

County officials regroup on landfill issue

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Officials are taking something of a time out in their quest for a solid waste landfill site.

"I think it's time we reassessed a few things," explained Roy Rewold, chairman of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. "Frustrations have been building and we must talk some things over."

Rewold, a Rochester Republican, made his assessment after scheduling a meeting with county commissioners and members of the Landfill Siting Advisory Committee (LSAC) that for the last year or so has been searching for a site for a county-owned landfill to reportedly meet municipal dumping demands for 40 years.

He scheduled the meeting after Ardat Regan, chairwoman of the LSAC, complained she and others on the committee felt they were "dealing with half truths" when talking to residents about the site selection process.

"People are frightened," Regan said Tuesday at a meeting of the planning and building committee of the board of commissioners. "We can't deal in half-truths and we've got to be more people oriented," she

said.

COMMISSIONERS ARE scheduled to meet with Regan and the LSAC at 4 tonight at the county service center.

"We're going to air things out," said Rewold. "And we want members of the LSAC to realize they are doing a good job and we (commissioners) are behind them 100 percent."

Nancy McConnell, board vice chairperson and a member of the planning and building committee, said the joint session — preceding the regular LSAC meeting — is a good idea.

"Ardath Regan has her ear to the ground, and she knows how people feel," said McConnell, a Bloomfield Hills Republican. "We should listen to what she has to say."

Regan said plenty at Tuesday's subcommittee meeting.

She complained that individual county commissioners — and some state representatives — were meeting privately with individual residents, thereby undermining the LSAC.

"WE'VE GOT to have integrity when we meet with people," said Regan. "We've got to work together, or

we can't work at all."

At one meeting in Highland Township Monday, almost 2,000 angry residents attended a LSAC meeting and complained about the process used to select possible landfill sites and the consulting company that has been advising county officials.

Regan defended the consulting

company — Rogers, Golden & Halpern of Philadelphia — but is asking county officials to approve "walking inspections" at each of the five sites under consideration for the proposed landfill.

Sites under consideration for the proposed landfill are:

- Oxford Township, 1,047 acres west of M-24 on both sides of Oak-

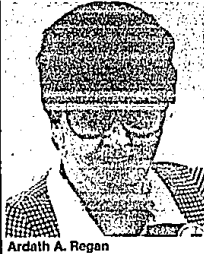
wood Road.

- On the boundary of Oxford and Addison townships, 892 acres south of Oakwood.
- Highland Township, 624 acres north of M-59 about a mile west of Milford.
- Highland Township, 717 acres south of Fish Lake and east of Hickory Ridge Road.

- Highland Township, 616 acres south of M-59 and west of Newberry Road.

The on-site inspections — expected to cost about \$50,000 — would include biologists, geologists and other specialists in addition to government officials, Regan said.

County officials have taken Regan's request under advisement.



Ardath A. Regan

She's taking the heat

Ardath A. Regan, chairwoman of the 28-member appointed Landfill Siting Advisory Committee, has some experience with government.

She has been a member of the Village Council of Holly for three years prior to being elected president — roughly the equivalent of village mayor — about 10 years ago.

Besides serving on various committees at the village level — including the planning commission

and economic development commission — she is a member of the Oakland County Solid Waste Task Force.

In 1981 she was appointed by Gov. James Blanchard to the Michigan Toxic Substance Control Commission, the state agency that helps determine which toxic waste sites will be selected for cleanup under the federal Superfund, a billion dollar pool used to cleanup environmental waste sites.

Regan is also vice president of

the Michigan Municipal League.

A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, Regan said she lived in various parts of the country before twice moving to Michigan. The first time was in 1968 when she lived in Livonia. The second was in the mid 1970s when she moved to Holly.

"I was a G.M. kid," she said. "My dad was a General Motors engineer and so is my husband."

Her husband, Frank, is an engineer with the G.M. Truck and Bus Division in Pontiac.

Federal, county money goes for airport addition

By Tim Richard
staff writer

An Oakland County committee unblocked for an hour about filling a staff job, then needed just five minutes to approve a \$1.6 million airport improvement.

