

# County foresees Homart center further polluting Fox River

By John Goers  
and Patrick L. Doddy

GENEVA—Elgin's use of the Fox River as a source of drinking water in two years may be more costly than necessary, if pollution predicted from the proposed Homart shopping center in West Dundee is unchecked.

The Community Development Committee of the Kane County Board Tuesday expressed concern that planning for the Homart project was inadequate in a resolution it adopted to notify the Northeastern

Illinois Planning Commission.

NIPC is reviewing a West Dundee application for federal funds to expand its sewage treatment plant, which according to the committee's resolution "includes a significant portion for the purpose of accommodating a regional shopping center.

**"THE URBAN RUNOFF** from this proposed center will be detained to meet flood control requirements, but no other plans have been made a part of this project to abate the pollution impact before the

water is discharged to a tributary of the Fox River north of Elgin," the resolution said.

"It is established that urban stormwater runoff especially from shopping center parking areas is often dirtier than raw sewage in B.O.D. (biological oxygen demand), suspended solids, heavy metals and other parameters used to measure pollution.

"It would be ironic to invest public money here to properly treat sewage and in the process make conditions much worse by unwittingly permitting an urban design that severely degrades water quality in the area; particularly so, since Elgin is now planning to use the Fox River as a source of drinking water."

West Dundee village planner Larry Wilbrandt took strong exception to the charges in the resolution, branding it "another attempt to stymie the Homart project, I guess."

Wilbrandt said he considered it unfair for the county to object to the sewer grant solely because of the shopping center. He said increased

sewage treatment capacity would benefit the whole village by allowing future development and cutting down on existing pollution caused by the plant's inadequacy.

"In their attempt to 'red flag' potential pollution (from the shopping center)" Wilbrandt said, the county was ignoring the pollution occurring now.

**FURTHER, WILBRANDT said,** the charges of inadequate planning are premature. He said detailed engineering plans for the shopping

center and its drainage system have yet to be negotiated between the village's engineer and Homart Development Co.

"I think some of these points are valid," Wilbrandt said, "and I've raised them with the village engineer."

"We are going to be raising these points," he said, "and they will be resolved, but maybe not to everyone's satisfaction because obviously some people want no shopping

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# County Homart center may raise water cost

center at all."

**WILBRANDT** also said he considered it "very strange that the village was not officially notified" of the committee's consideration of the shopping center. They did seem surprised to see me walk in to the meeting."

"I was told (by county staffers) that the village of West Dundee had not been too interested in letting the county in on information in the past, so the county" declined to notify the village, Wilbrandt said.

A new water treatment

plant designed to use river water is to be completed in Elgin in two years, said Elgin water director Ron Zegers.

**KANE County's** preferred approach in the Fox River Valley, the committee's resolution said, "is to greenbelt such urban facilities with vegetative filters, oxygenation habitats and facilities and other low maintenance low cost techniques that assimilate wastes through natural systems.

"Such systems can also serve to ameliorate traffic noise and exhaust pollu-

tion as well as provide a more humane esthetic environment for the West Dundee area."

Committee action followed criticism of West Dundee's planning to date for the Homart shopping center given last week by county director of urban development, Ivan Alten and county environmentalist Richard Young.

**ALTEN SAID** the county has a right to comment on the project, because the health and welfare of the residents of the county are at stake.

Young said he hopes West Dundee officials will realize a responsibility to protect neighboring communities that might use the river for drinking water someday from pollutants from Homart's development.

He said pre-treatment of Homart's parking lot runoff before it is discharged into the tributary of the river would be much less expensive than having communities downstream install elaborate treatment systems at their water plants.

**YOUNG SAID** West Dundee should see that Homart pays for all facilities needed to treat its pollution. No public funds should be spent, he said.

NIPC is to formally review the matter Feb. 7.

The shopping center, to be called Spring Hill Mall, is under construction at Illinois routes 31 and 72, west of the Fox River which runs through downtown Dundee. It is scheduled for opening in the fall of 1980 with five major department stores and 100 smaller shops.

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