

Rouge River conflict settled by council

By LYNN ORR

The City of Farmington will probably join the Rouge River Watershed Council within the next few months, but it took quite a bit of parliamentary footwork to get the decision.

After a minor skirmish, councilmembers adopted a resolution of its intent to join the advisory group, originally proposed by the League of Women Voters.

Laughingly labeled the "biggest confrontation of recent years," by one councilman, the flap was resolved when Mayor John Richardson and councilmen Richard Tupper and William Hartsock reconsidered their original dissenting votes to informally join the group, who's purpose is to coordinate the joint efforts of communities concerning problems and trends involving the Rouge River Watershed area. The river runs through a small portion of the city.

Although none of the councilmembers were opposed to the group, the up-to-\$500 membership fee that may be proposed when the group officially gets organized was cause for concern.

After the original motion was defeated, councilman Alton Bennett took his fellow councilmembers to task.

"We get a concession by a group that we can have one vote and then we want to be sure we're not going to be robbed financially," he said. The

watershed council representatives have proposed one vote and one membership charge for each community involved in the monitoring of the river. "Are we always going to piggyback the nice things that come our way?" he asked.

City Mgr. Robert Deadman pointed out that if the city waited for the group to formally organize before indicating intent to join, Farmington would be lacking a vote on both the by-laws and proposed membership fee.

WHEN ASKED why each community was being given one vote, Deadman replied that the group was "trying to be fair to the small cities."

Tupper expressed concern about the membership fee and the precedent of indicating willingness to join the group without knowing the exact cost.

Under parliamentary rules, a member who voted with the majority can ask that a motion be reconsidered. Hartsock so requested, and the motion was passed.

"The purpose of the council would be to study the water resources of the Rouge River, to prepare periodic reports on trends and problems involving the river area, to act as an advisory group to governmental bodies," says Deadman. The council may authorize studies on pollution, make recommendations, take water samples, and coordinate efforts by all the communities in clearing up problems, he adds.



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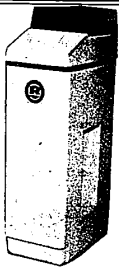
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