

Headlee: Fee really a tax

Continued from Page 1

"I frankly am disappointed," Costick said when the Observer called him. He said that while he expected to continue meeting on the issue, Anderson published his concerns before anything was settled.

"I'm not settled in my mind about this. We talked about it one time. Nothing was settled. We tried to deal with it up front," Costick said.

After meeting with city officials, Anderson last week requested the city council review the situation. Anderson said Headlee supports a user fee in lieu of a tax, but one that would allow a resident to choose suppliers.

Costick, who had received Anderson's letter, said the Farmington Hills City Council will be involved in the issue. Deadman said he had not yet received the letter as of Thursday.

The letter suggested the cities either:

- Change the ordinance to allow residents to con-

tract with any rubbish hauler they wish.

- Put the recycling fee, which Anderson called a "disguised tax," to a vote of the people.

DEADMAN SAID it isn't practical to let residents choose their own garbage haulers. He doubts residents could save any money that way. "I can't think of a case when a city went to one hauler and people didn't save money," he said.

The cities have not considered taking the fee to voters, he said.

The fee was set up so that those using the service would pay, he said. If the fee were included in the property tax, he added, people not using the service — including Alexander Hamilton — would pay for it also.

The mandatory, residential curbside recycling program began in both cities July 1, and response has been good, the city managers said. The cities recently passed an amendment allowing fee exemptions for poor or disabled residents.

Both towns to allow exemptions

Continued from Page 1

amendment into law and the Farmington City Council enacted the new law as an immediate, emergency one so that fall billings could reflect the change.

People wishing to apply for an exemption should call Karen Birkholtz, recycling coordinator for both cities, at 473-9503. An application and information about qualifications will be sent out.

FARMINGTON Hills City Manager William Costick said approximately 230 residents would qualify for the economic exemption there. In Farmington, City Manager Robert Deadman said he expected "very few" exemptions about 25 people would qualify for the economic exemption and another 30-40 could qualify for an exemption because of disability, he said.

A list of residents who would be eligible for exemptions has been made since the recycling program's hotline began in June.

The exemptions include:

- Those with a gross annual household income of \$8,000 or less could be exempted from the fee and those households earning \$13,500 or less could have their fee reduced by half. Those experiencing temporary financial problems can appeal for a fee waiver.
- Blind or permanently disabled residents, or those with a temporary disability as determined by a physician, could be exempted from the program.

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