

Asylum Lake Land Target Of City, County

A joint city - county effort is looming to request from the State of Michigan and its Department of Mental Health deeds to their unused Asylum Lake holdings.

The two local units of government want the state property for use as park land and for an innovative housing project.

A resolution on the Kalamazoo City Commission's Monday night agenda was held for a week until City Manager James Caplinger could make another contact with county officials.

Caplinger has been negotiating with Robert Welborn, chairman of the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners, and Donald Kelley, county parks and recreation director, about the Asylum Lake property which the county is interested in

incorporating into its parks system.

Meanwhile, the City of Kalamazoo is still interested in the adjacent Michigan Department of Mental Health land at the northeast corner of Parkview Avenue and Drake Road (Colony Farm Road - 12th Street).

The city is still pursuing a preliminary plan for locating a "New Town" residential development on that land. The "New Town", if it flies, would be a project spearheaded by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

What the county wanted the city to do was pass a resolution urging the state to declare the land and environs around Asylum Lake as "surplus lands" and transfer the title of the wooded acreage to the county for becoming a public open space for park and recreational

usage.

Then, the county would support the city's effort to gain title to the remaining acreage which is now primarily corn fields to the south of Asylum Lake.

What city commissioners would like is to have the city and county make their pitches at the same time and not separately.

The Asylum Lake holdings, which the county has its eye on, are about 160 acres of water and woodlands. The county would like to acquire title and maintain it as an open space and not immediately subject it to heavy development as an active park.

What the city and county are pegging their hopes on is that the state and its mental health agency have no apparent need for the land for future expansion purposes.