State sues to block Kensington rides

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- Attorney General Frank Kelley

Attorney General Frank Kelley has filed suit in Oakland County Circuit Court to block the development of privately-operated amusement area in Kersington Metropark, which borders Cokland and Livingston Counties.

"I'm certainly not opposed manusement parks." Kelley said. "The placement, however, of large, carrival-type, mechanical rides within Kensington Metropark is totally inappropriate. The rides are glaringly out of place with the natual beauty of the park."

out of place with the natual beauty of the park."
Humo-Clinton Metropolitan Authorty (HCMA) officials disagree with Kelley's raising the specter of a "Six Flags over Kensington."
"It sure in the world isn't an amusement park And it's most certainly not another Cedar Point," said HCMA Director David O. Laidlaw. The developers of the amusement area, the Kensington Children's Farm and Village Corp., agree.

According to Laidlaw and HCMA plans, the development of 120 acres includes the restoration of an existing larre, the construction of a farmbouse-framework of the project calls. The "village" part of the project calls for contruction of scaled down buildings fo an old-time town hall, fire bouse and candy store, for example. Instead of the Genini, the Jumbo Jets and the Blue Streak, the Kensington development calls for a late-180% intage, scale model railroad and nine other rides whose size has been limited by an earlier consent judgment. Instead of "Six Flags over Kensing-town of the project of the p

OCC buildings named

Baildings on three of Oakland Community Gollege's campus will be bearing new names later it his year.

Trustees approved the name changes at a special board meeting last week in honor of three men who devoted much of their lives to the school. The name changes will be:

The Aubrn Hills Science Building will be reammed after the late Joseph E. Hill, who died earlier this year. Hill was OCC's president for a decade before he was felled by a massive

heart attacend stroke last summer. Ceremonies will be held Oct. I.

"The Highland Lakes Science Building will be renamed after the late. Irving J. Levinson. Before his death, Levinson was provost of the Highlaces Campus in Union Lake. Ceremonies will be held Nov. 5.

"The "J" Building on the Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills will be renamed in honor of John E. Tirrell, OCC's first president. Ceremonies at Orchard Ridge will be held May 6. 1979.

ton," Laidlaw and others contend, the development will be quaint, demure, discreet and will enhance the HCMA's largest park.

THE CONTROVERSY has relatively recent but volatile roots.

The private company, the Kensington Children's Farm and Village Corp. began operations at the park in 1975 when it leased 120 acres in the park in orders are related to the control of the

park's northeastern section. Genera; manager os Peter Christiano Jr. who could not be reached for com-

ment.
That action, in itself, was not popular with persons who owned homes on property bordering that section of the park. They filed a suit in Oakland County Circuit Court challenging the

park, 'hey tited a sut in Uakland Comty Circuit Court challenging the lease. The firm now operates a children's farm and is scheduled to build the villages of the superation of the superation

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park." Washington said.
"In addition, it is our belief that this lease by the HCMA of public parkland to a private, profit-oriented corporation is not authorized by the HCMA's enabling legislation." he said.
The attorney general has taken the same view.

HCMA OFFICIALS do not deny charges of conumercialization. Rather, they defend it and try to put into perspective.

They say it makes sense. They say it allows them to focus their attention on acquiring new park land.

They say the partnership between HCMA and the corporation is a low-cost. low-risk way to raise capital, to finance a capital improvements program which would be left ignored and tunder-financed otherwise.

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under-financed otherwise.
Under the terms of its agreement
with the Kensington Children's Farm
and Village Corp. HCMA will get 10
per cent of the annual revenues from
the project. At the very least, the
regional parks system is guaranteed
\$5,000 annually.
Moreover, at the end of the lease,
the completed children's farm, the oldtime willage and the rides will become
the property of the HCMA.
According to 1979 HCMA material.
With a land acquisition program
under way to meet the needs of the
region by the 1990s, the Huron-Chiton
funds are 'limited' and therefore the
authority has selected this course of
action."

THE AUTHORITY is financed by 1/4 mill property tax levied in five coun-ties—Wayne, Oakland, Macomb. Washetenaw and Livingston. HCMA operates 10 metroparks.

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