



Development coming

Development company Chandler Farms is asking DeWitt Township for rezoning of about 800 acres on the township's borders with East Lansing and Bath Township. Two years ago, DeWitt Township turned back East Lansing's effort to annex the land and allow development there. The new proposal would include everything from a new golf course to a mobile home park. The land now is zoned for farm use. The details:

- 1 187 acres for retail business. A township official says it's a continuation of commercial development along U.S. 127.
- 2 240 acres for manufactured homes.
- 3 34 acres for multiple-family housing.
- 4 299 acres for a golf course and single-family homes.
- 5 20 acres divided between multiple-family housing and business.
- 6 22 acres for business.

Lansing State Journal

Development may end threat of annexation

By Sally Trout
Lansing State Journal

An 800-acre development is proposed for a piece of DeWitt Township once coveted by the city of East Lansing.

The plan calls for six separate zoning changes that would allow for a golf course and upscale residential development, manufactured

DeWitt Twp.

housing area, multiple housing and retail business areas.

Chandler Farms, a developers group, is asking that 802 acres be rezoned in an area bounded by East Lansing to the south, Bath Township to the east, I-69 on the north and U.S. 127 to the west.

"If this all goes together, it should put an end to East Lansing's annexation threat," said Bob Zeeb, DeWitt Supervisor.

Zeeb is now concerned with the details of providing water and sewer

What's next?

■ **What:** Public hearing on rezoning for part of proposed development

■ **When:** 7:30 p.m. Dec. 3

■ **Where:** DeWitt Township Hall, 16101 Brook Road, Lansing

services to the development.

"We want to be sure the developers pay the service costs without putting the rest of the township taxpayers at risk," he said. "We could have an agreement as early as next week."

Ryan Wood, township superintendent, identified two key members of the corporation as D. L. Kesler of Bath and Patrick Berardo of East Lansing.

These men are not new to the township development scene. Wood says they are responsible for the Northway subdivision, Northway

Shopping Center and commercial growth at the northwest corner of U.S. 27 and Herbison Road.

A public hearing on the golf course and surrounding housing along with the manufactured housing park was held Nov. 3. The planners' decision still is pending resolution of the service talks.

Those at the first hearing were more interested in how the development would affect them than in expressing any opposition, Wood said.

Thomas Stewart, who lives on Stoll Road near one of the development sections, just learned of the development. But he says he'll attend a Dec. 3 hearing on other parts of the project.

Douglas Riley, project coordinator for Chandler Farms, said the developers can't yet give specifics about what the development will involve. He indicated that, if rezoning, designs and service agreements are resolved, construction of the golf course and manufactured housing likely would start first.

DeWitt development fuss simmering

Opponents would like townshipwide vote on fate of 800-acre plan

By Amy Lee
Lansing State Journal

Quarrels continue over the fate of an 800-acre development plan on rural land between DeWitt Township and East Lansing.

DeWitt Twp.

"We've been exhausting every administrative outlet, going to meetings, petitioning, writing out requests," said Virginia Tefertiller of DeWitt Township. "It's like trying to climb Niagara."

Tefertiller wants a townshipwide

vote on the plan.

Chandler Farms, a developers group, is requesting six separate rezoning requests to make way for manufactured homes, apartments, a golf course and businesses.

The township board gave its preliminary approval Monday. Such rezonings require two votes; the second comes Jan. 26.

But Tefertiller is trying to get the rezoning issue before voters because she said the township has ignored citizen protests against land development.

"The township has scared most of the neighbors to death," Tefertiller said. "The board and planning commission have a very creative way of telling you to sit down and be quiet."

Tefertiller said the board avoids answering direct questions and cuts off residents who offer opposing views, while allowing supporters to talk without time restrictions.

"We have tried to be as cooperative as we can to provide all township residents with information," Clerk Diane Mosier said.

Township Supervisor Bob Zeeb echoes that sentiment.

