

Hour delay riles county Dems

Republican Oakland County commissioners came under harsh criticism from their Democratic colleagues for delaying the full board meeting nearly an hour Thursday to conduct a closed-door caucus.

"The Republican caucus, under the Open Meetings Act, has no right whatsoever to close a meeting," Commissioner Dennis M. Aaron, D-Oak Park, said. "You have committed a grievous error by closing to the public the public's business."

Members of the Republican caucus met in closed session 9:30-10:30 a.m. to discuss a "personnel matter." The full board meeting usually begins at 9:30 a.m.

"According to the open meetings law, a two-thirds roll call vote of members elected or appointed is required to call a closed session."

"You didn't have two-thirds of the commissioners voting for this," Aaron said. "I am a member of this elected

body, and I wasn't permitted to vote. You have no right to exclude me."

DEMOCRAT Walter Moore of Pontiac — who stormed in the meeting twice only to be asked to leave — claimed Republicans were "infringing on the rights of others when they held up the full board meeting for an hour."

"I was very upset because it was approaching 10:30 a.m., and everyone was waiting for them," Moore said. "I entered the room and mentioned that it was getting late and that they were infringing on the rights of others."

Democrats demanded an apology and an explanation of what went on behind closed doors. But Republicans remained closed-mouthed about the matter.

Board Chairman Richard Wilcox, R-Orionville, ruled Democrats' questions out of order.

"You can rule them out of order, but

the smell will remain," Aaron told Wilcox.

REPUBLICANS said the Open Meeting Act law allows them to close meetings to discuss personnel matters. "Under the law, we can request a closed session to discuss labor contracts," said Commissioner John E. Olsen, R-Huntington Woods, chairman of the Republican caucus.

"We followed the proper procedures by calling for a vote and keeping minutes," he said.

Commissioner James E. Lanni, R-Royal Oak, added that the law allows

closed meetings when the employee concerned makes the request. "One of the arbitrators asked me to close that session," Lanni said.

Olsen and Lanni appeared to be talking about two different provisions of the Open Meetings Act. One requires a disciplinary matter to be discussed in closed session when requested by the affected employee (see 8a), with the board powerless to deny a closed session. The other requires a closed session on collective bargaining "when either negotiating party" requests it.

New SEMTA bus plan OK — Murphy

Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy has thrown his support behind a revised \$1.6 billion regional public transit plan proposed by the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority.

"This proposal is a big improvement over what we've seen before," Murphy said in a brief presentation before the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

"They've added new east-west bus routes, which we've been requesting for years," he said. "I don't know what other changes could be made to benefit us other than adding more buses when we need them."

BUT THE PLAN has received mixed reviews from Oakland County commissioners.

Republicans on the board's Planning and Building Committee gave it a cool reception more than a week ago, calling for further study of the proposal. Democrats promptly supported it. The new plan reduces the amount of

underground light rail in the Woodward Avenue corridor. It also is intended to provide Oakland County residents better bus service.

The new version calls for doubling bus service and building a \$2.5 million network of nine "transit centers" and a \$10.5 million bus garage in Southfield.

Those provisions were not included in SEMTA's original 1979 proposal, which the Oakland County board opposed. The board felt that plan would primarily benefit Wayne County and Detroit.

THE 1979 version called for a light rail line along Woodward to run underground from Jefferson to Six Mile in Highland Park, then at street level to 11 Mile in Royal Oak.

The new plan cuts the more expensive underground part of the route in half. Under this plan, the underground route would run to Grand Boulevard. The light rail line would continue above ground from Grand Boulevard to Pontiac.

Office teachers offered course

Office education teachers may learn about word processing during a course offered from 4-7 p.m. Mondays, March 28 through June 6, at Michigan State University's Southeast Regional Center, 20500 13 Mile, Birmingham.

Enrollment is limited. Registration may be made from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Mondays through Thursdays, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays. For enrollment information, call 845-6410.

The course will aid teachers in instructing future office workers about word processing, career paths, equipment, systems and procedures.

JCPenney 81st Anniversary Sale Circular. Correction Notice!

• Page 10 to 16 — Portable Color Television #2030/2000 Key 10D

• The copy states Sale \$299 Reg. \$349 Save \$150

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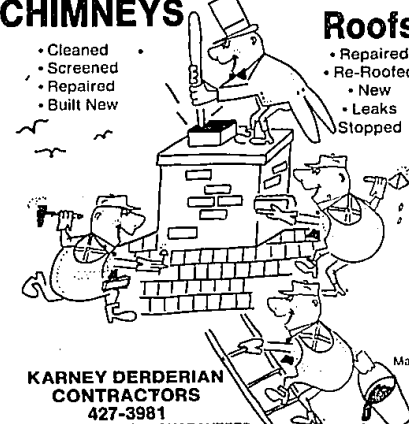
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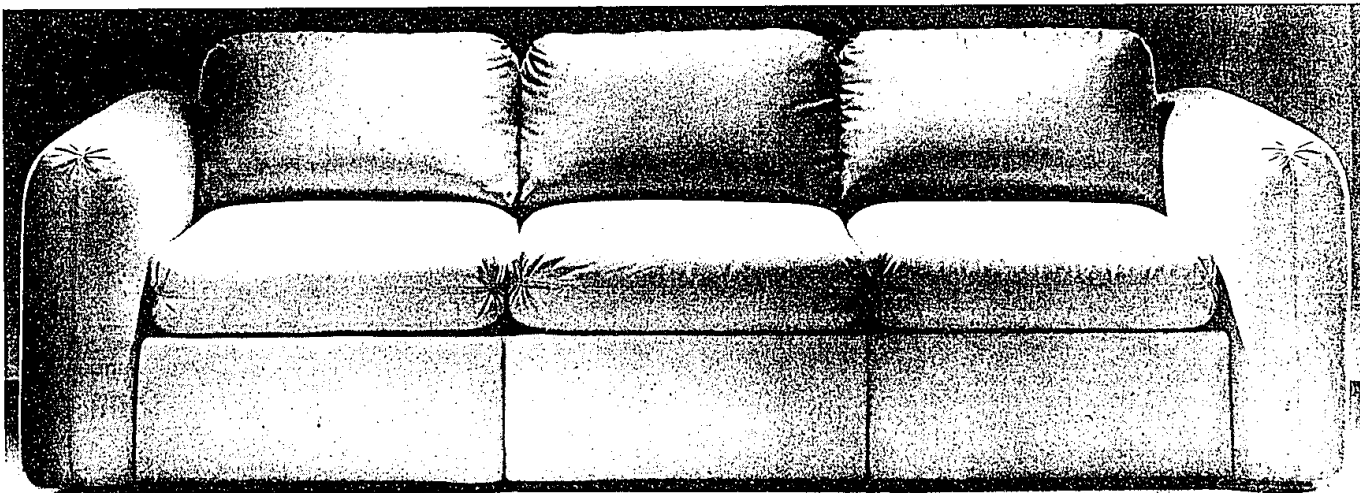


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