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Hills vows to back cable fee protestors

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills officials pledged support for at least 20 angry residents protesting a \$200-\$250 cable TV installation fee they will have to pay before MetroVision will lay cable lines in less densely populated neighborhoods.

"We are going to fight for every installation we can to the point of legal action," said Mayor pro-tem Charles Williams. "Remember these people

(MetroVision) have to live with us for some time (a 15-year franchise). They have to come back to us for a rate increase."

Led by Ned Nuss, 32871 11 Mile, residents from the Power and 11 Mile Road neighborhood confronted council members Monday "protesting our exclusion from the initial free installation fee."

The problem stems from MetroVision's "line extension policy" under which customers are charged for cable

installation in areas which have fewer than 30 houses in a linear mile. The stipulation was included in the cable TV ordinance adopted 1 1/4 years ago by the Novi, Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils.

Although 95-percent of the potential cable subscribers in Farmington Hills meet the firm's density requirements and are receiving free installation as promised, another 500 homes in the less densely populated neighborhoods are out of luck.

BUT NESS and other residents quickly informed a shocked council that homes along adjacent streets such as Alameda, Holly Hills and Hall are already hooked up to cable. Power Road homeowners claim the adjacent streets have fewer houses per mile than their neighborhood. Even the Farmington Hills City Hall, just east of Power Road is hooked up, Nuss said.

"If these are the facts, I sure would like this presented to the cable company," said Councilman Donn Wolf.

"Maybe we had better go measure these homes with an attorney."

Some areas with fewer than 30 houses per mile have cable so MetroVision can use the areas as a means of connecting other neighborhoods, said City Manager Lawrence Savage.

Responding to Nuss' criticism, city officials admitted they had understood that some residents in the less populated areas of the city would not receive cable in the firm's first wave of construction.

Savage, a member of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission, said that when MetroVision was bidding for the tel-city franchise, the firm provided maps showing that the northwest section of the city, particularly Section 7, "would be completely excluded." But Savage said he assumed all potential subscribers "in the central city area" would be included and receive free installation.

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On its way out

Time is running out for the brightly colored leaves adorning the Farmington City Park. The shorter days and cooler breezes mark the onset

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

MetroVision showdown planned at city hall

By Diane Galt
staff writer

Angry residents remain frustrated with MetroVision Cable Co. after airing their discontent for two hours Tuesday in the Farmington City Council chambers.

A series of future meetings between the company and public cable commission members will be held in an attempt to resolve the dispute, which centers on contract language and the installation of cable in sparsely settled areas of three communities hooking into the MetroVision system.

The major disagreement is over who will pay for the installation of cable and whether some residents, in the sparsely settled areas, will be able to get cable at all.

The first meeting, open to the public, is set for 8 a.m. Friday in the city man-

ager's office in the Farmington Hills city hall.

The Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission and a representative from MetroVision fielded heated comments from about 50 angry residents at Tuesday's meeting.

Residents complained there were too many snags in the installation of cable for entire portions of Novi, Farmington and Farmington Hills, three cities which adopted the MetroVision cable ordinance 1 1/4 years ago.

"I FEEL LIKE we've been hyped, petted and stroked by the company," said Earl Clough, of Clairview. "Now they're looking at commas in the contract to keep their profit margin up."

The meetings are planned to discuss discrepancies between what the commission says MetroVision is responsible for and what the company has said

they plan to do, said Larry Savage, Farmington Hills city manager and commission member.

"You (residents) don't like their (MetroVision's) answers, and we (commission) don't like their answers, but we're not technicians," Savage said. "They're the builders, and we're going to thrash it out. Hopefully, a judge won't have to interpret this for us."

During the meeting, there were constant references by commission members and residents to taking MetroVision to court. Also during the meeting, MetroVision outlined some of its future plans.

MetroVision general manager Tom Bjorklund said current data showed that Quaker Valley subdivision will not be wired with cables.

