

Residents Oppose Extension

By JACKIE KLEIN

PONTIAC The attorney for a regional citizens' group says "rub-bish" to Department of State Highway's claim that it is obliged by contract to build an extension of Northwestern from Telegraph to M-275.

George Snyder, attorney for Citizens Council for Land Use, Research and Education (CLURE) testified before a special House committee in Pontiac Wednesday.

"The contract between the State Highway Department and the Oakland County Road Commission can be altered as long as outstanding

construction bonds are paid. The payment of bonds isn't connected with the issue of road building."

Snyder maintains the 1957 contract contemplates that if there has been a change in circumstances, the contract can be modified.

"To premise the need for construction on legal obligation is improper. A taxpayer's lawsuit is unreasonable because most don't want the road built. Developers, without vested interest in the highway, don't have the standing to sue."

Snyder said \$25 million in bonds sold in 1957 for the Northwestern improvement has already been spent for

construction of the freeway from Eight Mile to I-696. In 1970, he said, "disgruntled" developers threatened a lawsuit against the State Highway Department unless the 9.6 mile extension was committed.

The attorney maintains the contract provided for the extension to terminate at U.S. 23 instead of M-275. "Contrary to the State Highway Department's position, an agreement was reached with the county road commission to build the 9.6 mile extension in exchange for foregoing about U.S. 23."

Snyder claims the project was accelerated by pressure from land developers who

stand to gain if the extension is constructed.

He said the highway department "flagrantly" ignored an executive directive from Gov. Milliken that an environmental impact statement be submitted before the decision making process on the extension.

Milliken has ordered the highway department to halt land acquisition for the freeway until the statement has been submitted.

Snyder urged the committee to continue its investigation and to ensure an impartial environmental impact study is made available to the public suggesting alternative routes.

The State Highway Department has a public duty to perform. The county road commission and the highway department can agree to abandon the project for the welfare of the community as long as they meet bonding obligations.

"These agencies would have broad public support in the event of litigation. If an environmental study confirms adverse effects of the highway, the contract can be abrogated."

Also calling for environmental impact statements and further need studies were the East Michigan Environmental Action Council; Robert Marshall, minister of

Birmingham Unitarian Church; Concerned Inc. of Detroit; Rouge Basin Coalition; West Bloomfield-Farmington League of Women Voters; and, Concerned Citizens for West Bloomfield.

Mrs. Alfred Pace, a 69-year-old widow, said she has owned property in Commerce Township for 35 years and was concerned about the effect of the extension on her 18 acres of land as well as her cemetery property.

"I live in a senior citizens apartment. The Oakland County Legal Aid said I am a victim of circumstances subject to official dictum."

Farmington Youth Heads DeMolay

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Harwell got interested in DeMolay through his older brother, "I saw what DeMolay was and as soon as I was of age, I joined."

The satisfactions have been forthcoming. He served as master counselor of the Farmington chapter in 1970 and later received a merit-

orious service award from the international supreme council for his outstanding leadership efforts.

He was elected the outstanding DeMolay of Farmington in 1970 and again in 1972. He also served as master counselor for his district.

But "as satisfying as the honors have been, he says the feeling of brotherhood is a bond that exists among the members both in local chap-

ters and across the whole membership.

Harwell says, "Immediately when I walk into a group, DeMolay or Masonic, there is a sense of being at ease that you don't have on the outside."

While the bond of friendship is there, Harwell emphasizes that aloofness is not. "It is not anything like high school groups where it gets cliquish. In DeMolay we

think we overcome that."

Working to overcome problems like that are part of Harwell's responsibility for the next year. As a trouble shooter, he will be visiting chapters where there may be some dissension and trying to work out the problems to promote a feeling of total unity.

He feels that because DeMolay offers many interesting outlets, it consequently appeals to many different types.

"No matter what a young man's interest is, we feel we have something for him. Basically anything you can name we can come up with - chess, social activities, business, athletics."

Harwell himself is a versatile young man. Before graduation from North Farmington High in 1971, he was active in debate, forensics,

student affairs, Latin Club president for two years and received the Kathryn Sevin award as outstanding student in his senior year.

For a while, he is putting some of his personal interests on the back burner in order to give back to the DeMolay organization statewide, some of the many things he feels it gave to him.

Did State Legal Ruling Make Probe Useless?

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The sewer was installed in 1969, water lines that serve the two extra branches had to be installed to clear the right of way of the proposed extension.

"In the installation of the sewer, we installed them at a depth of 28 feet to clear the proposed highway construction.

This resulted in considerable cost increases." He said that improvements to arterial roads have been held in abeyance in anticipation of the extension, thus overburdening local roads.

Doherty said that traffic

has increased 110 per cent since 1965 on Northwestern between Middle Belt and Orchard Lake Road, Orchard Lake Road from Northwestern to Maple Commerce Road, 14 Mile and Maple Road westbound from Orchard Lake Road.

Local citizens who own land in the path of the extension have experienced "hardships" because they have been unable to "receive a fair price for their land" all because of the long imminence of the construction of Northwestern extension."

Doherty said that "based on the opinions of those in

the highway and traffic fields, Northwestern extension must be built."

"The alternatives, in the form of a free access highway or remodeling the planned ultimate design of our existing roads would be most detrimental to our community and would be only a patchwork approach to an obvious problem."

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Miss MacLaren Joins Choir

FARMINGTON Ellen G. MacLaren, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R.M. MacLaren of 3859 Colony Park Drive, Farmington is a member of the Alma College A Cappella Choir.

A 1972 graduate of North Farmington High School, Miss MacLaren will travel with the 55 member group throughout Michigan during the 1972-73 year.

Miss Frontczak At Swarthmore

FARMINGTON Sue Frontczak, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter T. Frontczak of 26359 Dundalk, Farmington, is enrolled as a freshman at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. She is a graduate of Harrison High School.

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The Farmington Enterprise Observer

DAN McCOSH, Editor
36251 Schoolcraft Road
Livonia, Mich. 48150
Phone 261-8600

Published every Wednesday and Weekend
Home Delivery Service
Newsstand... per copy, 15¢
Carrier... monthly, 75¢

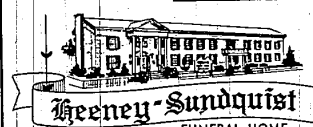
Phone 261-3800
Published by Observer Newspapers, Inc.
36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, Michigan 48150 every Wednesday and Weekend. Philip H. Power, Publisher. Second class postage paid at the U.S. Post Office, Livonia, Michigan 48150.

Address all mail subscription change of address forms 2578 to P.O. Box 2618, Livonia, Michigan 48151.

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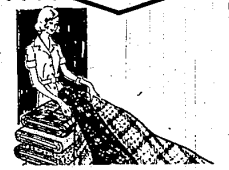
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