

Board gets the word on land deals

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the board can make a decision on the recommendations of the task force, according to Board President Helen Prisk.

"It is so deep a report that it's going to take awhile for the board to digest it," she said following the vote.

Most of the land was purchased years ago when enrollment was still increasing in the district. Additional schools could be built on the land, administrators believed.

But now the district serves far fewer students — 8,858 as of the state-required "fourth-Friday" board count last September as compared to 16,856 during the 1971-72 school year.

By the 1987-88 school year, about 8,800 students will be enrolled in the district, a reduction of about 12 percent, according to Dr. Stanley Hecker, a Michigan State University sociologist who has studied the area.

"THERE IS no scientific way to determine exact future enrollments," said Prisk in his report to the board.

But, Prisk added, "There is no reason to believe there will be any significant change in the enrollment projections made and updated by Dr. Hecker."

In his recommendations, Prisk said that a 40-acre plot at Drake and 12 Mile roads should be retained "because of the remote possibility of the need for a high school. It would also be an excellent location for an elementary school."

The district's other "keeper" land holding consists of approximately 12 acres on the south side of 11 Mile Road between Drake and Halsted roads. "There is a possibility that the district will require additional elementary space in the future," said Prisk in his report.

The Prisk report advised sale of the following pieces of property:

- An odd-shaped one-acre lot in the Franklin Forest subdivision near Middlebelt and 14 Mile Road. "Its future value may be that should Fairview School be reactivated as a regular elementary school, it would provide access to the north for children walking from the subdivision to Fairview School."

- A five-acre site in the Schroeder's Farm subdivision between Halsted and Drake and 13 Mile roads. "Because of the size and location of this property, and the district's limited possible need for future elementary buildings, it is recommended that this property be offered for sale," the report said.

- Approximately 8 1/2 acres in the Greenacres subdivision between Halsted and Middlebelt and 12 and 13 Mile roads. The report advises it be sold because of its "size, location and absence of utility services..."

- An additional lot in the same subdivision. "The only use for this property is as access to the adjacent 8.89 acres," the report said.

- Approximately 20 acres at 11 Mile and Halsted roads. "Because there will be no need for additional middle school space... It is recommended that this property be offered for sale."

- Approximately 7 1/2 acres in the Meadowbrook Hills subdivision near eight Mile and Haggerty roads.

- Approximately five acres on Nine Mile between Drake and Halsted roads.

- Approximately 180,000 square feet, or 4 1/4 acres of frontage on Northwestern Highway near the Warner Middle School. "Sale of this property will have no detrimental effect on the operation of Warner Middle School," the report said. "The property, rezoned, will be very valuable property. It is felt that the time to sell this property is now, while other property on Northwestern Highway is being developed."

- Approximately 2 acres, or 79,200 square feet, fronting Middlebelt Road between Nine and 10 Mile roads near

the Farmington Area Advisory Council Building. "It is not likely the district will receive this property any time in the future — nor is it likely the property will be required by the FAAC for its operation," the report said.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS pay no municipal taxes on their land holdings, and "there's minimal liability and maintenance" on the land, board Treasurer Richard Wallace has said.

State law dictates that money gained from land sales must be used for building and site purposes, including debt retirement. Depending on the size of the debt, very little of the money can be used for operation expenses such as paying teachers' salaries.

The board has scheduled a special meeting for Tuesday, Jan. 31, at the central office, 32500 Shawwassee Road. The board's next regular meeting will be on Feb. 7 at Forest Elementary School, 34545 Old Timber, Farmington Hills. Both meetings start at 8 p.m.

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