

Fight over county appointments headed for court

Republicans and Democrats are possibly headed for circuit court to untangle the question of who has the right to make and hold a number of appointive jobs in Oakland County government.

Key post is a six-year term on the powerful road commission. Democrats are backing Eugene Kuhy of West Bloomfield, former planning

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Henry Ford Museum

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commission chairman and 1974 candidate for county executive, while Republicans are for Fred Houghton, former county commissioner from Rochester.

Issues in each case are different, but the political background is the same. In their final month with a majority in 1976, Democratic county commissioners pushed through a batch of

Guide to winter events prepared

Winter is an exhilarating time, with possibly as much to see and do outdoors and indoors as summer, according to the Southeast Michigan Travel and Tourist Association.

To back up its claim, the association is making available free a copy of its latest calendar of events covering the December-March season.

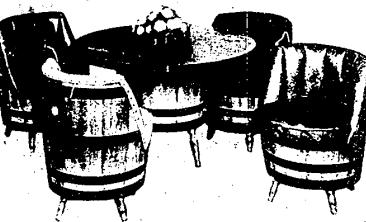
The brochure lists more than 100 special events.

To obtain a free copy, write the association at Suite 312, State of Michigan Plaza Building, Detroit, Michigan, 48226. For more information, call 271-1620, Ext. 573.

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appointments. Now that Republicans have a 15-12 board advantage, they are putting up their own personnel.

IN THE ROAD commission case, County Commissioner John McDonald (R-Farmington), new chairman of the personnel committee, charged that Kathy failed to file his oath and bond within 10 days of getting his appointment, as required by law.

More importantly, McDonald said, the commissionership appointment was made Dec. 18, although the actual vacancy didn't occur until Jan. 1, when the term of Fred Harris of Farmington Hills expired.

Democrats contend there was no precedent for making an appointment during the last year of the old term.

ALSO CONTESTED were one seat on the board of institutions county hospital, which selected the agency for the spring; two seats on the sanitary code appeals board and two on the committee which oversees the county airport.

In each case, argued McDonald, the appointment was made by a 14-13 vote, and the margin of victory came when a Democratic member of the county board voted for himself.

McDonald cited an opinion from the county board's attorney, corporation counsel Robert Allen, saying that Democratic appointments were "void" for that reason. Allen's opinion said it was against public policy for a commission to vote for himself for a money-paying "outside" position. (This does not apply, however, to the election of the board's internal officers.)

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LARRY PERNICK (D-Southfield) sought without success to get the board to appropriate \$2,500 to seek a declaratory judgment about whether the Democratic appointments were legal.

Democratic colleague Alexander C. Perinoff of Southfield unleashed an impassioned verbal attack, saying he was "shocked at the depths to which the Republican Party has fallen" and predicting the GOP's extinction.

McDonald replied that it was "appropriate" for a committee to be the deciding vote in appointing himself to a paying position. While it was all right for a commissioner to vote for himself, the appointment was void when the commissioner's own vote was the deciding one.

THE WRANGLING extended into the board's general government committee, where Republicans elected members of their caucus to both the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of all six board committees.

"This is pigish, to say the least," said Pernick.

McDonald, the GOP caucus leader, said he had attempted to meet several times with the Democratic board.

Board's outgoing vice-chairman, Bernard Johnson, refused to discuss committee assignments, "and each time he stood me up."

General government committee Chairman Robert Page (R-Birmingham) said there was "sentiment" in the Republican caucus to give the majority party a 6-3 edge on most committees and a 7-3 edge on finance, but the caucus decided to leave the break-

down at 7-4 on finance and 6-4 on the others.

AS EXPECTED, Republicans elected William Goss of Royal Oak board chairman for 1977 and Lillian Moffit of Bloomfield Township vice-chairwoman.

Moffit noted she was the first woman to hold the No. 2 position in the second largest county in Michigan.

Chairmanships and scheduled meeting times are:

• Finance—Paul Kasper (R-Bloomfield Hills), second and fourth Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

• Planning and building—Richard Wilcox (R-Lake Orion), second and fourth Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.

• Public services—Henry W. Hoo (R-Troy), every Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.

Full board meetings are the first and third Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

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