"We (commission members) have a

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Congressmen stirred by Mideast massacre

Area Congressmen will be watching the Lebanese peace talks scheduled to start in Geneva on Monday for direction on how the U.S. should react to the massacre of 216 Marines and Navy personnel in Sunday's bombing of a military compound at the Beirut airport.

"The onus has to shift quickly on the Lebanese to come to terms with each other," said Rep. Sander Levin, D-Southfield, whose 17th District includes Redford Township.

Levin discussed the coming Lebanese talks after attending a two-hour briefing for members of Congress Monday afternoon by Secretary of State George Schultz and Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger. He was one of five congressmen interviewed for their reactions to the bombing.

"My feeling — and the sense of everyone — is that things have to happen," Levin said. "Steps have to be taken or else the U.S. won't stay there in any form."

Rep. Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, agreed with Levin.

"If there is strong direction to sitting down in Geneva and negotiating some degree of peace, we should remain," he

said. Pursell, whose 2nd District includes Livonia, said he wasn't optimistic about the outcome of the peace talks.

"My ultimate guess is there will be a partition of Lebanon — break it up. I don't know if it's the right thing, but it probably will happen," he said.

THE TWO CONGRESSMEN were among those who voted in favor of a compromise on the 1973 War Powers Act. Voting with them was Republican William Broomfield of Birmingham, whose 18th District includes parts of Farmington and Troy, the Rochester

area, West Bloomfield and Bloomfield Hills.

"I supported it — not that I was happy about the 18 months, but that was what was in front of us," Broomfield said. "I've never been really keen on U.S. force — there on a multinational basis. I would have preferred a United Nations force, but it was felt the Soviet Union would veto it."

President Reagan used the War Powers Act to send the peace-keeping contingent to Beirut for 60 days. The compromise, which passed the House by a

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Scholars examine U.S. alternatives

By Diane Galt
staff writer

Along with the rest of the nation, local scholars were appalled this week at the deaths of more than 200 American U.S. Marines in Lebanon.

The action of suicide terrorists driving TNT-laden trucks into U.S. Marine and French forces barracks in Beirut sparked unclear responses from government officials on the political situation in Lebanon and the role of the "peacekeeping" Marines stationed there.

"Why I think we're there is a personal reason, because it's hard to know why you're there, when it's a surrogate war, with the Syrians acting as surrogates for the Russians," said Sarah Keldan, professor of political science at Oakland Community College.

Spokespersons for the Reagan administration said the U.S. would keep its 1,400-man force in Lebanon.

The Marines were first sent to Lebanon 13 months ago to "bolster the morale of the Lebanese people and government and to be ready to help police areas that the U.S. had expected would be evacuated by the Israeli Syrian and Palestinian forces, which had in effect

partitioned Lebanon," said a New York Times article.

Since then, the role of the Marines has shifted to protecting the Lebanese army and to fighting off efforts by Syrian Druse and Shiite factions that were trying to alter the Lebanese government, the article said.

THE REASON the American Marines were sent to Lebanon was because "when the Israelis invaded the country a year ago, and the Syrians began beefing up their forces it looked like a Syrian/Israeli war," said Wayne State University professor Maurice Waters.

The U.S. went to the Middle East country as a peacekeeping force, but the religious factions in Lebanon saw the U.S. position as one of total support for one side — the Christian faction — supported by President Gemayel, Waters said.

"I approved of the initial idea, the idea of sending Marines was good, but (the reason they are there) got altered drastically in the past year," Waters said. "They are no longer playing a neutral role, there's a question of protecting themselves and fighting back."

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oral quarrel

What should Reagan do about Lebanon?

More than 200 United States Marines died last Sunday when powerful explosives were set off at their headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon. President Ronald Reagan has called the bombing "a despicable act," but has vowed to keep the 1,600-man Marine unit in Lebanon as part of a peacekeeping force.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE OUR PRESIDENT CONCERNING THE UNITED STATES' PRESENCE IN LEBANON?

To answer this question, call 477-5493. You have until 1 p.m. Friday to respond. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please look in Monday's Farmington Observer.

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