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(petitions)," Rothrock said.

Swiatkowski has been a proponent of back-to-business issues in the school district. He formed the group Parents for a Traditional Education and publicly criticized the district's elementary report cards and the use of the whole language approach to reading.

Swiatkowski said his candidacy was picking up support. He said he had two dozen volunteers and was receiving at least two phone calls a day from interested people.

He disputes the notion he had an uphill battle against two incumbents. He said general anti-union fervor would have made Jack Inelch vulnerable.

"He's beatable, I don't doubt that," Swiatkowski said. "(Board president) Cathy Webb is another story. She manages to keep a low profile.

"I only needed to knock out one. I think I could have done that."



Doug Swiatkowski

■ 'It's not fair for me to take contributions or use volunteer time

Doug Swiatkowski

# Ice advice: Hills voters to have say

BY BILL COULTAN  
STAFF WRITER

After a lengthy public discussion of a proposed ice arena for Farmington Hills at Monday's city council meeting, it looks like the voters will have the last word.

About 60 people, including many members of a citizens committee that studied the feasibility of building an ice arena in the city, showed up for a public hearing. After proponents, opponents and those who would like a lot more information about the arena had spoken, city council members said even if it isn't required, they would ask the voters to approve bonding for the project.

Councilman Jon Grant said paying off \$500,000 a year in debt while making \$150,000 in profit did not seem plausible.

"I've seen a lot of financial projections in my business career," he said. "There are no numbers out there quite frankly that show we can do this."

Grant said he wants to support the proposed two-surface arena,

■ 'I've seen a lot of financial projections in my business career. There are no numbers out there quite frankly that show we can do this.'

Councilman Jon Grant

but added that he did not expect it to make a profit immediately as projected.

Several members of the community also worried about the financial obligation of the taxpayers for the proposed arena, which would cost between \$6 million and \$8 million.

Masha Silver, who said she had no objection to an ice arena but questioned the survey methods that concluded the community wanted an arena, said the city's plan called for a "whole smorgasbord" of amenities in a facility that could leave taxpayers responsible for any shortfall.

"The worst part is that we have some council people who don't feel they can trust the people to know how to vote," Silver said.

Several parents told the council about the cost of transporting their children to and from other far-flung arenas at all hours of the day and night. And several said they were fearful that with ice demand higher than ice time, they might not be able to get any ice time in other communities in the near future.

Paul Jacques of the Year 2000 Committee, along with representatives from soccer and baseball organizations, embraced the idea of building the arena at the Founders Sports Park on Eight Mile, in part, because soccer fields left out to make room for the facility could be added to the newly acquired Mercy property on 11 Mile east of Middlebelt. But several residents com-

plained that the location was too near residential areas, including a church. Another sore point was the possibility that a restaurant that serves alcohol would be included in the facility.

"Why would you want to sell beer to hockey players?" said Harris McBride.

At one time it was hard to get playing time on tennis courts that now stand empty, something that might apply to hockey and figure skating in the future, said Betty Cook.

"All sports go up and down," she said.

Councilman Terry Sever said although an arena might not make money in its first few years, it was the only project he'd seen that could make money at some point.

The city will come back to the council with bids from architects to draw up plans for the arena, said Mayor Larry Lichtman. Any proposal should be completed in time to put it to a vote in the August primary, he said.

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