

Oakwood from page A1

given the partnership's history, Oakwood won't be building homes but instead will sell the lots.

He encouraged officials to approve the agreement contingent upon submission of final engineering plans and the assurance that the city is protected from the loss of any funds in the case of foreclosure.

A number of residents complained that officials were "caving in" by taking on a greater share of the infrastructure costs while giving up the power to enforce tree replacement. City manager Steve Brock said later the landscaping plan submitted by the developer includes "rudimentary" tree plantings.

"It's not anything near what we'd likely require ordinarily," he said, adding the hope that residents who build on the lots will plant trees.

Resident Ellen Berran, among several residents who oppose to the project, said the developer had "expressed contempt" for the tree protection ordinance. She and other residents urged the council not to approve the agreement and take

Oakwood back to court.

However, officials felt their hands were tied, because refusing to sign the settlement would open the entire agreement — and the city's 2A-1A zoning — up for reconsideration. Donohue said the city had been able to extend the more restrictive zoning to other areas, based on the Oakwood agreement.

Despite the judge's proposal, residents didn't feel the compromise was fair.

"The purpose of the woodland ordinance is to protect the jewels of our city," said resident Andy Nickelhoff. "I think it's reprehensible for a judge to strong arm you into giving up those protections."

Councilwoman Vicki Barnett said an underlying issue runs deeper than seven city officials can resolve.

"We have a problem with judges stripping away the rights of local communities to meet the needs of our residents," she said, referring to proposed legislation that would allow developers to sue in federal court when their projects are denied approvals.

Barnett asked residents if they were willing to risk the RA-

1A zoning and pointed out, while the city would be paying more, it would also have more control over building the sewer lines. While they couldn't discuss specific details of their negotiations, council members said both sides had given up something for the agreement, which was unanimously — if reluctantly — approved.

"I can tell you there is not one person on this council who does not sympathize with everything you've said," councilman Jerry Ellis commented. "There is no justice. What we end up with is a practical application of the law to bring closure to matters."

RCOC training video wins national award

A training video produced for the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) entitled *Keep an eye on it! Environmental awareness for road maintenance*, was honored with a 1999-2000 Teddy Award.

The video took first place in one of 10 categories in a contest sponsored by the Michigan Outdoor Writer's Association (MOWA). The video was produced for the purpose of teaching road agencies how to minimize and prevent erosion problems and stream damage caused by drainage from gravel roads.



Joel Knight

Local students qualify for state Geography Bee

Two students from the Farmington school district have qualified to compete in the April 6 state geography bee competition at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant.

The students are Joel Knight, a seventh grader at Power Middle School, and Sean Young, a fifth grader at Wood Creek Elementary School.

Both Joel, who qualified from Power for the second consecutive year, and Sean are among 100 Michigan students to compete at CMU.

The winner of that tourney will qualify for the national competition in May, to take place in Washington, D.C.

Levy from page A1

Strategies Committee, the proposal included levying 18 mills on non-homesteaded property (businesses, etc.) and more than 13.7 mills for homeowners. The blue ribbon panel included five residents and nine district staff members.

According to the proposal, the state "will not make up any reduction in revenue as a result of non-renewal of millage. Without the renewal, the district would experience catastrophic budget and program reductions."

Cannon said the renewal voters would decide June 11 is exactly the same as the one approved in March 1997.

Candidate filing info

Voters on June 11 also will elect two school board members to four-year terms and approve or reject a tax renewal proposal for Oakland Community College-Orchard Ridge Campus. The seats now held by Farmington school board President Frank Reid and Trustee Bobbie Feldman will be up for grabs.

Reid this week took out nominating petitions to seek re-election to the board. But Feldman announced during the March 13 board meeting that she will step down after two terms.

The deadline to file the petitions is 4 p.m. Monday, April 9; those deciding to drop out can do

so no later than 4 p.m. Thursday, April 12, said Judy Steinhilber of the district's election office. Candidate packages with the petitions are available at the Lewis Schulman Administrative Center, 32500 Shawwassee.

In order to vote June 11, residents must be registered as of Monday, May 14.

Meanwhile, absentee ballots will be available, also at the Schulman center, during the weekdays beginning Tuesday, May 22 through Friday, June 8. For more information about filing, call Steinhilber at (248) 489-3341. Nominating petitions must have at least 20 signatures of registered voters.

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