

Committee closing in on county landfill site

By Matt Jachman
staff writer

A committee studying possible sites for a new Oakland County landfill is nearly ready to share its findings with county officials.

The 25-member Landfill Site Advisory Committee on Thursday finished rating 10 sites by giving a "weight" to 28 different criteria based on a Philadelphia engineering company's analysis of the topography and soil make-up of the sites.

The blind process — the sites were known to committee members by numbers only — put the sites into an order. The sites will be revealed when the committee appears before the county Board of Commissioners

at a meeting tentatively scheduled for Aug. 17.

The committee's recommendation to the board will be to move forward with hydrogeological (how the water is distributed) studies at the sites," said committee chairwoman Ardath Regan. "There may still be some unknowns."

Detailed testing of the top sites on the list will help the board decide where to locate the landfill, said Regan, who is president of the Village of Holly. But the landfill committee will be involved in the process throughout, she added.

THE COMMITTEE has been meeting since February with J.W. Spear, an engineer with the Philadelphia firm of Rogers, Golden & Hal-

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chair, landfill site committee

pern, which specializes in energy, environmental and land use issues. Originally, 27 sites were looked at, but 17 were taken off the list before the committee finished the weighting process, Regan said.

Data from available records — road construction reports, construction records and other county information — were used to judge the sites. Soil borings were not done, Regan said.

The blind rating method was used to equitably pick the best site and avoid political disputes between committee members over where the landfill will be built, she said, adding that there "has been unanimous support of this process" by the commissioners.

But no matter where the landfill is finally located, Regan told commissioners at the board's Thursday meeting, someone will be unhappy.

"We're not going to have a very easy time of it in the next couple of months," she told the board. "But it's time some of us have the guts to lead."

Regan praised the committee's work and blasted rumors that the blind site selection is a sham and

that officials have already picked a landfill site.

REGAN, WHO also chairs the state's Toxic Substance Control Commission, which decides how to distribute federal Superfund environmental cleanup money, said the work of the landfill committee can avoid the environmental problems she has seen.

"I have walked through ruins of the very worst landfills in the state," and have seen the hazards and hardships they cause, she said. "There are better ways."

A new landfill is part of an overall county plan for solid waste disposal that includes recycling centers and a trash-to-energy incinerator.

Me too! County goes for Quality of Life grants

By Matt Jachman
staff writer

Local cities and townships aren't the only ones taking advantage of a new state grant program.

Oakland County officials want to be on it too — to improve two county parks.

The county parks and recreation commission on Wednesday approved

a request to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for two recreation bond fund grants totaling \$500,000. If approved, the grants would be used, with county money, to develop the beach area at Orion Oaks and to improve the beach and modernize campsites at Groveland Oaks.

The recreation bond fund, dubbed the Quality of Life program, was

created last November when voters approved Proposal D. The fund of nearly \$16 million is designed to help local communities that can provide some matching money to upgrade recreation facilities. The bonds will be repaid through the state's general fund.

The program is expected to last five years. The application deadline for grants to be awarded in 1990 was

Friday. Communities across the county are applying for grants under the program.

JOE FIGA, chief of design for the parks and recreation department, said he is uncertain of the county's chances of winning a grant.

"It's hard to say. We've got a really good track record," FIGA said. "We've won a lot of grants, and we've always done what we said we would."

FIGA said he expects an answer to the grant request by the end of the year.

The top priority, FIGA said, is a \$450,000 grant for Groveland Oaks, a 362-acre park in Groveland Township. If approved, the grant would be used, with \$300,000 in county parks

and recreation money, for landscaping and a retaining wall near the beach area and the improvement of some of the park's 600 campsites.

Two hundred campsites near the beach would be converted to 120 sites, FIGA said, giving campers more space. Water and electrical lines would be added to the sites. Currently, he said, each water hook-up and electrical outlet serves several sites.

At Orion Oaks, an undeveloped 927-acre park in Orion Township, a \$130,000 grant would be matched with \$130,000 in parks and recreation money to build a dock, trails, a storage building and restrooms in the beach area.

THE GRANT REQUEST for Orion

Oaks is a copy of one sent in April to both the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Land and Water Fund, a federal program administered by the state. Those requests are still pending, FIGA said.

The commission also adopted a resolution calling for a ballot proposal for a one-year, ¼-mill tax to develop Orion Oaks. The plan, FIGA said, would raise \$15 million to install utilities and build roads, trails, cabins, parking lots, a lodge and an activities center at the park.

The county Board of Commissioners will decide later this summer whether to put the proposal on the ballot.

Abused kids

Legislators seek victims' bill of rights

Two state legislators from Oakland County are sponsoring a proposal they say would ensure greater protection for child victims of physical and sexual abuse.

State Reps. Judith Miller, R-Birmingham, and Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, last week introduced what they are calling a bill of rights for sexually abused children. The measure, they say, will likely be expanded to cover children hurt by physical abuse as well.

The two cited statistics showing that child abuse cases in the state have nearly doubled since 1980. "I think it is a greater problem than is perceived by the public," Dolan said. "It is more than just sexual abuse. There's a lot of physical abuse out there."

The proposal, Dolan said, is also designed to help social workers, foster parents, therapists and others

who care for abused children.

The bill would:

- Require judges to complete a program on the diagnosis and treatment of child abuse in order to increase their sensitivity toward such cases.

- Prohibit a convicted child abuser from contact with the victim until the offender has completed a court-approved treatment program.

- Make evidence that an accused attacker has abused another child admissible in court proceedings on a specific case.

- Make admissible in court expert testimony that a child suffers from behavioral problems because of abuse.

- Force a parent convicted of abuse to pay court costs and lawyer's fees incurred by the other parent and to pay for the child's therapy.

- Allow a child's testimony about alleged abuse to be videotaped instead of forcing the child to repeat testimony several times as a case progresses.

THE TWO LAWMAKERS, under the auspices of the state Republican Leadership Task Force, plan to hold hearings throughout the state to gather testimony from social service agencies, teachers, those who care for abused children and those who handle abuse cases. The hearings, Dolan said, will help them broaden and revise the proposal before it goes before legislative committee hearings in the fall.

The first hearing was held last week in Mount Clemens. There are no hearings scheduled for Oakland County.

Dolan said she expects strong support for the plan from the state Legislature.

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