"We've done more advertising on this (rezoning) than usual," Zeeb said. The township has included notices in the Lansing State Journal in addition to the normal practice of publishing notices in the DeWitt-

Bath Review, a weekly publication, he said.

If the board again votes Jan. 26 in

favor, Mosier said rezoning could occur within that week.

Mosier said she would not speculate on how the board will vote. Zeeb said he will vote in favor.

Theresa Sprague, resident and member of Sincere Township Residents Against Wastful Spending, or STRAWS, said "everyone knows" the board will vote in favor of the rezoning.

"They politely lie, but in the end they do what the developer wants," Sprague said. "They just take it in steps to keep everyone quiet."

STRAWS and other residents are talking about forming one central citizens group, Tefertiller said.

"As we go door to door, we find more residents who oppose the plan

and are upset with the way they are treated at township meetings," Sprague said.

More residents have voiced opinions on this plan than with the average rezoning request, Mosier said.

"There are huge issues involved," Mosier said.

She cited the size of the plan and the fact that East Lansing once coveted the property as reasons for the high public interest.

Tefertiller said she has signatures of 92 residents who oppose development and the township is motivated by "dollar signs."

Taxes on the developed property could be as high as \$3 million.

"I'm not the leader type, but it's not okay to tell people to be quiet," Tefertiller said.

DeWitt rezoning OK stirs up resistance

Some residents plan
petition drive to halt
800-acre development

Lansing State Journal

Developers who have won DeWitt Township Board approval for an 800-acre development plan on the township's southern border may have to convince a new group: the voters.

Residents along State and Chandler roads who oppose the plan say they will start a petition drive to put the issue on ballots.

The Township Board voted late Monday to approve six rezoning requests for Chandler Farms, a development company that wants to put houses, apartments, businesses and a golf

course on 800 acres along the borders of East Lansing and Bath Township.

The land is now zoned for agriculture; Monday's vote gave preliminary approval for changing the zoning classifications to allow Chandler Farms' plans.

Such a zoning change requires a second vote from the board — a requirement designed to give time for further study. But Monday night, there seemed little doubt of the board's support for the project.

Backers of Chandler Farms' plans cite two arguments:

■ Development of the land — in a prime location near Interstate 69 and U.S. 127 — is inevitable, and having a single developer coordinate growth there would make the process more orderly.

■ The township can't afford to pass up the added tax money — estimated by Chandler Farms at about \$3 million a year when the project is



Zoning requests

DeWitt Township board gave preliminary approval Monday to rezoning for an 800-acre development plan.

- 1 187 acres for retail business.
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Lansing State Journal

finished.

Those arguments haven't swayed residents who say the development would ruin the area's rural character by bringing hundreds of homes and businesses and thousands of cars to local roads.

About 50 residents attended Monday's meeting, and of the 25 or so who spoke, only three supported

the development. It's that public opposition that some residents hope to tap in a drive to stop the project.

Rex Tefertiller lives near the area and has been a vocal opponent of the plan. He said before Monday's meeting that opponents who have been loosely organized would band together and begin a formal campaign.

DeWitt board eyes 800-acre rezoning

By Allison Daniels
Lansing State Journal

The Township Board may vote Monday on a plan to put homes, businesses and a golf course on about 800 rural acres.

The board will review a Planning Commission recommendation to

DeWitt Twp.

approve zoning requests that would clear the way for development of the land bordering East Lansing and Bath Township.

Approval could lead to the construction of a golf course, retail businesses and manufactured homes — along with single-family homes and apartments.

Some residents worry about increased traffic and preserving the area's rural character.

What's next

DeWitt Township Board meets:

■ 7 p.m. Monday

■ Township Hall, 16101 Brook Road

Rex Tefertiller, a State Road resident, is part of an informal group opposing the plan. He says officials are ignoring the township's development guidelines, which call for preserving agricultural land.

"They're abdicating their responsibility by basically turning control of the area over to the developer."

Tefertiller said if the rezoning is approved, residents will organize a petition drive.

However, others support the

plans.

