

Commitment to paved roads affirmed

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills City Council is saying it loud and clear: graveling unpaved roads will not be considered an alternative to paving roads.

"We have had as a major objective... paving. One of the reasons is because we believe paving is in the best interest of the city as a whole," City Manager William Costick said.

Council's reaffirmation of longstanding city sentiment last week came as a result of a debate between residents — those favoring paving and those favoring graveling — of Goldsmith, north of Eight Mile, between Metroview and Halsted.

The debate between residents began in February when city officials met with Goldsmith residents to discuss road paving. Following the meeting, however, officials received not only signed petitions requesting paving, but also some requesting graveling of the unpaved road.

Almost 50 percent of the street's property owners signed the paving petition, while 61.4 percent signed the graveling petition. But three property owners signed both petitions, throwing the process out of kilter.

BECAUSE 51 percent of the property owners did not favor paving, city administrators recommended against establishing a special assessment district to finance the project.

After reiterating the city's desire to pave rather than gravel unpaved roads, council members agreed to give paving supporters another try to garner the needed signatures.

While residents make another bid to garner the needed petition signatures, city administrators told council they would re-examine the proposed project — determining whether the needed ditching and storm drainage can be included in one of the city's programs.

"Maybe we can impact costs 10-15 percent," Costick said.

Although paving supporters did not want to delay the petitioning process, Costick told them paving could not be started at least until next year.

AWARE THAT the tide of sentiment was against them, graveling supporters conluded with their bid to convince council that graveling was in the residents best interest.

"We feel if you pave the road now, you will just have to do it all over again," said Robert Graves, spokesman for those favoring graveling, referring to the amount of construction traffic traveling Goldsmith.

Paving is unnecessary because the amount of traffic on the road doesn't warrant it and many of the residents cannot afford to pay a special assessment, Graves said.

If the city waited, allowing for development to occur on properties that would be affected by a special assessment district, costs would be reduced, he said.

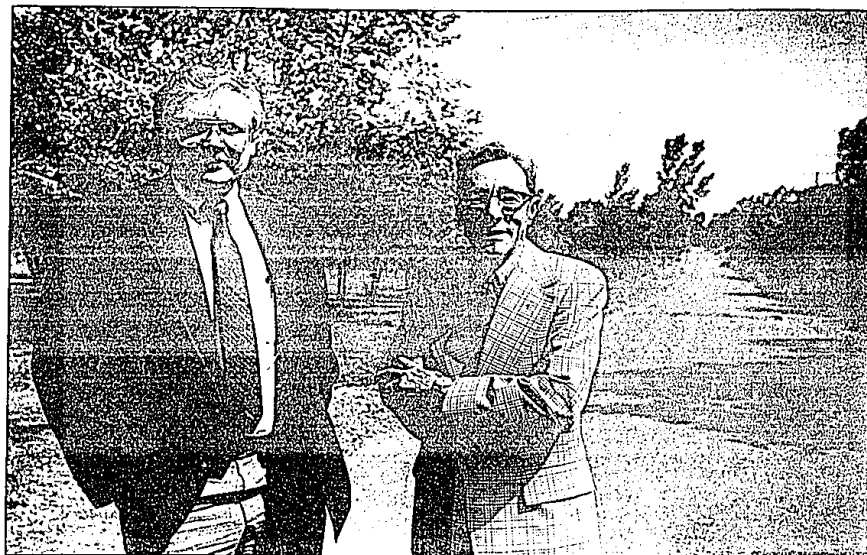
"Right now, there are some people that will have to pay \$20,000, plus interest," Graves said, referring to paving costs. As an example, Graves' share over 10 years would total about \$15,000 because he owns three lots that would benefit from paving, he said.

BUT COUNCILWOMAN Joan Dudley told Graves that the city has provisions for those, particularly senior citizens, who cannot pay special assessments for paving. "We aren't going to put them out of their homes," she said.

Al Hetke, spokesman for paving proponents, also made his case before council.

"Goldsmith needs desperate help," said Hetke, referring to problems with the existing gravel roadway and drainage problems. "A gravel alternative will not solve the problems. Traffic on Goldsmith is going on tremendously. Goldsmith is a gravel road won't hold up."

Hetke also asked council to take a position on graveling roads. If council continued its support of paving unpaved roads, Hetke said he had little doubt he could garner the needed support for paving.



Al Hetke (left), spokesman for the Goldsmith paving proponents, and Joe DiMalo, a Goldsmith resident for 40 years.

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Suggesting that council take an immediate stand on graveling, Dudley said: "I have grave concerns about the city getting in the business of graveling roads. I don't think we

ought to take a step backwards." Graveling is neither efficient or cost-effective, she added.

Councilwoman Jody Soronen echoed Dudley's concerns. "I am not willing to go back to a system where we encourage gravel roads," she said.



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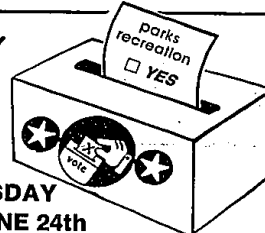
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Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission

State government studied up close

"Meeting adjourned." So ended the 38th annual Youth In Government mock legislature and model judiciary program in Lansing on May 3.

Attending this year were 620 Michigan high school students. Five students from Livonia Clarenceville High School participated in the four-day event held in Lansing. They were: Dale Weighill, Kevin Dorton, Rob Lambert, Will Walther and Alan MacNeill.

Clarenceville includes students from parts of Farmington Hills, Redford Township and Livonia.

An introductory conference was held in Pontiac in November for students in southeastern Michigan. This gave the participants an opportunity to learn more about what they would be doing while in Lansing.

The students who went to Lansing assumed the roles of governor, senators, representatives, press corps, pages, lobbyists and others.

The roles played by the Clarenceville delegates were: clerk of House, Dale Weighill; sergeant at arms, Kevin Dorton; representative, Alan MacNeill; and pages, Rob Lambert and Will Walther.

THE DELEGATES met in legislative committees eight hours discussing public policies and proposed legislation that they had prepared at their home schools. Seven hundred bills had been submitted. Only 300 were printed in the bill book the students worked with.

The young politicians were allowed full use of the Capitol building, the Lansing Civic Center and other facilities during their stay.

"Roberts Rules of Order" were judiciously practiced.

While in the capital, Clarenceville's delegation met and spoke with state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington. Brotherton and the group discussed some of the mock bills that had been sent in by group members months before.

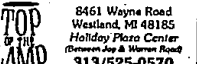
Alan MacNeill wrote a bill concerning gym requirements. Will Walther and Rob Lambert wrote a bill about extracurricular activities, and Dale Weighill and Kevin Dorton produced legislation on school "snow" days.

THE COST of the program to each student was \$85 per person. This in-

cluded four-day and three-night stay in Lansing, a luncheon, a banquet, a dance and the use of the Civic Center facilities. In comparison, California charges \$225 per person. The registration fee is lower here because civic-minded corporations and the YMCA support Michigan's program with contributions of money and services.

Clarenceville's Board of Education helped subsidize the program by paying \$50 of the fee for each Clarenceville student. Each of the delegates paid the rest of the registration fee and the cost of additional meals and expenses.

This was Clarenceville's second year in the program. Two students attended last year.



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