

Talk of extending Northwestern revived

By Mary Lou Callaway
special writer

The possibility of extending Northwestern Highway through Section 34 in West Bloomfield to terminate at Maple Road, long thought a dead issue, is being revived.

Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield elected officials plan a joint meeting on Wednesday, April 9, to discuss Northwestern and 14 Mile Road improvements. Fourteen Mile is under Farmington Hills jurisdiction.

However, proponents of the extension once again may have to deal with public pressure against it and lack of money.

Traffic counts are high, the potholes deep and money is short in the township. The county and the state for roads, township Supervisor John Doherty said. No primary roads serving West Bloomfield are under township control, he adds.

Doherty has never given up wanting the extension. But the township planning commission removed it from its Master Plan land-use guide three years ago.

THE MICHIGAN Department of Transportation does not show it on its 10-year plan. The only state priority affecting West Bloomfield is being given to widening Haggerty Road for 12 miles from Interstate 696 to M-59 at a cost of \$30 million this year, according to state Sen. Richard Fessler (R-West Bloomfield).

Fessler was the prime mover, with the endorsement of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, for the four-lane parkway project.

"The widening of Haggerty is a good

interim solution but what's needed is a freeway cut through," said Dennis Pajot, Oakland County Road Commission communications officer.

"We're still interested in having Northwestern built in compliance with our contract," Pajot said. "In 1957 we agreed to pay them (state) \$1.8 million over 20 years. They in return were to bond over \$50 million statewide and build Northwestern from Eight Mile Road to U.S. 23. They built only to Telegraph."

"We think that route (Northwestern) is necessary to relieve the horrible traffic congestion," Pajot said.

The county planning and building department is interested in improving the existing portion of Northwestern but warns it will compound problems where Northwestern ends at Orchard Lake Road.

THE SUPERVISOR is suggesting a Northwestern extension be a landscaped boulevard from Orchard Lake Road west to empty on Maple Road, also planned to be a boulevard.

That, says Doherty, is the only practical solution to the mounting traffic bottleneck as drivers head north. From Maple, he said, they can go directly to Haggerty Road.

"I don't know whether the rest of the township board supports this or not," Doherty admits. In the early 1970s local opposition to the extension and the lack of state money scuttled the plan, which had been a dotted line on maps since the 1920s.

Development of the 260 acres under option by Robert Sosnick's REDICO firm would be in the path of an extended Northwestern. REDICO spokesman Jason Horton said they have proposed

it as a major artery built at private expense, instead of a county thoroughfare.

"THE COUNTY wants Northwestern. Farmington Hills wants it. Southfield wants it and certain factors in the township want it because of frustration with traffic patterns there," Horton said.

"We've always said the best insurance policy for those who don't want it would be a sound planned development through Section 34 to allow local control over what ultimately takes place." And despite what the county and municipalities may want, it doesn't appear that the public money is there to extend Northwestern.

"This road commission has never been funded enough to keep up with Oakland County's development," Pajot says. "We're about \$825 million short over the next 10 years. Right now, we're in a development boom, and this has been the worst year for pothole patching."

A road tax has been discussed, he said, but there has been no formal proposal.

"There is discussion of a local option gas tax. It would require legislation. We would opt, by a vote of the people, to have a gas tax here (in the county) only," said Pajot. That would mean the motorist buying gas in Oakland County would, in effect, pay a user tax.

"THE COUNTY doesn't have funds," agreed Doherty, "even if we could match it. We aren't supposed to have to match funds on primary roads. But we did to widen Orchard Lake Road. That had to come out of our general fund, holding up the township getting a new

town hall and a police station." Horton predicts, "If the Northwestern extension goes through, Section 34 will not have the primarily residential flavor. The state highway department has some right-of-way. They own lots in Orchard Vale subdivision. They do

not have right of way through the proposed loop road.

"If Northwestern were extended either as a freeway or a boulevard, you'd end up having West Bloomfield look like the last mile of Farmington Hills

between 12½ and 13½ Mile roads on Northwestern.

"Instead of the back portion (of the Bauervic acreage) being 90-percent residential, I believe it would be 90-percent office and commercial," Horton said.

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Spring begins. If you have arthritis, you look forward to easier walking; no more heavy overcoats, pulling on stiff boots, or concern that you may risk a nasty fall on the sidewalk. But there is one aspect of spring which presents a threat for anyone with arthritis: bleeding ulcers. For unknown reasons, early spring is the time when an increase in the incidence of ulcers occurs. This increased risk holds for everyone, but for those individuals taking arthritis medications, the risk is particularly great. The reason is that one of the side effects of these drugs is to decrease the stomach's ability to counteract the effects of the hydrochloric acid its own lining cells produce. If the individual with arthritis uses a drug such as coated aspirin the risk of ulcer is small, with other drugs which dissolve in the stomach, the chance of gastritis or ulcer is great. Therefore, the physician may be reluctant to add medicine to your arthritis program at this time despite a flare in joint pain and swelling. Do not become discouraged. Remember that March and April will pass, and with their leaving exists the risk of ulcers in treating arthritis.

obituaries

GEBHARD STAAB

Mr. Staab, 84, of Novi died March 20. Born in Germany, Mrs. Staab was a retired tool and die inspector for General Motors.

Survivors include his wife, Hedwig; sons, William and Lawrence; daughters, Joannette Gerard and Hildegard Staab; sister, Lisbeth Kappner; brother, Alfred; four grandchildren.

Services were March 24 at the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Thomas Schorger of Spirit of Christ Lutheran Church officiating. Burial was in Glen Eden Cemetery, Livonia.

AUGUSTA MAESELE

Mrs. Maesele, 95, of West Bloomfield, formerly of Farmington, died March 22 in St. Mary Nursing Home, St. Clair Shores.

Born in Sweezele, Belgium, Mrs. Maesele was a homemaker. Survivors include her daughter, Evelyn Tilley; eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Services were March 25 at the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, Mass was celebrated at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church with the Rev. Arthur Jacobi officiating. Burial was in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Detroit.

on the agenda

Farmington Hills City Council
Council Chambers
31555 11 Mile, Farmington Hills
7:30 tonight

Council will present resident Pat Baker with an award for being the winner of the "Name the Park" contest (Heritage Park, formerly known as the Spicer Property). Council is expected to adopt a resolution approving the wording and election date for a half-mile levy for parks and recreation development. Council will also receive a

report on the construction progress of the police building. Approval will be considered for additional equipment purchases for the police building. Also to be considered is approval of a sub-contract agreement with the Oakland County Road Commission for maintenance of the Grand River boulevard, between Eight Mile and Purdie. Council is expected to enact an ordinance amendment to revise purchase agreement conditions for the sale of property to the Detroit Baptist Manor at Drake and Freedom roads.

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