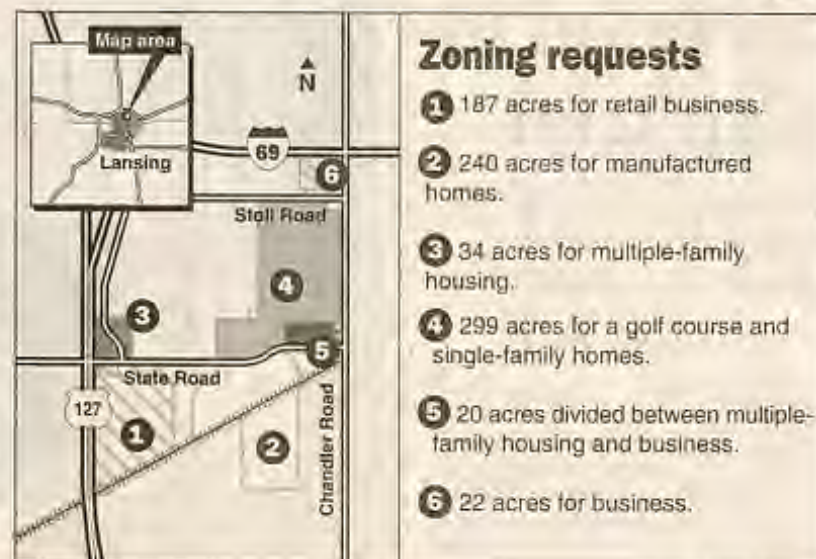
"It sounds like a drastic move, but if you look at the whole picture the community really stands to benefit," said Stephen Thimmig of Zeeb's Animal Hospital in DeWitt. "The tax base would improve and there would be more roads and emergency services for residents."

Chandler Farms, a group based in DeWitt, is seeking approval for six zoning changes for the 802 acres now zoned agriculture.

The land is south of Interstate 69 and east of U.S. 27.

But, township Superintendent Ryan Wood said, "There would still be hundreds of acres of green space."

If approved, construction could begin as early as summer, and would continue over about 15 years.



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Lansing State Journal

Annexation poll worries DeWitt Twp.

Residents: Last Lansing planning to grab land; city says it's not big deal

By Ellen Schuman
Lansing Staff Writer

LAST LANSING—MAYOR ROBERT R. ROGERS is planning to annex DeWitt Township, says an official city. Not a big deal.

But DeWitt Township residents, who say East Lansing wants the land.

Township residents, who say they want to stay where they are, say the city is planning to annex the land.

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Lansing State Journal

DeWitt, East Lansing jockey over land use, property rights

Idy-Ten Whartin

LOWLY TIDE — Jerry Brown, looking through the fog at an early-day morning ceremony on the beach, the family has moved into the new home.

Property Holdings Ltd. is controlled by one of the directors, Guyper, who is listed in 1967 as a "shareholder" along with DeWitt Township, which had 100 shares.

As a fourth step, Baccinella was added to the diet and the results were compared with the first diet. It is possible that within the two treatments, 1 and 2,

Butcher's Island, which is a 100-acre tract on the Florida Keys development program, has turned into a catch-all for bridge work between East Coast

Public: none/none

San Antonio and Beloit, Wis., will have public hearings tonight on a proposed bond issue to build a new city hall.

■ **Land Landings:** 2001 peak.
 Current (2004): 171,111
 down 5%

DuWHL Towerdeck 7 p.u.
 DuWHL Towerdeck 14 p.u.
 DuWHL Towerdeck 21 p.u.

Investing in

■ Jahresertrag Fund: aus 42%
Fertig 20.

and DeWitt Township — a little
more than could be done there with
the same money.

the hope, never, reporting to the
house and his mother, the

and the balance between a property owner's rights and obligations to neighbors.

"I have an obligation to be a grateful patient, and I'm asked to be a grateful person," says Hesse. "If I'm the least bit grateful to this team to this fantastic place, to decide what happens in the end, now I don't think we're honest."

