

# Dump sites, though well selected, rile residents

The writer, a Farmington Hills student of the environment, is a member of the Oakland County Solid Waste Planning Committee. She reports here on the group's bus tour of proposed landfill sites.

As our Solid Waste Planning Committee toured Oakland County inspecting landfill sites, it heard complaints from all sides.

The prospect of trash disposal so close to home evoked many charges from outraged residents: water and air pollution, reduced property values, unequal treatment, loss of home rule. When the bus passed through Lyon Township, a new concern emerged—danger to other species.

ALONG Old Plank Road, the tree-tops were full of blue herons. A heron rookery near this site concerns many nature lovers, including committee

member John King of the Oakland County Audubon Society.

We were then informed that state Department of Natural Resources officials had been consulted. They found the blue heron nesting grounds situated more than a half-mile east of the proposed landfill boundary.

Moreover, these lovely birds are "not an endangered species—not a fragile bird," according to George Schutte, director of Oakland County's Solid Waste Division. Schutte planned the tour.

AT THE intersection of Old Plank and South Hill roads stood many unhappy Lyon Township homeowners. Among them was Ron Herman.

"I put my home up two years ago. They didn't tell me about the landfill," Herman complained. He also pointed to a new, brown, split-level home on the hill worth "over \$100,000," which he said surely would drop in value.



Nancy Kourtjian

Schutte said the more expensive homes on South Hill Road are west of the site and would not be affected. Only four existing houses would be purchased and removed. Earthen berms, 8-by-12 feet, will be built to buffer the remaining homes in the area, he said. The bus tour moved on.

WHEN WE reached I-96 and Milford Road, our tour guide was John Layman, a former member of the planning committee. Because he is president of Lyon Development Co., he resigned from the county committee to avoid a

conflict of interests.

Layman said the proposed 60-acre site called "Lyon II" and said:

"We own all the land from the expressway to Grand River, but 800 feet is reserved for housing and park development." He also noted that all the engineering and testing for the site are done.

Layman said the water table is 120 feet below the surface. There is also an adequate layer of clay 50 feet deep, and a clay liner is prepared. This conforms to Act 641, which prohibits any direct contact between leachate and

surface or ground water. (Leachate is liquid which seeps out of buried waste materials.)

"It's just a zoning problem. The University of Massachusetts was built on a landfill," Layman continued.

AT LYON II, all waste would be below ground level.

"No Mount Trashmore here," added Layman, referring to the downriver Wayne County dump that was developed above ground.

Asked about possible methane leaks, Layman said the DNR had tested and OK'd sample methane emissions since 1978 and had a water monitoring system on site as well.

Layman said one builder knew of Lyon II but put up homes anyway.

NEXT STOP was the Marlowe landfill in Rose Township.

Forty acres are nearly full, and 40

more have been zoned for landfill use. These 80 acres, however, will last only eight to 10 more years, said owner Melvin Marlowe.

All neighbors are Marlowe brothers. Thus, the 50 trucks which drive up Pepper Road daily to dump trash bring no complaints of smells or traffic. It's a family affair.

"Garbage is beautiful," said Marlowe, who also chose to resign from the committee. Marlowe's own home is located on the landfill across from the entrance at Pepper and Rose Center roads.

The Marlowe family is seeking Rose Township rezoning for 130 additional acres. The case is currently in court.

DESPITE MANY problems, Schutte declared, "These are the five best sites." That judgment came from unbiased, out-of-state consultants and was based on purely physical properties, he explained.

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