

# Open space bills trapped in committee

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

A dozen bills allowing neighborhood districts to set up special assessment districts to reserve open space are bogged down in the Senate Local Government Committee.

"They're not going any place until January," said Rep. David Honigman, R-West Bloomfield, who already has won House passage of House Bills 4120 to 4131.

Realtors, home builders and

apartment owners associations opposed the bills, fearing they would expand government's power to condemn private property for public use.

THE FIVE-MEMBER Senate committee save its quorum dissolve as members drifted off to other meetings. At the end of a two-hour meeting, only vice chairman Edgar Fredricks, R-Holland, was left as Honigman answered the critics' arguments. A brief meeting failed to

draw a quorum. "I agree with everything these guys say," Honigman told Fredricks, "but I don't see what it has to do with my bills. Every argument they made is with the existing (condemnation) law."

The bills would allow groups within a local unit of government to petition their elected officials for special assessment districts for a much longer list of purposes: pristine woodlands, bogs, landscaped areas, camps, botanical gardens, water front access and so on.

"They will also allow businesses to expand parking lots," Honigman told the panel. "Rep. Mike Bennane (Detroit) added an amendment to a longer list of purposes: pristine woodlands, bogs, landscaped areas, camps, botanical gardens, water front access and so on."

He added: "There's a feeling in rapidly growing areas that the entire township shouldn't pay for something that benefits only us (one neighborhood)."

ROBERT LONG, supervisor of Commerce Township, said the population has expanded from 9,600 to 27,000 in his 22 years in office be-

cause "people like the open appearance. Two areas would like to preserve open space."

"We have, almost every meeting, petitions for some kind of service — chloride, blacktop, lights, weed control."

"One (neighborhood) has 17 homes around a 1-acre parcel. They are unanimous in wanting to acquire it. The don't want a park. They want open space," Long said.

Honigman said that under his bills, if 20 percent of the property owners object to the improvement, it would have to be approved by at least 51 percent of the owners. He said a governing board may, if it wishes, require a "supermajority" of 70 percent approval from owners.

A dozen bills are needed because separate laws govern rural districts, fourth-class cities, home rule villages, general law villages, general law townships and charter townships, as well as metropolitan districts.

JACK SCHICK, of the Apartment Association of Michigan, saw problems.

JACK WALKER, of the Michigan Association of Realtors, said MAR hasn't taken a position but was bothered by "what appears to be an extension of police power" (eminent domain).

"Just who benefits is another concern."

"They (the bills) might be good for the representative's (Honigman's) area, but not for the northern and western sides of the state."

His chief objection was that a local government could find itself invoking the use of its power of condemnation (eminent domain) with a longer list of special assessment districts. If lawsuits resulted, the entire community could wind up paying, he said.

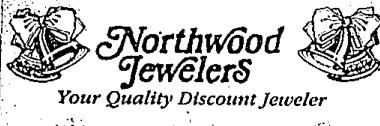
Long also raised questions about who would own the preserved open space and who would be liable if someone were injured on it.

## Honor roll released

Continued from Page 8

man, Jason Parry, Brian Platz, Amy Post, Kevin Price, Jennifer Radchenko, Kimberly Reeser, Ryan Regan, Carrie Rice, Lisa Rivers, Jessie Sabnis, Timothy Salley, Elana Samson, Lauren Schindlerman, Susan Schultz, Vicki Scammons, Steven Sears, Bashar Sedki, Daniel Serlin, Tatanya Shulman, Scott Simpson, Michael Smith, Michelle Starrs, Ronda Steinbock,

James Stewart, Susan Sundberg, Sarah Swan, Brian Temple, Teresa Theodore, Dale Turner, Ollie Underwood, Angela Valente, Alexander Vasserman, Matthew Wandel, Shelly Wasserman, John Web, Hillary Weisler, Randall Weisbush, Julie Whiteman, Lisa Whiteman, Lori Wiegard, Todd Wolfe, Andrea Wolff, Kenneth Yoshida, Joseph Zeff, Robert Zeno, Matthew Ziecke, Rhonda Zurilla.



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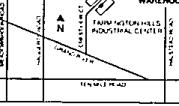
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