Many heavy-year farmers expect progress in building a golf course, offices, restaurants and a big mall on the 1,000-acre tract, including a 100-unit housing — a residential development located at the intersection of Highway 275 and Farm to East Lake road. The group of about 200 individuals is expected to meet in the near future.



500 545 000 Limited Time Rent

[illegible]

Land: Dispute splits residents

Continued FROM 1A

preserve what is left of the area's rural atmosphere.

"How much development is too much? The boundary is fuzzy," said Rex Tefertiller, whose State Road home is surrounded by land proposed for the project. "I've lived in this area for 15 years, and I have seen development. But it's the magnitude of this project—it's too much."

Tefertiller and his wife, Virginia, began fighting the project soon after they learned of the proposal to rezone the land from agricultural to allow development. DeWitt Township boards approved the rezoning, but a citizens group started a petition drive to force a townshipwide election in hopes of overturning the decision.

Their vote is scheduled for August. But it sparked a border war between DeWitt Township and East Lansing when the project developers said they'd consider asking East Lansing to annex their land, which would avoid the vote.

"They are trying to circumvent the democratic process, and that isn't right," said Virginia Tefertiller. "The people should have the right to decide this."

A Chandler Farms representative answers that his group, too, is merely exploring an option the law allows.

"What Chandler Farms is doing is consistent with the democratic system," attorney Howard Seifer said. "They are saying we're undemocratic because we're not doing exactly what they want us to do—and that's absurd."

The annexation threat has left East Lansing with most—or all—of the bargaining power. DeWitt Township officials doubt they'd be able to block an annexation, although an East Lansing citizens group concerned about the environment says it would try.

Representatives from the two governments spent late last week and Monday negotiating what is called a "425 agreement." It could be DeWitt Township's only shot at keeping any control—or making any tax money—from the land.

The arrangement would allow DeWitt Township to some of the property's tax revenue for 30 years, but the property would be under East Lansing jurisdiction.

Under the proposal DeWitt Township—which now taxes



CHRS HULMES/Lansing State Journal

Rex and Virginia Tefertiller Their State Road home is surrounded by land proposed for the Chandler Farms project.

at a rate of about 6 mils—would collect the equivalent of 3 mills for the first 15 years, and 2 mills for the next 15 years, according to DeWitt Township Superintendent Ryan Wood. After 30 years, the land—and all the tax revenue—would be East Lansing's.

The 425 deal can't be reached, property owners say they'll move to annex the land to East Lansing—leaving DeWitt Township with nothing.

Both governments have public hearings tonight.

Winners, losers

The 425 agreement would cover about 125 acres, including about 80 acres for development on land from at least three separate sellers. However, more than half the land Chandler Farms says it owns or controls all the land through legally enforceable agreements.

A purchase price was not available Monday through the Clinton County Register of Deeds, but it's clearly a multi-million-dollar deal, according to township records. The 425 acres involved are assessed at a taxable value of \$686,000, which would make them worth about \$1.5 million, in the assessor's opinion, if sold as farmland. With the land available for development, property owners can demand much higher prices than what they'd get for farmland.

The land is on DeWitt Township's southern edge, with de-

velopment closing in on all sides. It's between Interstate 69 and U.S. 127, and abuts on to potential development. East Lansing—a city built to capacity and craving room to grow—is directly south.

"This development is going to occur anyway, so we might as well make it as beneficial as possible," said Doug Jester, an East Lansing councilman.

East Lansing officials have openly wanted the land for at least three years.

"In the worst case scenario, early on, it would be a financial wash," East Lansing City Manager Ted Strain said. "In the long term, there would be significant benefits."

Among them:

■ **Cash.** It could add \$1.2 million in tax revenue to East Lansing coffers, expanding a current \$35 million budget. At first, the net profit would be minimal—\$50,000 a year or so. But 20 years out, the profits could range from \$600,000 to \$1 million annually.

■ **Housing.** East Lansing doesn't have much affordable housing—and anything under \$100,000 is gobbled up nearly as soon as it hits the market. The plan for 200 acres of manufactured homes would add a housing market and development space.

