

# Oakland to Lansing: You pick prison site

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Declining to gang up on each other, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners sent the question of selecting a state prison site back to the Michigan Department of Corrections.

"Let's ship all this back to the state," said board Chairman Richard Wilcox, R-Ortonville. "We'd have to battle our constituents" by recommending a prison site, the white-haired veteran of county politics said.

"We could get 14 votes for a lot of sites. As long as it's not in my back yard, I can vote to put it in any of your back yards," Wilcox said candidly.

A BIPARTISAN, 18-9 majority agreed with the chairman Thursday. After weeks of work in two committees, the board voted to ship its studies to Lansing, where the Corrections Department and the state Legislature will

make the final decision.

County forces were split into two large camps and several smaller ones.

County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, a Republican, favored using 10 acres of the state's Clinton Valley Center (CVC) property in Pontiac for a 500-bed prison. The CVC site was adamantly opposed by about 10 employees and relatives of mental patients who asked to speak to the Board of Commissioners.

The Republican-dominated board's public services committee preferred the site of the county's trusty camp in Auburn Hills.

Other sites under serious study were adjacent to the county jail on North Telegraph Road in Pontiac and the Reid Mountain State Recreation Area. "About 200" sites were mentioned, one commissioner estimated.

THE MINORITY gave Wilcox some flak, calling his recommendation "a cop-out."

"This is a change from the usual procedure," said Commissioner Betty For-Uno, D-Pontiac. "The state has asked us for one site. They don't want two tons of material."

Area commissioners supporting Wilcox were Republicans G. William Cadell of Wallied Lake (district includes part of West Bloomfield), Marilyn Gosling of Bloomfield Hills, Thomas Law of West Bloomfield, John McDonald of Farmington, David Moffitt of Bloomfield Township, Ralph Nelson of Rochester, John Olsen of Huntington Woods (district includes Lathrup Village), Robert Page of Birmingham (district includes part of Troy) and Roy Rewald of Rochester.

Opposed were Republicans W.A. Hassberger of Birmingham, Susan Kuhn of Clawson (district includes part of Troy) and Nancy McConnell of Bloomfield Hills, along with Democrats James Doyon of Madison Heights (district includes part of Troy), Alexan-

der Perinoff and Larry Pernick, both of Southfield.

WILCOX APPOINTED a prison site special committee several weeks ago which "held quite a few meetings and recommended four sites. They were not unanimous," he said.

The question then was referred to the public services committee, which "whittled the sites from four to one." But that committee dropped the ball into Wilcox's lap for a final recommendation.

So Wilcox turned the chairman's gavel over to the vice chair, took the floor and made the motion himself to "ship all this back to the state."

USING THE public's portion of the meeting — required under the Open Meetings Act — about 10 persons opposed the Clinton Valley Center site. One favored it.

"CVC is a hospital. It is not a prison," said Dorothy McQueen of Farmington Hills, representing the Alliance for the Mentally Ill in Michigan.

Norman Abel, Bloomfield Township resident and member of the same group, brought a rush to the commissioners' auditorium as he told of a son's long battle with mental illness. "I would hate to have a prison on the grounds (where) my son could be influenced. Please — there's no reason to put a prison on this site."

"Or else offer an alternative — put the hospital on a different site."

THOMAS WHITE, representing

AFSCME union employees of the CVC, said, "Mental patients should be treated in a serene setting. A prison site would destroy our ability to do that."

White noted the uprisings and battles at Southern Michigan Prison at Jackson in the last two weeks as examples of why a prison shouldn't be close to a hospital for the mentally ill.

Richard Chalfont, president of AFSCME Local 49, said, "Putting a prison on that site will not help the

chances of those people getting better."

Other persons charged that prisoners might make drugs available to patients — many of whom were hospitalized because of drug problems — or attempt to use docile patients as hostages.

Only Pontiac resident Lynwood Flack spoke in favor of the CVC site, saying an unobtrusive spot for a 10-acre prison could be found on the state-owned 232 acres of land.

## OCC students dig for mastodon

A summer geology course called "Excavating a Mastodon" will begin July 1 on Oakland Community College's Highland Lakes Campus.

Jeheskel Shoshani, who directed projects for both OCC and Wayne State University, will be instructor. The course (OSC 240) features both

for the five-week course. Information about the course is available from Charles Nelson at 389-3174.

The Highland Lakes Campus is at 7350 Cooley Lake Road, Union Lake. Summer session registration will be July 1 with late registration July 2, 3 and 5.

classroom work and a dig for mastodon bones.

Mastodons, which look like furry elephants, inhabited this region as glaciers receded some 10,000 years ago.

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