

# City seeks accord with WMU on Asylum Lake sewer line

By MARK FRITZ, Gazette Staff Writer

An end to the continuing pollution of picturesque Asylum Lake apparently is tied to a so-far elusive agreement between the city of Kalamazoo and Western Michigan University.

City officials say they still haven't been able to reach an agreement with WMU, which owns most of the property around the lake, on where to place an "interceptor" sewer.

"We'll install it wherever they want to install it," said City Manager Robert Bobb. "Our interest is to protect the lake also."

But William Kowalski, WMU assistant vice-president for facilities engineering, said, "The city has not approached the university with a definite plan."

The city says it needs to secure a right-of-way from WMU to install the sewer on the lake's north side. The purpose is to extend an existing sewer interceptor to Drake Road to eliminate pollution which, county and state health officials have said since 1975, comes from nearby residential septic tanks.

Bobb and city Public Works Director Donald Swets told city commissioners Monday that they would meet with WMU officials this week.

Kowalski said today that WMU was wary of the sewer project because of problems caused by the recent construction of two apartment complexes on the north and northeast shores of the lake, which caused serious soil erosion near the lake. Kowalski called it "a sad experience."

Swets said the city received grants for the

sewer two years ago, but that the WMU right-of-way is needed before work can begin. Swets said city officials hope to begin in the fall.

City officials say pollution on the west end of the lake comes from the Stadium Drive West Mobile Home Park, 5101 Stadium. According to city records, sewage from the park's septic system has flowed into the lake for several years.

The Kalamazoo County Health Department and the state Department of Public Health both told the park owners in 1975 and 1976, when it was called the Lazy "R" Trailer Park, that the septic leakage was creating a health hazard and must be corrected. State health officials told the trailer park to connect to city sewers in 1977.

Kowalski said city officials approached WMU about a sewer easement on the lake two years

ago, but that the university said it wasn't interested. The solution, he said, "is to run a sewer down Stadium Drive."

Bobb said that hooking the trailer park to city sewers was considered unfeasible because it would require a costly pumping station.

City officials also said Monday they're trying to correct lake pollution from storm runoff. Swets told commissioners Monday that pollutants such as oil and paper refuse were being carried into the lake by a storm sewer on the lake's west end. Bobb said storm runoff from the parking lot of the K mart store at Drake and Stadium was polluting the lake.

Swets said in a report that the "floatable" pollutants could be corrected by a "floating tube" that would catch and remove the material.