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"(but) I wouldn't be overly hopeful."

In 1993, \$36 million was made available through three DNR programs. However, that was quickly gobbled up in \$150 million worth of requests from other cities.

Also, two-thirds of the \$36 million available last year was from the Michigan National Resources Trust Fund, which is designed for land acquisition and resource projects. The Shiawassee Park improvement plan calls for neither.

Whether or not the grant goes through, the city will have to go ahead with improvements to the park's tennis courts and buildings, Schultz said.

"We could continue to postpone new volleyball and basketball courts," he said. "We'd like to have those things."

A public hearing over the grant application at Monday's city council meeting produced few

comments. Fairview resident Frank Valencia said he wanted to make sure the city maintains what it already has.

"We can't put the kids out in the street," he said. "We have to have a place for them to use their energy and have fun. We have to take care of the kids."

Councilwoman JoAnne McShane agreed.

"I also feel it's important we have open recreation for our youth and our seniors, that we cover the whole spectrum of ages."

Shiawassee Park has three little league baseball diamonds and one with lights for softball. The park is used by residents for recreational pursuits from tennis to kite flying.

Grant money is provided by the DNR through its Recreation Bond Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund as well as Natural Resources Trust Fund. If awarded, the Land and Water Conservation Fund would pay for half of the \$48,000 project; the other two programs would defray 75 percent — \$36,000 — of the cost.

Lawsuit from page 1A

towny Douglass Witters. "I would anticipate the judge would be rendering a decision supporting that thought."

The Farmington Public School District, Board of Education and former Superintendent Michael Flanagan are named in the suit filed July 14 of last year. Dickson is asking in excess of \$10,000 damages and for the court to appoint him principal.

Dickson's attorney Jamil Akhtar said the lawsuit has since been amended to include the school administrators' union — the Farmington Association of School Administrators — for alleged breach of duty in not providing fair representation.

"I have not been served with papers," said FASA president Ken Dean, an assistant principal at Farmington High. "I have no record of that. I can't respond."

Dickson declined comment on the suit, only to say it has not affected his job as assistant principal.

"No, it's not a problem," Dickson said.

Akhtar said Dickson was as qualified as the six applicants who were interviewed for the job.

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Dickson was not selected by a three-member screening committee to be interviewed.

Dickson has been with the Farmington School District since 1969, working as an assistant principal at all three high schools for 18 years. He also has a Ph.D.

Some 50 applications were reviewed by the screening committee.

Personnel director Bob Coleman, who served as the screening committee chairman, determined a candidate's name would have to appear on two of the three members' short lists in order to advance the applicant to the interview committee.

Harrison teacher Dennis Kling

had Dickson's name on his list; North Farmington principal Deborah Clarke and Coleman did not, according to court documents.

Dickson's suit also contends the use of a screening committee is contrary to the FASA collective bargaining agreement. Affidavits by FASA members Richard Close and Ken Dean, the union and the district say otherwise, according to court documents.

Flanagan said in a deposition he established a two-tiered interviewing system to make the process more fair, according to court documents. The seven-member interview committee submitted two names to Flanagan to choose from. He recommended the Board of Education hire Rande Horn.

The screening process has been used in the district since 1999, Witters said.

Prior to that, a superintendent selected candidates to be interviewed and submitted the name for board approval.

During the screening process for the Harrison post, applicants were given numerical scores in various categories, Akhtar said.

"Each of the interviewers scored the candidates. Mr. Dickson received the fourth highest score," Akhtar said. "If he did receive the fourth highest score, why didn't he go to the interview process?"

School officials involved declined comment. Board president Cathy Webb, who did not participate in the screening or interviews, said the hiring process is fair. Ken Dean has been FASA president for two years. He said there has been no problem with the process.

Dean said, "There has been no one I've heard of who has voiced any concern over the screening process."

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