

Homart water plan sunk by C'ville board

By PETE NENNI

As far as the Carpentersville village board members are concerned, the sale of water to the Homart Development Co., to be used by the proposed Spring Hill Mall, meets the basic economic tenets of supply and demand.

Carpentersville has the water supply and Homart has the demand for it and the only way they will get the liquid is on the terms of the village.

Three weeks ago, Homart representatives approached the board with a request to draft an agreement to purchase water from the village.

Water that was originally to be supplied by West Dundee, has been found to contain barium, a substance that has raised the concern of environmentalists throughout the state.

But Monday night, following the recommendation of Village Manager George Shaw, the board voted unanimously to deny Homart's proposal and instead, draft one of their own to be presented to the development company at a May 21 meeting.

Shaw said he recommended the agreement be denied because the provisions in the package were to Homart's advantage and the village's disadvantage.

"This is about as one sided an agreement as you can come up with," he said in

a telephone interview Tuesday.

He said there were a number of items in the proposed agreement that could not be accepted, including the price of the water to be sold.

The Homart proposal calls for Homart to be billed at the same rate the village would bill a resident, but Shaw said the village's agreement will charge the company at a rate between 1.50 and 1.75 times the normal charge.

"They are outside of our service district by their own choice and now they want to come back in and expect to get the same benefits," he said.

Another point of concern centered on how the billing would be handled.

The village wants one master meter to be used, billing Homart for the water, while the development company wants to also use other meters for stores within the mall and bill each separately.

Shaw said the village would have to use its own people to read extra meters and do more billing.

However, the biggest bone of contention may be the length of time the village will supply the water to the shopping center.

Although at an April 19 meeting with the village, Homart indicated the service period could run as long as five years, no definite time limit was set in the recent

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proposal.

The agreement called for a renewal of the service for consecutive five year terms at the end of each period, unless Homart notifies the village at least 30 days prior to the automatic renewal date, that it will no longer be needing the service.

Shaw told the board he found the proposal "totally unacceptable" and said the water should be supplied on either a permanent basis or on a three year maximum temporary basis with no renewal option.

"They're using us. We'll do it for three years and know they are leaving and use the capacity for somewhere else, but to be sitting here and wondering what's happening is to their advantage," he said.

There was some question as to whether the village's water system would be able to handle Homart's need for between 200,000 and 330,000 gallons per day.

Village Engineer Carl Caspers said the village was supplying between 3 million and 3.25 million gallons per day, three years ago and because of increased efficiency at the plant, now supplies 2.5 million gallons per day.

He contended there is room for expansion of the service, and as the supply were increased back up to 3.5 million gallons, the village would be receiving more

revenue without having to make any major increases in the water fund.

Homart officials were not available for comment on the denial by the village of their purchase proposal.

At the April 19 meeting, Homart officials said the concern over barium content has caused the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to impose restrictions on new construction only and require treatment equipment to remove the chemical.

Kenneth Beck, Homart's director of design, said the company is going ahead with plans for a deep well system in West Dundee to supply water.

However, the supply will only be used for fire protection needs, in hopes that the federal government and the state will change their standards on barium content in drinking water.

The company intends to comply and construct treatment equipment, but the project will be shelved if the restrictions are dropped.

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