

# Power from page A1

the city control of construction of the sewer and water lines in difficult terrain that is environmentally sensitive.

"We wanted to make sure that we have control over how that is done, especially under that (natural beauty designated) road,"

he said.

Sy Kernicky, one of the residents who has led the fight for the rezoning and against the original development, was disappointed but somewhat philosophical about the outcome.

"We're trying to preserve

whatever is there," he said. "If we can have them sign off on the RA-1A zoning, that will be some protection."

The city's ability to keep the area as an RA-1A zoning is part of the agreement even though the proposed project on 22 acres is slightly more dense than the maximum ratio of house to property under that zoning.

Kernicky, who originally been sued by the developer as well, said fighting the project in court would have been an uphill struggle. "Everybody who talked to Judge Howard had the impression we were going to lose."

Vagnozzi agreed and said a previous experience regarding a circuit court order that the city and another developer settle, impressed him.

"They hauled the whole city council up to Pontiac and the judge made it clear that the court didn't want to spend more time on the issue and told us to settle," he said. "I mean, we might have been facing the prospect of jail. Not that we were afraid of that, but that is how serious it gets."

The city council will discuss the issue at tonight's regular meeting.

# Phonics from page A1

the U.S. Department of Defense adopted them for its American schools overseas.

A "strong phonics component" is featured in the K-2 grade level as well as grammar, vocabulary and mechanics throughout, Nyberg said.

Reading will be broken into two areas, informational and narrative, which is in line with the MEAP test.

So by the time the child enters the fifth grade that child has had all the reading and writing experiences we feel (prepares) the child for further English language success," Nyberg said.

The recommendation concludes an 18-month study. Committee members included elementary teachers, principals and a parent.

Members considered the district's student profile, instruction guidelines, and philosophy in selecting a curriculum, Nyberg said.

When it came to phonics and whole language, committee members didn't favor one over the other.

"We recognize phonics is more

than just a checklist," Nyberg said. "It provides fundamental skills and strategies that become second nature through a lifetime of reading."

"At the same time, whole language is more than just literary escapism. A thoughtfully crafted whole language program rehearses the phonics, spelling, grammar and vocabulary lessons while stimulating the imagination and intellect."

Three consultants — including one from Columbia University — were positive and encouraging after reading the committee's draft, Nyberg said.

School board president Dave York praised the new direction.

"I think this is a landmark day and a landmark piece of curriculum," York said. "I think it provides our staff a lot of clarity and a foundation for equity throughout the district."

"I also see it as a conversation piece for parents and teachers to truly work together and understand what needs to be achieved in the classroom."

**"I think this is a landmark day and a landmark piece of curriculum."**

**David York**  
—school board president

A frequent critic of the district's language art curriculum and a lack of phonics has mixed feelings, though.

Farmington Hills resident Patti Alsapach is concerned the curriculum is not proven.

She is pleased to hear district officials addressing the phonics issue, though.

"This is the first time it has come out of their mouths that phonics was important," Alsapach said. "Over the last few years, there have been a few hints..."

"The direction is correct. For everything they have put us through and for all the parents who have paid for tutors, they need to acknowledge that we were right and they were wrong."

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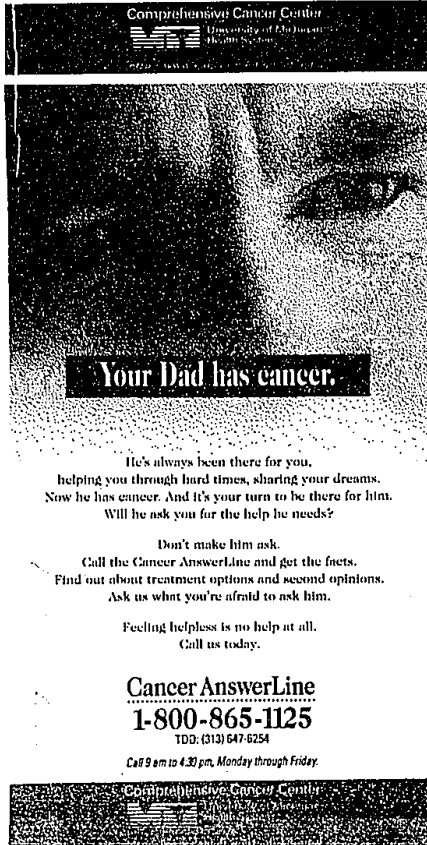
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