

Smelly, encroaching river alarms Brookdale

By CAREY HANS
STAFF WRITER

If something isn't done to control the flow of the Rouge River, residents of Brookdale Condominiums may find themselves losing the foundations of several buildings.

"I'm not trying to be doom and gloom about this, but something has to be done," said Brookdale Association president Jack Hammer. "We need a helping hand."

Dozens of concerned residents from the 104-unit condominium complex, located on Grand River in the Uptown Farmington area, came to the city council last week. They asked for help with the encroaching river problem, and also voiced concerns over broken sewer pipes which affect the river's flow and what they say is an unbearable smell coming from the river.

City officials promised residents the smell would be taken care of this winter, with completion of the \$13 million dollar sewer improvement project which will halt any sewage from flowing into the river; lines will then carry only storm water. They also promised to repair any city-owned sewer pipe which is damaged.

Also, the city's engineer will meet with residents to discuss what options the association has to keep the river from taking a natural course and undermining the property.

Like several other condominium complexes in the city, the 25-year-old Brookdale was built on the banks of the Rouge River and Hammer said that is one of the attractions of living there. But not paying attention to the encroachment problem could cost the homeowners' group big money, as it did with the nearby River Glen Condominiums, said City Manager Robert Deadman. There, the foundation of a building was damaged because of encroachment.

"We totally agree to protect your units, we must have some stabilization of your banks," Deadman told the residents. "You have too high an investment there. The cheapest time is right now to go in there and repair it."

Unfortunately, the city has no money to help, nor do officials know of other federal or state money for which the residents can apply. Deadman said the only Rouge



DANIEL LIPFITT/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pointing it out: Jack Hammer, Brookdale Association president, points at the river below. "We need a helping hand," he says.

projects with which the city has been involved were reinforcing the river which runs through the city's Shawanaw Park and another project at Valley View Condominiums which was federally funded.

"We can't take on the responsibility of the entire Rouge River," Deadman added.

"That is a major, powerful river."

The association already put in about 100 feet of seawall along one of the worst areas five years ago. But other areas are eroding under a fence which runs along the ridge, as the property slopes down-

ward to the river. They would like to put fill dirt along the bank, Hammer said, then put plantings in to reinforce the ground.

Public services director Earl Billing said the city has offered to give the complex broken concrete to use as fill and

reinforcement when they repair sidewalks in the coming years.

The city engineer will be directed to report back to the city council on any recommendations about the situation, said Mayor William Hartsock.

MetroVision requests early powwow on cable franchise

By CAREY HANS
STAFF WRITER

Officials from MetroVision of Oakland County are asking to renegotiate early their 15-year cable franchise in Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi.

The change would allow improved technology and an expansion from the current 54 channels up to a possible 112 channels. Managers said the upgrade would not increase cable rates to subscribers.

The cable company negotiates with the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission, which represents a joint franchise agreement with the three cities. All three city councils must approve early negotiations before they can begin, and also must approve any franchise proposal. The company is 10 years into the current franchise contract which will expire in May 1997.

Normally, the cities would begin renegotiating the franchise in 1994.

"We think the time is certainly right — this would be one of the first markets going to this larger number of channels," said Tom Bjorklund, vice president and regional manager of MetroVision. "We are asking that we speed this process up a little bit."

Bjorklund said the new technology would allow the company to add fiber optics for better transmission and less system down time and to increase the current signal power.

The Farmington City Council approved opening the negotiations early at its Sept. 8 meeting. The Novi and Farmington Hills city councils are expected to consider the matter at their Sept. 21 meetings.

Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick said he would like to recommend approval of the early negotiations. "I think it's going to take some analysis and study," he said. "But it's worth looking at."

Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman recommended the council approve the early negotiations. "It makes good sense to go ahead," he said. "It gives us more time to be concerned with some of the details."

Farmington councilman Richard Tupper said he was concerned about possible rate increases because of the changes and wondered just what the company could put on 112 channels. Tupper said residents' watching habits and rates "should be taken into consideration."

Robert McCann, area manager for MetroVision, said that when cable began, everyone wondered what would be used to fill the 54 channels they now have and that they are all full. As to the question "will it increase the rates?" McCann said "no."

Bjorklund told the Farmington council that although "there've been several rate increases over the years for basic cable" and "nobody likes them" that MetroVision remains the lowest basic cable rate in the Metro Detroit area.

MetroVision does not hold an exclusive franchise with the three cities, but Deadman said it would be unlikely another company would want to come in and pay the money to rewire the entire area for cable.

"Most of the competition occurred during initial negotiations" to bring cable to the area, he said.

In an unrelated move, the Farmington City Council voted to allow MetroVision to "borrow" cable Channel 21, as the company is running out of channel space. Channel 21 was reserved for the city if the council were to approve rebroadcasting its meetings. That is currently done in neighboring Farmington Hills and by the Farmington school board.

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

WOOD FIRE

Damage was estimated at \$25,000 when a pile of wood, next to a house on Castlereigh caught fire Sept. 8, according to a Farmington Hills fire report.

Firefighters received a report of an unknown type of fire on the outside of a house. When they arrived they found the pile of wood on fire with flames encroaching on the overhang of the house.

EGG THROW

A 19-year-old Farmington woman told police that she was the recipient of an egg thrown at her by a youngster on a Farmington Public Schools bus Sept. 10, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

The woman said she was behind a school bus on southbound Farmington Road, near Kirby, when a youngster threw an egg out of the window. It landed on her and her car.

THEFTS REPORTED

A typewriter valued at \$219 was reported stolen from TCA Plastics Inc., 39303 Country Club Drive, Sept. 4-6.

A radio and equalizer valued at

\$600 were reported stolen from a garage at Little Valley Trailer on Tuck Road, Sept. 8-9.

Cash and checks worth \$580 were reported stolen from a car at a Marathon gas station, 29450 Nine Mile, Sept. 9.

A radio valued at \$760 was reported stolen from a 1985 Chevrolet at a Marathon gas station on 10 Mile, Sept. 5-6.

Books, tools, winter clothing and decorations valued \$5,000 were reported stolen from a storage shed on Buchanan Court at the Independence Green Apartments, Aug. 18-Sept. 3.

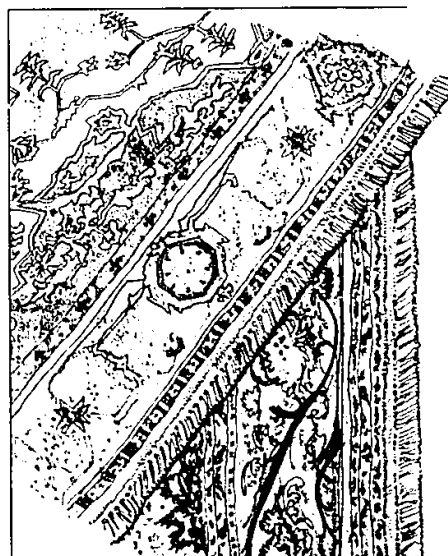
Tools valued at \$250 were reported stolen from a house on Old Homestead, Sept. 9-10.

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