

Just a little longer

Facing jail, Lanni asks to stay on road commission

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Even though he doesn't dispute charges he twice raped a 15-year-old babysitter, James E. Lanni would like to remain on the road commission for Oakland County a little longer.

The chairman of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners says no dice, however, and wants to remove Lanni as soon as possible. "The sooner he's gone, the better."

said commissioner Roy Rewold, who heads the county commission.

Rewold and other commissioners may have to wait as long as two weeks before Lanni is off the road commission. Rewold has tentatively set Aug. 8 as the date for a hearing at which Lanni can answer charges against him.

"The law spells out the reasons for which a road commissioner can be removed from office," said William Hampton, a lawyer for the board. "And it spells out the method."

"Even though he (Lanni) no longer

has the presumption of innocence, he must be afforded due process," said Hampton.

To afford Lanni due process, Rewold sent him a letter officially spelling out the charges against him and notifying him of the Aug. 8 meeting.

Ironically, Rewold received a letter from Lanni Tuesday. But instead of containing Lanni's resignation — as many commissioners hoped — the letter reflected his desire to remain in office for an unspecified time, Rewold said.

"LANNI SAID the charges against him have nothing to do with the performance of his duties," Rewold said. "It said he wants to stay on the board for at least a couple more weeks."

But that won't do, Rewold said. "He's got to go."

Lanni, 46, of Royal Oak, is likely to go to prison shortly after he is sentenced for criminal sexual con-

duct on Sept. 24 before Oakland Circuit Judge Richard D. Kuhn.

The judge set that sentencing date Friday after Lanni pleaded no contest to six counts of criminal sexual conduct involving a former babysitter. Lanni allegedly forced the babysitter, then 15, to have sex with him on two separate occasions last year.

A no contest plea means that Lanni does not admit that the charges against him are true, explained Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Jean S. Gibson, who prosecuted the case. But neither does Lanni contest those accusations, she said.

"For sentencing purposes, it's the same as a guilty plea," Gibson added.

Commissioners have quietly tried to get Lanni to resign since last November, when the charges were first lodged against him.

But Lanni refused, and under existing law commissioners could not force him to step aside.

OU sets career building path

After a few years in a job, many people find they need a career change but don't know how to go about it. The Oakland University Continuum Center is offering a structured training program to guide participants to alternative career goals.

"Career Building: New Directions From Past Experience" will be offered on 7-10 p.m. Tuesdays, July 30, Aug. 6, 13, 20, on the Rochester campus. In addition, one hour of private career counseling is included following the four-session workshop.

Participants will be led through an out-of-the-ordinary self-exploration process of finding direction, assessing job talent, exploring career options and setting goals.

The workshop details the special tactics involved in career transition, and offers techniques for eliminating the uncertainty and stress associated with job change.

The fee for all sessions plus one hour of career counseling is \$129; a workbook and interest test are also included. Register by phone with MasterCard/VISA before July 26. Call 370-3033.

Self-esteem workshop set

Today children face many complex situations that can undercut self-esteem. They learn the realities of life earlier, deal with difficult choices, and often lack a traditional family to fall back on. Consequently, the educator's and counselor's roles can be difficult ones.

The Oakland University Continuum Center will offer a half-day

workshop of self-esteem training that reveals how professionals can build self-interest and self-respect in students with "Making a Positive Difference: Students and Self-Esteem" on Thursday, Aug. 1, 9 a.m. to noon on campus.

The fee is \$39; MasterCard and Visa accepted. Registrations will be taken through July 30. Call 370-3033.

Are insurance benefits why he won't resign yet?

They haven't had much, if any, contact with him, but Oakland County commissioners quietly speculate that James Lanni wants to keep his seat on the road commission in order to continue health insurance benefits for his family.

"It's ironic," said one commissioner who asked not to be identified. "But he's probably thinking about his wife and two small children."

Lanni, 46, of Royal Oak, is likely to go to prison after Sept. 24, when Oakland Circuit Judge Richard D. Kuhn imposes sentence.

Last Friday Lanni pleaded no contest to six counts of criminal sexual conduct involving a 15-year-old baby sitter. He faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.

Commissioners want to remove Lanni from the road commission — as soon as possible.

"None of us feel sorry for Jim Lanni," said commissioner Nancy McConnell, R-Bloomfield Hills. "But

'None of us feel sorry for Jim Lanni. But we do have some concern for his wife and two children.'

— Commissioner Nancy McConnell
R-Bloomfield Hills

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Lanni, who was a county commissioner for 10 years, was appointed to the Road Commission for Oakland County in 1989, shortly after he was defeated for re-election.

Like the other two road commissioners, Lanni receives a \$10,000 a year salary and fringe benefits such as a county-owned automobile and county-paid health insurance.

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Well, the kids don't always see eye to eye on what's most awesome. This day's Labi the glassblower is not. Is too loud. But then again, they're not the same height.

Even Mr. and Mrs. Keaton don't always agree. So when it's time for the Keaton Brothers Home Says who? Say "one for me and you." But then again, they're married.

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