

MetroVision, SWOCC OK transfer compromise

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington and Farmington Hills MetroVision subscribers will not bear the brunt of a \$6 million upgrade to the system. The stipulation is part of an ownership transfer agreement worked out between the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission and MetroVision Thursday. City councils have to grant approval by May 15.

SWOCC represents Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi.

MetroVision's parent company, Newhouse, has been merged into Time Warner Entertainment/Advance Newhouse.

Several communities — including Livonia — approved the change of ownership several months ago. SWOCC is not an acquirer.

"It's been a long and arduous process," said SWOCC Executive Director Karen Collins, "that's for sure." The transfer is a precursor to

bigger negotiations. MetroVision's original 15-year franchise agreement expires in May 1997. Refranchising process is expected to start soon.

SWOCC will conduct a public hearing 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 10, at Novi City Hall. People can speak on the cable operator's performance during the past 12 years.

On the transfer agreement, the cable regulatory body wanted to make sure MetroVision's new owners followed through on previous commitments to up-

grade the system. MetroVision plans to install fiber optic cable, which can carry more channels.

At Thursday's meeting at Farmington City Hall, MetroVision and SWOCC attorneys haggled over language on the transfer.

MetroVision officials asked that the agreement include a stipulation allowing the cable operator to recoup any money for an upgrade if the Federal Communications Commission changes its rules. FCC doesn't allow cable operators to pass up-

grades directly through increased rates.

"That's a lot of money," MetroVision vice-president Tom Bjorklund said. "As business people, we have to be concerned we might have the ability to make more revenue on that basis."

Both sides agreed an FCC change on the matter was unlikely. SWOCC chairman Bill Hartsack was adamant about not allowing the language. MetroVision could come back

and charge customers retroactively, he said. Both sides agreed to a compromise.

MetroVision may recoup some of its investment indirectly according to FCC rules, Bjorklund said. One way would be through increased rates due to an increase in channel capacity.

MetroVision also agreed to pick up SWOCC's costs for attorney and consulting fees during the transfer process. Also, the cable operator agreed not to pass along those costs to customers.

Grand River way is paved with a wealth of history

Grand River Avenue began as a heavily traveled Indian trail connecting the Grand River in western Michigan to the trading centers developing in the Detroit area.

The Indian trail became a road connecting new settlements in the southeast corner of the state. Groups of settlers radiated out from Detroit and into the surrounding counties in search of farmland. The settlement patterns that developed influenced the location of the road and the improvements that would be made over the years.

As settlers used the Grand River trail, they widened and improved it to accommodate horses and wagons. The land route eventually connected the oldest settlement in Michigan, Detroit, to the state capital, Lansing.

When the Erie Canal through western New York State opened in 1825, settlers streamed into southern Michigan. They traveled in primitive stage coaches on old Indian trails running between Detroit and Howell.

As the number of travelers in-

creased, better roads were needed. On July 4, 1832, Congress established the Grand River Turnpike. The act directed Andrew Jackson to appoint a commission to lay out a road from Detroit to the mouth of the Grand River on Lake Michigan. Three commissioners appointed by the president were to explore, survey, and mark the route for the road.

The commissioners began their work at a point equidistant from both Saginaw and Chicago roads (today's Woodward and Michigan avenues). The existing route ran in a westerly direction through part of Oakland County to the headwaters of the Cedar River, then down the river and down Grand River to the rapids.

They explored an area from 10 to 20 miles on either side of the route. It took until 1836, when Congress gave the word, to start work on the thoroughfare.

Michigan's capital was established in Lansing in the early 1800s. The issues surrounding staidhood occupied the Michigan congress and interest in the road



Much to improve: Antique-looking lighting will be installed in the median of Grand River. Eventually, the tall, 'erector set' power poles will come down.

wanted. The original plan for the Grand River Turnpike was never completed. However, Congress did give the state land to sell in order to finance making Grand River passable.

As vehicles and needs for transportation changed from stage coaches and wagons to railroad and automobiles, the character of the road changed. Owners of what is now the Botsford Inn established a stageline stop and a small settlement sprang up around it. The Grand River Road became Grand River Turnpike, a toll road, to help pay for the installation and repair of

the road.

In 1850, there was a push to connect Detroit with the state capital at Lansing. The road connection was completed in 1853, making it the Detroit-Howell and Lansing Plank Road. In 1905, the state department was created to provide road construction and maintenance.

In the early years, the road was used to transport produce, grain, lumber and sheep and cattle to Detroit. The railroad would not come to Farmington until the early 1930s when Detroit United Railway laid rails along Grand River to Farming-

ton and on to Orchard Lake. In the early 1900s, cars were rarely seen on the road, since then automobiles have dominated the roadway.

While the forms of transportation and names associated with the road have changed over the years, Grand River still serves to transport people and goods from Detroit to Lansing, through Farmington Hills. Today, more than 53,000 vehicles use Grand River on a daily basis.

From "More than Tavern, 150 Years of Botsford Inn" by Jean Fox.

Corridor

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council members Terry Sever, Jon Grant and Aldo Vagozzi for their involvement with the project.