The county board's general government committee Monday was a chapter out of "Parkinson's Law," the work of witty British scholar C. Northcote Parkinson. Parkinson's "Law of Triviality" says:

"The time spent on any item of the agenda will be inverse proportional to the sum involved."

"We do it all the time," agreed commissioner Dennis Aaron, D-Oak Park, with a wry smile.

THE COMMITTEE kicked back to the board's informal "leadership" a proposal to hire Kevin Oeffner as senior analyst in the board's own program and operations evaluation office.

"We need someone for the budget process, starting Oct. 1," said finance committee chairman G. William Caddell, R-Walled Lake, appearing before the government committee. "I've been requesting this three or four years."

But commissioner Tom Law, R-West Bloomfield, was bothered by the short notice of the appointment and the speed with which it was taken up.

"Usually you announce a position, take applications, and then hire," said Law. "Here we're going to fill a position and hire somebody all at once. At least, let's open it up and post it somewhere."

In the end the general government committee voted to send the plan back to the board's leadership group — chairman, vice chairman, and two caucus chairmen — with a suggestion to revise the job description and decide whether to advertise.

THE LEADERSHIP had proposed Oeffner. Since 1987, Oeffner had been Ingham County's small business grants coordinator and a one-

time campaign manager for now-Sen. Doug Cruce, R-Troy.

Caddell said more staff is needed because James Brennan, who directs the board's programs and operations evaluation office, is spending much of his time to Oakland's new \$1 billion solid waste program.

Aaron agreed with Law's objections to filling the post without advertising, adding it should be under the merit system and not a political appointment.

"I'm disturbed by what I've seen in the last year. We have a lot to gain by keeping the merit system clean," Aaron said.

But commissioner Don Elabop, R-Rochester, a former state senator, said the job should be political because "stuffs for legislative bodies have enormous power. To lock them (appointees) in when they could be advocating different policies (from elected legislators) — that's intolerable."

THE COMMITTEE without debate accepted a \$1.6 million Federal Aviation Administration grant for a new building at the Oakland-Pontiac Airport in Waterford Township.

It will be used for an airport rescue firefighting and maintenance building and service road.

"The (current) maintenance building is from the '60s," said J. David VanderVeen, manager of county airports. "It's in the wrong location, they told us. The Michigan Aeronautics commission took bids last Wednesday."

The entire project will cost \$1.8 million, with the \$200,000 county match coming from credits from previous projects. No new county money will be needed, the committee resolution said.

The maintenance building project is one of several improvements scheduled for 1989 at Oakland-Pontiac Airport.

Others are: asbestos removal and building improvement at the terminal; T-hangers and site work; utility line relocation; and terminal parking lot resurfacing.

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County eyes credit for recycling items

By Tim Richard
staff writer

An Oakland County committee is studying a state bill that would give a tax credit to companies that recycle trash into new products.

"I'm not ready to jump on this today," said commissioner Richard Starritt, R-Milford, chairman of the county board's general government committee.

The panel will wait until Oct. 2 to take up state Senate Bill 440, aimed at stimulating market demand for recycled materials.

AS INTRODUCED by Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Port Huron, the bill would allow companies to deduct 15 percent of the cost of buying recyclable material from their single business tax (SBT) bills.

As amended, however, the bill would allow just a temporary deduction from the SBT bill, then require the company to pay the state Treasury back at one-tenth of the amount per year.

"The reason the payback is in there is to provide low-interest loans to private incinerators," said L. Jean

Willoughby, the county's state grants coordinator.

The state Treasury Department feared a loss of revenue from a tax credit, she said.

The county board's planning and building committee took a look at the bill and decided it disliked the payback section, said Joe Mullen, the board's legislative agent.

TO RECEIVE a loan or tax credit, a taxpayer would have to buy recycled waste and use it in the manufacture of a new product.

Examples are the use of old newspaper as insulation and lawn mulch, the recycling of broken glass as new glass, and the melting down of old plastic into highway signs.

A company that spent \$1,000 to buy such trash and manufacture new products could claim a SBT credit of \$150.

"The 15-percent credit is effectively a net price cut for firms that purchase recyclable material," read an analysis of SB 440 by Gary Wolfman, professor of political economy at Hillsdale College.

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