■ **Students.** East Lansing, Lansing and Bath schools each have a portion of their district on the proposed development's land. Much of the housing de-

velopment would fall within the East Lansing district, which has about 3,800 students.

City officials estimate the new homes would bring in up to 310 new students. Each comes with about \$7,000 in state aid—a \$2.3 million boost to the district's sagging financial structure. East Lansing has been hammered by declining enrollment, which led the district to slash \$3 million from its budget and close a middle school last year.

"It would help us keep schools open," East Lansing schools Superintendent Vicki Wozniak said. "We have some small elementary schools now. If we could get more enrollment, we could run them more cost-effectively."

Those are financial gains DeWitt Township government had coveted.

Township officials figure the development would have brought them about \$400,000 a year in new taxes and \$200,000 a year in state revenue sharing. After expenses—a \$200,000 to \$400,000 profit—a big boost to their current \$2 million budget.

"We'd have extra money for parks, libraries and additional police for the entire township," said township Supervisor Bob Zech.

The township also figured to land a \$5 million sewer hookup fee in the deal. After system upgrade costs, but would not them about \$3 million. That money could have been used to

s residents



CHRIS HOLMES/Lansing State Journal
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City officials estimate the new homes would bring in up to 330 new students. Each comes with about \$7,000 in state aid—a \$2.3 million boost to the district's sagging financial structure. East Lansing has been hammered by declining enrollment, which led the district to slash \$3 million from its budget and close a middle school last year.

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Those are financial gains DeWitt Township government had coveted.

Township officials figure the development would have brought them about \$460,000 a year in new taxes and \$260,000 a year in state revenue sharing. After expenses—a \$200,000 to \$400,000 profit—a big boost to their current \$2 million budget.

"We'd have extra money for parks, libraries and additional police for the entire township," said township Supervisor Rob Zeeh.

The township also figured to land a \$5 million sewer hookup fee in the deal. After system upgrade costs that would net them about \$3 million. That money could have been used to

lower sewer rates for everyone in the township, Zeeh said.

The blame game

The Tefertillers say they've been accused of costing the township thousands of dollars and potential legal headaches.

"People are trying to say this is all our fault," Virginia Tefertiller said. "That simply isn't fair."

Tefertiller was asked to be on the committee to negotiate the 425 agreement. She at first agreed, then says she changed her mind after praying about it with her husband.

She says she felt township officials were trying "to set her up" to take the blame if residents aren't happy with the results.

Likewise, Bower resents opponents portraying him as greedy. Even some of Bower's longtime friends signed the petition circulated by Citizens Against Urban Sprawl, the group aiming to block the project.

Bower says some of the same people who don't want him to sell the land complained about the farm operation, too.

"It's increasingly difficult to farm right next to a city," he said.

As a self-employed farmer, Bower has no company-sponsored pension plan. Planning future security for himself and his wife, Mary, is in their own hands.

"A farmer's retirement is in his land," he said.

Bower said no farmer wants to buy the land because it borders on a city. He's also checked with the Department of Natural Resources and inquired about the Michigan farmland preservation program, neither of which were reasonable options given the alternatives, Bower said.

Bower probably could have subdivided his land, sold it piecemeal and made more than he will on the Chandler Farms deal.

"But I like their plans," he said of the Chandler development. "People will see it's a good development."

The Tefertillers are unconvinced.

They say the land should remain agricultural because it serves as a water recharging area for an underground aquifer. They oppose the manufactured housing portion of the plan, and fear that once the land is rezoned, it would disrupt a way of life they cherish.

"This is alarming," Virginia Tefertiller said. "If we don't start thinking about what urban sprawl is doing to us, we'll all be in trouble."



Zoning decisions

A DeWitt group wants to reverse these zoning decisions on the Chandler Farms development.

