

At Estral Beach

Dike Alterations Won't Affect Flood Insurance

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ESTRAL BEACH — Estral Beach residents desiring to alter or replace the Operation Foresight dike on their land need not worry about losing flood insurance, one village council member said today.

Gerald Monske, head of a subcommittee which investigated the federal flood insurance system, said altering the temporary flood-protection structures would have no bearing on a homeowner's insurance policy.

"Actually, if you replace your dike with a more permanent structure, such as a cement seawall, you will be helping to lower your insurance rates," Mr. Monske said.

The Foresight dikes, constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1973, have deteriorated and are considered a nuisance by many.

Ted Cuda of 6956 Lakeshore Dr. won a two-year fight Monday to gain court permission to lower his rock crib to a specified height. Mr. Cuda was supported by the village council, which earlier unanimously decided to reverse the stand of the previous council and aid those residents who wanted to alter their dike.

Monroe County Circuit Court Judge William J. Weipert decided Monday to sign a new order in favor of those residents in certain areas of the village who wanted to alter their sand or rock cribs. The judge stipulated a resident first must obtain the consent of the council and village dike coordinator to improve the dike.

Mr. Monske earlier recommended to the council that it support the residents' attempts to remove their dikes since it would not affect the insurance.

"I think more people now can afford to put up seawalls," he said.

There were no additional requests to remove dikes at Tuesday's council meeting in the wake of Mr. Cuda's successful court fight Monday. However, that doesn't mean more requests will not be forthcoming, according to Ruth Ann Nietubicz, village clerk.

"I'm sure in time there will be more people with requests for removal," the clerk said. "This diking thing

has hung over our heads too long. It's a relief to have it over."

The new order that will be signed by Judge Weipert affects only Estral Beach, according to James J. Rostash, village attorney who represented the council at Mr. Cuda's hearings.

Mr. Rostash was incorrectly identified in Wednesday's Evening News as representing a group of residents opposed to the removal of the dikes. Attorney Paul E. Braunlich represented that group instead.

The council approved hiring a surveyor to study flood elevation heights to help residents determine to what elevations their dikes can be lowered and still comply with the new court order. The order prescribed minimum elevations for dikes along the village canal and on the lakefront.

President Frank E. Borbely, who termed the new court order "a very good working agreement," briefed the council on Monday's proceedings.

THE POSSIBILITY of obtaining natural gas service in the village will be investigated, the council decided after learning of the fight for customers in northern Berlin Township between two local gas suppliers.

Both the Michigan Gas Utilities Co. of Monroe and Michigan Consolidated Gas Co. of Detroit will be contacted, Mrs. Nietubicz said.

A preliminary survey showed more than 100 homes in the village used propane gas for heating and cooking purposes, the clerk said. Obtaining natural gas service would represent a savings for residents, the clerk said.

A CONTROVERSIAL village-owned Jeep will be sold immediately, the council decided. The vehicle was purchased illegally last year when the former council did not follow proper bidding procedures.

Bids on selling the Jeep will be opened at a meeting Dec. 12, which was moved up a week because of Christmas, the clerk said.

A special meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 6 for revising the budget to allow for a yearly audit instead of having one every two years.