

Officials seek renewal of Hills recreation tax

By Dan Maliszewski Staff Writer

Hills officials are up for their plans to ask voters to renew an expired 0.5-mill levy for recreation this spring, despite defeat by area voters of Washington Public Schools tax proposal Feb. 5.

The community will reward you with this weekly," said Dennis Fitzgerald, Hills Parks and Recreation Commission chairman.

Fitzgerald said he is confident

that the way in which revenues were used for parks and recreation projects from the five-year 0.5 mill levy can withstand the "microscope test" from voters. The tax was approved in 1986 and expired in July.

"We think we can stand scrutiny on the dollars handed to us," Fitzgerald said.

The half-mill over eight years will generate \$9.6 million, less than the \$12.2 million price tag on the commission's parks and recreation action plan. The plan provides a guideline of parks and recreation projects

and land acquisition, including for baseball and soccer fields.

PARKS AND recreation commissioners are developing a priority list of projects within the action plan that would be financed with money from the proposed renewal. The five-year action plan, approved by the city council recently, would be adjusted for eight years.

The city council is expected to review proposed ballot language and the commission's description of desired projects at 7:30 p.m. Monday. The goal is to complete the ballot

language and project proposals by Feb. 25.

City officials want to have the special election before the school district's annual June election. Possible dates for the city's special millage election are April 30 and May 7, both Tuesdays, city manager William Costick said.

Both dates would provide enough time for the city to levy the tax if it is approved by July 1.

Council members asked that parks and recreation commissioners prepare specific plans of how revenue from the proposed tax would be used, including the \$600,000 designated for the city-owned Philpott land, south of 169th, west of Farmington Road.

Fitzgerald asked if council members would be satisfied with descriptions such as land acquisition for passive or active recreation, for example.

Joe Miller of the Farmington Soccer Club, who supports the proposed millage and a two-part said

the numbers have to be satisfied because that's what they are paying for. If there's any question, they voters won't vote for it.

COUNCILMAN TERRY Seeger wants to ensure that the city would not pay the dollars should the city be made to pay all the land described in the plan.

"Each year we can make that determination as to whether or not," Mayor Steve Krasnow said. But he added that the city's status, the plan will not be a ready-made package. The plan and budget tax money will have to be used for things that a grant might otherwise finance.

Seeger is concerned that there would be a lot of money spent on what projects, programs or facilities are passed to the city council and the Farmington Soccer Club, who supports the proposed millage and a two-part said

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Seeger said, asking city officials to consider the economic times facing a majority of taxpayers.

A financial analysis presented to the council Monday night provides a plan of items in the eight-year plan and the estimated costs, as well as how much of the costs would be covered with tax money and other sources, such as grants.

For example, land acquisition and development with an estimated \$5 million could be financed with \$1.4 million in tax money and \$3.6 million in other sources.

Also included in the plan are bike paths, an estimated \$500,000, to be financed totally with tax money.

Hills and soccer field renovation at an estimated \$700,000 are also included in the eight-year plan, as for example, an estimated \$200,000 for a new center program.

Other items include estimated costs of \$200,000 for Heritage Park, \$125,000 for a soccer field, and \$270,000 for new transit transportation vehicles.

Ends would fund purchase of golf course, officials say

By Dan Maliszewski Staff Writer

Hills officials have been negotiating to buy an unfinished, nine-hole Copper Creek golf course in 12 Mile-Halsted area. But its purchase was dangled with any parks and recreation tax plan.

Any venture, such as the purchase of the golf course would "have to stand on its own," and would not be paid for with revenue bonds, city manager Costick said Monday.

Deeply concerned as a property owner that that affect property values in the Copper Creek development, said Ray Davis, a Copper Creek resident. He thought the city's negotiations to public light may take the form of a question to the city council. He also heard the estimated \$3.1 million for golf course development listed in the Parks and Recreation Commission's plan of projects was for the possible Copper Creek purchase.

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COSTICK REPLIED that the price tag in the plan was not for a specific program. It could be for a brand new course or the expansion of the city-owned San Marino Golf Course on Halsted. But he later said that any purchase of Copper Creek would be financed through revenue bonds.

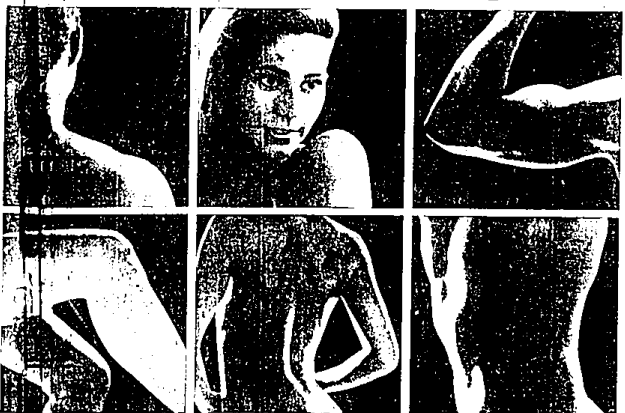
Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi Tuesday confirmed that and added that the purchase would probably would also involve money to complete the course, which is supposed to have a clubhouse.

Davis said condominium residents are expected to meet Monday to discuss the golf course. Council members asked Davis to bring residents to the council meeting later that night. That's when the council will again discuss the proposed parks and recreation tax plan and the Copper Creek golf course.

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