- 1 187 acres for offices and business
- 2 340 acres for manufactured homes
- 3 34 acres for multiple-family housing
- 4 299 acres for a golf course and single-family homes
- 5 23 acres divided between multiple-family housing and business
- 6 22 acres for business
- 7 146 acres added for land-share agreement

Lansing State Journal

Law clears way for land pacts

By Chris Colombicowski
Lansing State Journal

A state law passed in the mid-1980s allows municipalities to share development profits while avoiding all-or-nothing annexation wars, experts say.

Michigan is dotted with long-simmering land feuds between cities and surrounding townships. But since 1985, it's also been dotted with agreements between local governments that allow them to share expanded tax bases and municipal services.

The land-transfer pacts allow for economic development agreements under the Conditional Land Transfer Act, Public Act 425.

East Lansing and DeWitt Township will hold public hearings tonight on just such an agreement on 925 acres of the township set for development.

"It allows for growth to happen without getting into the turf issue. It allows townships to participate in growth."

The law allows for wide variation in terms.

Agreements can be drawn up between two cities, two townships, a village and a township or a city and a township.

They can last for five to 50 years and can be renewed. Or, when the agreement ends, the land can stay with a city or return to a township.

No one keeps count of the number of land-transfer pacts, said Dennis Fromm-Stehman, executive director of the State Boundary Commission.

"It allows for growth to happen without getting into the turf issue."

John LaRue
Michigan Township Association

Lawyers draw up the deals through negotiations between the governments and file them with the Secretary of State's office.

But a Michigan State University professor has analyzed the first 10 years of Act 425 agreements.

Lynn Harvey, a state and local government expert in the Agricultural Economics Department, counted 99 deals through 1994. Of those:

■ Fifty-nine percent were between a township and a city.

■ The average length was 31 years, but most were for 40 to 50 years.

■ Forty-four percent required the land to be permanently transferred; 34 percent required the land retained; 21 percent required renegotiation.

Harvey warned in his study that the purpose of Act 425 agreements is to promote economic development, not forestall annexation.

LOCAL & STATE

DeWitt Twp. stands to lose development

Chandler Farms may request annexation into East Lansing

By Amy Lee
Lansing State Journal

DEWITT TWP. — Township officials have five days to forge an agreement with East Lansing to share 928 rural acres or face loss of the property by annexation.

A land-share agreement would allow Chandler Farms LLC developers to skirt a proposed August referendum that could halt the developer's plans for housing, businesses and a golf course.

If an agreement isn't reached, Chandler Farms will ask East Lansing to annex the land, said Chandler Farms attorney Howard Soifer of Lansing.

The request probably would be enough to win approval for annexation from state officials.

What's next

DeWitt Township officials will hear public comment on a proposed land-share agreement with East Lansing and could vote on the agreement.

■ **When:** 7 p.m. Monday.

■ **Where:** DeWitt Township Hall, 16101 Brook Road.

"There's going to be a lot of midnight oil burning between now and next Monday," Soifer said.

"We are losing that property to the city of East Lansing," said Clerk Diane Mosier. "The question is, do we want to lose it for nothing or try to gain something from it?"

Several details remain to be negotiated, including how to divide revenue generated by the development and the township's request for assurances that East Lansing won't try to



Lansing State Journal

annex other township land.

Citizens Against Urban Sprawl, a group opposed to the development, fought for a public vote on zoning decisions that would allow the development. The referendum is set for August.

Any annexation or land-share agreement would override the August referendum. East Lansing, not DeWitt Township, would have zoning authority over the land.

The delay caused Chandler Farms to seek the possible annexation, Soifer said.

Each week of delay costs the group \$40,000, Chandler Farms' Doug Riley has said.

Please see **LAND 3B**

Land: DeWitt Twp. may lose out

Continued **FROM 1B**

Opponents of the development criticized the effort.

"(Chandler Farms) are trying to defeat the democratic process," said Virginia Tefertiller, a citizens group member.

"They're trying to circumvent the right of the people to have a say in what they want for their township."

But Supervisor Bob Zeeb said officials had warned residents of possible annexation.

