

County reps hail any—and all—M275 plans

By TIM RICHARD

Whether it's the old M-275 plan or a modified one, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners is for it. With a minimum of debate, commissioners voted 21-3 to tell the State Transportation Commission next month that Oakland wants the latest version of a west county freeway. The six-man Transportation Commission will meet Aug. 22 in Lansing to get official reports, and Sept. 25 in the commissioners' auditorium in Pontiac to get public input, on the controversial freeway.

GUIDED BY Commissioner Robert McConnell, R-Farmington Hills, the county board on Aug. 9 gave overwhelming bipartisan approval for the third time to an M-275 plan. The

three opposing votes came from representatives of the southeast part of the county.

McConnell said the new freeway plan, which would run from the I-96 and I-275 intersection in Novi to I-75 near Davisburg, was re-designed to remove earlier objections:

- The black spruce bog, which the freeway would have endangered, has been drained by its private owner.
- Damage to Dodge State Park No. 5 has been minimized.
- Sound barriers have been added to the plan.

McConnell, who chaired more than a year of efforts to find an alternative to the old M-275 plan, said the new plan would require only four lanes compared to six for the parkway plan which carried his own name.

And, he said, plans to improve local roads, which carried

the name of chief M-275 opponent Steven Rosman, "would ruin" two of the Straits chain of lakes.

"Are we going to keep on denying our citizens of western Oakland County the facilities they need?" he concluded.

COMMISSIONER Larry Pernick, D-Southfield, was the only board member to speak against the plan — he urged more study by both the planning and building committee and the full board.

A 1978 advisory vote in five townships and two cities was on a "north-south trunkline" and not necessarily on a freeway, he said.

"What's going to be the effect on urban sprawl and blight?" Pernick asked. "A freeway may lead to the depopulation of south Oakland County. Maybe that's what you want to do," he said. No one took up his challenge to discuss the effects on population shift.

The Democratic floor leader charged M-275 will "only aid landowners and developers."

VOTING AGAINST the M-275 plan were Pernick; James Doyon, D-Hazel Park; and Dennis Aaron, D-Oak Park.

Area commissioners joining McConnell to vote for it were Henry W. Hoot, R-Bloomfield Township; Paul Kasper, R-Bloomfield Hills; Lillian Moffitt, R-Bloomfield Township; Joseph Montante, R-Orchard Lake; Ralph Moxley, R-Birmingham; Dennis Murphy, R-Novi; Robert Page, R-Birmingham; and John Peterson, R-Rochester.

Absent were Alexander Perinoff, D-Southfield, and John McDonald, R-Farmington.

THE COUNTY board voted twice in 1977 — on March 3 and Aug. 18 — in support of the former M-275 plan, despite the fact that the State Highway Commission cancelled the project earlier in January of 1977.

Chief differences in the proposals are that the new plan eliminates an intersection at Commerce Road near the state park; provides for sound deadening berms; and swings west of the now-drained spruce bog, McConnell said.

Three members of the old Highway Commission are members of the new Transportation Commission. Hannes Meyers Jr. of Zeeland and Weston Vivian of Ann Arbor voted against the former plan, but there is county board speculation Meyers may favor the new plan. Carl Peltonpa of the Upper Peninsula favored the former plan and is considered likely to favor the new one.

Of the new members, Rodger Young of Rochester hasn't committed himself but is viewed as leaning in favor; William Marshall, state AFL-CIO president, is being counted as a favorable vote because of the construction jobs a new freeway would provide; Larry Patrick of Detroit is expected to be a negative vote.

If commissioners' speculations are correct, a 4-2 vote would favor the new plan.

Missing from the picture will be the Highway Commission's most colorful and vocal opponent of M-275 — Peter B. Fletcher Jr. of Ypsilanti. Fletcher angrily quit the day after the 1978 election, when voters voted to abolish the Highway Commission (which had power to appoint the department director) and create a Transportation Commission (with the governor appointing the department head).

Kingswood elects new officers

Two Southfield residents have been elected and several other Oakland County residents have been re-elected to the board of Kingswood Hospital, a private, non-profit psychiatric care facility in Ferndale.

New members are Claire P. Martin, administrator of the Southeastern Michigan Red Cross Blood Service, and

attorney Terry J. Nosan.

Ms. Martin was previously executive director of Buckeye Health Plan Inc., in Cleveland, and director of a comprehensive health service plan in New Jersey. She has a bachelor of science in biology from Howard University and a certificate in physical therapy and master of science from Columbia University.

Nosan is in the firm called Nosan Building Corp., in Southfield. As an assistant state attorney general, he represented in the Department of Mental Health in legal matters. He earned his bachelor degree from the University of Michigan and his juris doctor from Detroit College of Law. He has also been a volunteer in the Southfield legal aid program.



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