activities in Oakland County Parks, call 858-0908.

A second hearing was held Thursday, Feb. 13, in Detroit offering additional opportunities for community questions.

NEITHER COMMUNITY is contesting the increases, officials said. Oakland County Department of Public Works, administrative agent for the Hills, told city officials they agreed with the numbers.
 "We were satisfied after our meeting," Deadman said of the Farmington rates. "They (Detroit officials) have accurately interpreted what our needs will be. The numbers used to develop the rates are the same ones we would have used."

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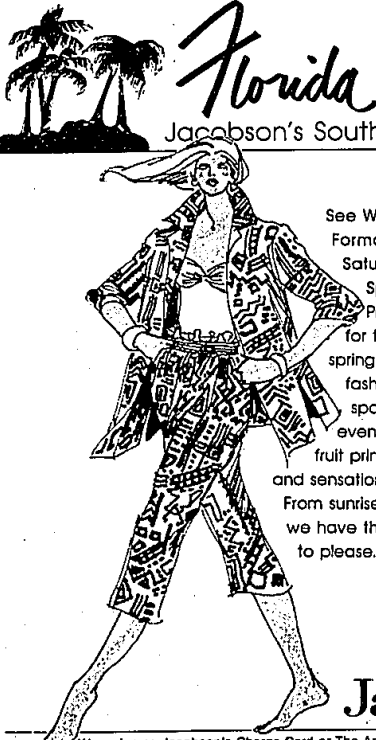
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