

Drug ordinance faces tough debate

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Oakland County commissioners will ponder a lot of conflicting advice as they take up an ordinance proposal aimed at halting the sale of drug paraphernalia.

The board will hold its first post-election meeting at 7:30 this evening in its auditorium at 1200 N. Telegraph. It will be one of four evening meetings the board holds each year. Usual meeting time is 9:30 a.m.

Two Democratic Oakland County commissioners — James Doyon of Madison Heights and Betty Fortino of Waterford — last week got their proposed ordinance through the county board's general government committee on a split vote.

THE TWO candidates for governor split over the question. If the full board passes it, the ordinance would have to be signed by the governor.

Gov. James J. Blanchard, a Democrat, endorsed the idea late last week, saying that anti-drug legislation may be needed at all levels of

government — federal, state and local.

"It's easier at the state or national level," admitted Blanchard, an Oakland County resident.

"I'm sympathetic with the effort — to the extent it's constitutional," the governor said during a news conference.

But Republican challenger William Lucas, the Wayne County executive, said only a federal law will do the trick.

Lucas, former sheriff, FBI agent and Newkirk City policeman, said it would be too easy for criminals to

cross local or state borders to buy drug paraphernalia. Lucas was asked the question during a Bloomfield Township news conference earlier last week.

THE SHOPPING list of paraphernalia includes "hash" pipes, cocaine spoons, empty gelatin capsules and syringes.

But some Republican commissioners — notably committee chairman John Olsen, who represents Blanchard's county district — dissented, saying the matter would be better

handled by a state law.

The state Senate is considering such a bill, sponsored by Sen. William Sederburg, R-East Lansing. The Legislature will reconvene Nov. 12. A state law would take precedence over a county ordinance.

But Doyon and Fortino argue Oakland County should adopt an ordinance to keep pressure on Lansing.

EVEN COURT opinions conflict, as Linda E. Wasielewski, assistant corporation counsel, told the committee.

Two federal judges have ruled on both sides of the question:

• In a 1980 Novi case, then-Federal Judge Patricia Boyle upheld an ordinance. She said it was reasonable related to a legitimate state interest and not unconstitutionally vague. Boyle is now a Michigan Supreme Court justice.

• In a 1980 Ferndale case, Federal Judge Anna Diggs Taylor struck down the ordinance as violating due process. She said it failed to give fair notice to people of ordinary intelligence as to the proscribed conduct.

College VP

Dorothy J. Hopkin becomes Oakland Community College's new position of vice president for information and telecommunication systems on Dec. 1. Previously she was Michigan State University's director of administrative information services and has worked for the University of Illinois and in industry. Her degrees are from MSU and Wayne State.

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