"This has been a long time coming," said study group vice chairman Massie Kurzeja. "I'm pretty sure the council will support this. There is a certain amount of grant money available. If we can use it for something like this, I think we should."

Kurzeja said the project was a good start to revitalizing what she called the city's "gateway to the west." It also represents a commitment to an older area of the city, the southeastern part, she said.

"Every area gets older eventually," Kurzeja said. "If you don't take care of them, eventually the whole city is neglected."

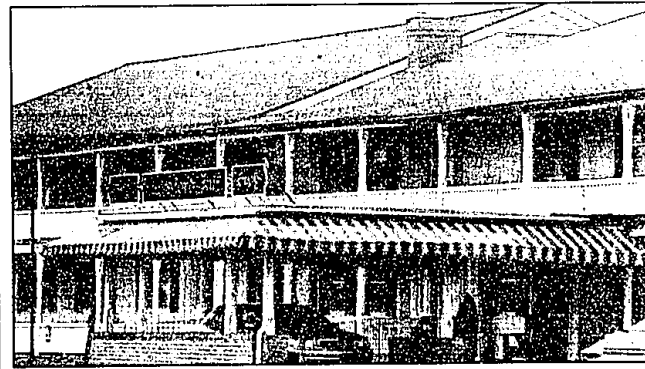
The proposed street lights are called "Acorn" lights because of their shape. They are recommended for this type of project because of they help achieve a "warm and pleasant, exceptionally well-lit environment."

Anhut said the effect would be a welcoming one. Kurzeja, a longtime activist and member of the Olde Town Homeowners Association, said this will provide an alternative to some of the lighting security-conscious businesses use that has a "beacon" effect on drivers.

The study group consists of business people along the corridor; neighboring residents; and representatives of the City Council, Planning Commission, and the Economic Development Corporation.



Problem poles: Botsford Inn owner Creon Smith (left) and former owner John Anhut hope some of the leaning utility poles on Grand River will be replaced when improvements are made.



Give us a sign: The historic Botsford Inn on Grand River just north of Eight Mile will get a new sign in the fix-up drive.

Link between child and animal abuse recognized

BY SUZANNE L. PARKER
STAFF WRITER

Many children who commit violent acts against animals often grow up to behave violently towards people as well. That's why the Michigan Humane Society and Orchard's Children's Services are teaming up to fight violence against both groups.

An unusual pairing, perhaps, but research shows the association between animal and human abuse to be a strong one. That's why the two groups, in their newly-formed partnership, are presenting "Protect Our Future: Stop the Cycle of Child and Animal Abuse."

The day-long conference, for animal and human service professionals, took place Saturday at the Michigan State University Management Education Center in Troy. The program was designed to help them better understand the connection between animal abuse and violence

against children and adults.

But the agency also hopes to spread the word to the general public as well. "We view the conference as an opportunity to educate not only professionals, but also bring the subject matter to the public's eye as well," said Gary Tiscornia, Michigan Humane Society's executive director.

"The more people know and understand this issue, the better the chance of preventing it from happening." Among the topics covered at Saturday's program were talks by three nationally-known researchers, who will talk of not only the link between animal abuse and child violence, but also methods of treating the families involved.

There was also workshops for professionals on how to intervene in cruelty and abuse cases as well as on Michigan's new, felony-weight, Animal Cruelty law.

Dr. Alan Felthous, the keynote speaker at the conference, is one of

There is no one definitive cause of animal abuse by children — it could be neurological or learned behavior. But one of the most common findings is that there is often abusive parents and a violent and chaotic family background involved as well.

Dr. Alan Felthous

the researchers who established the link through research he conducted with another peer in the 1980s. The research, which involved a questionnaire given to violent inmates at two federal penitentiaries, showed that many of the inmates who were currently violent towards people, even in prison, often performed cruel acts on animals when they were children.

Equally as compelling, Felthous found that often these study participants were abused as children themselves. That doesn't mean it's always the

ty incident where two brothers dropped a puppy from a fourth-story window. The boys' single mother told the investigator that she knew her sons were having behavior problems, but she didn't know where to go.

That's when the Humane Society called in Orchard's Children's Services to find the family some help. An Orchard's investigator learned the mother had an alcohol abuse problem and the children had likely been abused by their father. So Orchard's pointed the mother in the right direction, and the partnership between the two agencies was born, albeit unofficially.

Over the next four years, the two agencies began to call each other for help on various cases. "Over time we've realized that both groups are working with the same individuals," said Gerald Leven, chief executive officer at Orchard's, the largest foster care and adoption agency

in the tri-county area.

"We had seen homes where animals were removed and discovered there were also abused children as well." Together the two agencies have formed the Center for the Study and Treatment of Violence, which already is applying for \$700,000 in foundation grants to begin studying the two types of violence and developing treatment programs for families, Levin said.

By formalizing this partnership, Tiscornia said, the Humane Society is returning to its beginnings of more than a century ago. "When we first started out in the 1877 we had a very active social and human services program, which was phased out around 1930," he said. "This new research and partnership brings us full circle. Instead of expanding our program, we established a link with a highly competent children services agency. It's like coming home in a new and better way."