

Asbestos pipes

Recommendation on ban is anticipated

By Joanna Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills' engineering staff is expected to present a recommendation soon on whether the city should ban the use of water line pipes made with asbestos.

The engineering staff's current research, which is expected to conclude with a recommendation, stems not so much from recent health concerns about asbestos cement pipes as it does from the inability of contractors to use such pipes. Director of Public Services Thomas Blasell said, "We are reacting to the fact that contractors have been told by their insurance carriers they can't install

it," Blasell said.

"New ones (asbestos cement pipes) are not being installed because contractors are not bidding them."

Farmington Hills is one of several metro Detroit communities that has lagged in suspending the use of the pipes in light of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposal last fall to ban many asbestos products. Medical research, according to the EPA, has shown that when inhaled asbestos fibers can lead to lung cancer. Agency officials are expected to present final rules next year.

Acknowledging concern about potential health hazards connected with the asbestos pipes, Blasell said

that "in terms of actual usage, there is not a health hazard. From the user standpoint, there is no problem."

POTENTIAL HEALTH hazards stem from the possibility of the asbestos particles becoming airborne. That does not occur once the pipes are in use, but can occur during the manufacture and installation of the pipes, Blasell said.

Consequently, the asbestos cement pipes now in use in Farmington Hills water mains are not hazardous to health, he said.

Asbestos cement pipes have been used — until recent difficulties with contractors' ability to bid them — because they were less expensive and easier to maintain than iron doc-

tile pipes, Blasell said.

Last year, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department — providers of Farmington Hills' water supply — banned future use of asbestos pipes but felt existing pipes posed no health hazard.

Asbestos cement pipes contain approximately 20 percent asbestos, which is used as a reinforcement material. Asbestos pipes are generally used as water mains.

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Sidewalks finished

Farmington's 1985 sidewalk program is complete.

The cost for sidewalks that were repaired will be assessed 100 percent against the adjacent property owners.

Sidewalks installed for the first time — those not required to be installed at the time the property was improved — will be assessed at 50 percent of the installation cost. The remaining cost will be paid by the

Community Development Block Grant program.

The city council approved the 1985 sidewalk special assessments July 21. It also established a payment schedule for assessments over \$501. Payment of the first installment is due Aug. 15. The penalty for late payment becomes effective 30 days later, Sept. 16. City Manager Robert Deadman said.

Employees can write tickets

Ticket writing could increase in Farmington Hills.

A new ordinance allowing employees other than police officers to issue misdemeanor, appearance tickets was approved unanimously by the Farmington Hills City Council July 14.

Zoning and code enforcement officers, building inspectors, the fire chief and deputy fire chief, the fire

lieutenants, the fire marshal, the fire inspector and the fire technician specialist and assistants will now be authorized to issue appearance tickets for activities that violate city or state codes.

Misdemeanor violations carry a maximum permissible penalty of 90 days in jail and a \$500 fine. They are handled through the 47th District Court in Farmington.

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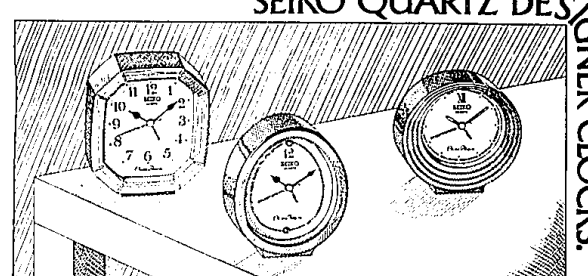
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