

Village taking 'hard-line' on Homart water issue

By PATRICIA BOMBARD

CARPENTERSVILLE—The village has decided to take a hard line in dealing with Homart Development Company regarding the company's request for temporary water service.

At the village board meeting Monday night, the board voted 5-2 in favor of offering Homart an agreement which calls for a minimum three-year contract and contains a \$60,000 "willingness to serve" charge.

Homart approached the village in April requesting temporary water service for the Spring Hill Mall. Homart is in the process of digging two wells at the mall site, but may not be able to use the water from them because of a high barium content.

According to Kenneth Beck, Director of Design for Homart, the company would like to purchase water from the village on a temporary basis rather than install the costly equipment necessary to remove the barium from the water.

He also said the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is in the process of reviewing the barium standard and the company is hoping that eventually the standard will be lowered. Without installing the purification system, which would cost an estimated \$400,000, Homart can use the well water only for fire

protection.

Homart came back to the village with its first offer for purchasing the water two weeks ago. The board was unhappy with the proposal and directed Carl Caspers, village engineer, to draw up another one with more of the village's interests in mind. In particular, Homart had offered to pay the normal customer rate for the water, but village board members made it clear that Homart would have to pay 1.75 times the normal rate because the water will be going outside of the village limits.

Monday night, Caspers presented his counter proposal to the board for consideration. Under the proposed agreement, the village would supply Homart with an average of 200,000 gallons of water a day at a cost 1.75 times the rate for all other customers under one of two contract options. The first would require a three-year non-renewable contract under which Homart will pay a willingness to serve charge of \$60,000.

The second option would apply if Homart wants to purchase the water on a permanent basis and includes a willingness to serve charge of \$600,000 to be paid in three equal installments over a three year period with the first \$200,000 due 90 days after the agreement is signed.

Caspers explained that the "willingness to serve" charge is "not an unusual rate" and is often included in

such water agreements. The agreement specifies that the money would be used on the village's water works. Caspers said the charge means that the village has the capacity and is willing to serve Homart outside the village limits, but in return the company has to pay a portion of the cost that the village taxpayers paid in order to create a system that could handle that capacity.

Beck was also present at the meeting and said the insertion of the willingness to serve charge had taken Homart by surprise. He asked that he be allowed to meet with Caspers to discuss the charge and a few other items in the agreement.

At that time Village President Orville Brettman said a meeting would be appropriate since there is no need to rush into the agreement. However, Trustee Herbert Radtke called for a vote on the agreement as presented saying, "I think this should be our proposal to Homart, period."

Radtke said he is upset with the way Homart has treated the village on other issues, including designs for changes on Route 31 and Main Street. "Homart never comes before us until it's almost too late," continued Radtke. "I'm tired of it."

The motion to approve the agreement as the village's offer to Homart passed with only Brettman and Trustee Marv Sraier dissenting.

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Village taking 'hard-line' 'Hard-line' taken Issue

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After the vote, Beck said Homart probably will not accept the agreement as it is and will probably continue to negotiate. He said the company may also pursue other alternatives, including installing the

purification system on the wells.

Beck also said Homart would never be willing to contract for the water on a permanent basis because that would be a breach of an agreement the company has with the Village of West Dundee.

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