

Murphy, Spreen told to get together on safety division procedures

By Suzie Rollins Singer
staff writer

Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy and Sheriff Johannes Spreen were asked to get together for what Spreen says will be the "first meeting in a year," to make sure each understands the rights of the county safety division.

"Spreen and Murphy have been at odds over the officers' duties and who should supervise them. Last month, the county Board of Commissioners adopted a policy which makes Murphy responsible for the safety division, granting him deputizing powers."

"The 44-member division is responsible for patrolling county-owned prop-

erty, including its parks. Although the division was always under Murphy's jurisdiction, he was awarded deputizing powers only last month.

Spreen contends public safety division officers often overstep their authority and act on non-county property.

THE CURRENT conflict was brought to a head at the board's general government committee Monday by Commissioner Lawrence Pernick, D-Southfield. Pernick drew attention to media accounts of how Don Kratt, safety division chief, perceives his department's duties.

"Kratt was quoted as saying his powers are far broader than patrolling county property," Pernick said.

Deputy County Executive Pat Nowak, who represented Murphy at the Monday meeting replied, "The public act which covers this says safety division officers can act on county property. It's clear that they're beyond authority if they're off county property."

Recently, the county was ordered to pay a \$17,000 judgment to a man who was arrested in the mid-70s for drunk driving by a safety division officer. The man sued the officer for acting out of his jurisdiction because he had been driving on Telegraph Road, off county property.

"In the past when an officer of the safety division encountered a life threatening situation, he acted like a

police officer, and then it was under the scope of this authority," Nowak said. "Now that scope has changed."

SOME DEMOCRATIC commissioners dwelled on safety division members' past actions, demanding to know why the officer who committed the "\$17,000 arrest" wasn't disciplined.

"We're dealing with the present and the future," said Nowak. "We understand our scope now, and proper action will be taken if anyone violates the act."

Commissioner Paul Kasper, R-Bloomfield Hills, said, "We have a policy. Now that it's there, if there's an infraction, those who don't obey can be dismissed."

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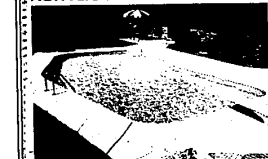
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