"A few people have screwed up what was a great thing for the entire

township," Zeeb said. "Now, the same development is going to be there but we'll have no control."

Chandler Farms proposes to build a golf course, retail businesses, manufactured housing and single-family homes on the land. The property lies east of U.S. 27, west of Chandler Road and south of Interstate 9 — largely on the township/city border — and is zoned for agriculture.

The land-sharing agreement would allow the township to collect a part of tax revenue and fees generated by the development for 25

years but the property would be under East Lansing jurisdiction. After 25 years, the land would belong to East Lansing.

"Our preference is to do this in a cooperative manner; it's not adversarial," said East Lansing City Manager Ted Staton. "It's no secret we've been constrained by the city's physical borders."

Chandler Farms contacted city officials about a possible land-share agreement in December.

Township and city officials both must approve an agreement.

DeWitt project foes file petition

Group seeks vote
on zoning decisions
in DeWitt project

By Gordon Trowbridge
Lansing State Journal

Opponents of an 825-acre development in southern DeWitt Township plan on Monday to file the last of their petitions seeking a public vote on the project.

Ginger Teter, a member of Citizens Against DeWitt Orchar Sprawl, said the group will file the last of about 650 signatures Monday with township officials.

CAUS wants to force a referendum on seven zoning decisions that allowed Chandler Farms a development contract to go ahead with its plans to put new houses, mobile homes, businesses and a golf course on more than 400 acres along the borders of East Lansing and Bath Township.

The group filed six petitions — linked to the first six zoning votes — in February.

The last petition deals with the last vote, which rezoned about 22 acres for use in the mobile-home project.

Township Clerk Diane Mosier said she is working to verify the validity of the signatures. Each needs 448 signatures — 10 percent of the township vote total in the last election for governor — to force a public vote.

Mosier said she expects a report March 23 to the Township Board on whether the petition signatures are valid. If they are, the issue could go to township voters as soon as the August primary.

Mosier said she's still waiting for legal advice on the township's options on when to schedule a vote.

Opponents of the project say it's too much, too fast for what they say is a quiet, rural area.

The township officials say that if they don't allow the project to move forward, developers will simply have the land annexed into East Lansing, which would allow the project to move ahead and reap the tax rewards.

East Lansing officials say they have no immediate plans to annex the land, but have said they're watching the situation. And the developers' group has said it could seek annexation by East Lansing if it can't move ahead as part of DeWitt Township.

DeWitt begins land negotiations with E. Lansing

Township's officials try to 'salvage' their stake in development

By Faith Johnson
Lansing State Journal

In an effort not to participate in what is seen as a shotgun marriage, East Lansing and DeWitt Township officials began negotiating Thursday on an agreement to share taxes generated from development of land on Chandler Road.

Developers of the 930-acre site said an August referendum that could fund plans for housing, businesses and a golf course forced them to ask East Lansing to step in. East Lansing would control the property and stand to make about \$1.2 million. DeWitt Township would have brought in about \$400,000.

The two papers reached "425 agreements," names for a state law that allows municipalities to contract for, unadvised of and, well, allow a compromise.

Without an agreement, the development company says it will ask East Lansing to annex the land.

East Lansing and township officials will gather public input Tuesday at meetings, and vote line negotiations reach a deal.

DeWitt Township officials said Thursday they are not pleased with the proposal. Neither municipality would discuss details, but East Lansing holds the negotiation powers, officials said.

"The township is in a very difficult position here," said Ryan Wood, township superintendent. "The question is, will (the agreement) be in good faith to the township or a cheap lunch deal."

DeWitt Township and Chandler Farms had reached an agreement to develop the area but the group Citizens Against Urban Sprawl fought for a public vote on rezoning and collected the 810 signatures needed for an August vote.

DeWitt Kestee Warner and developer of the land said developers never talked to East Lansing before the referendum came up.

"We are concerned that we will not get approved," Kestee said, of the August vote, "and that the bargaining chips with East Lansing could go down the drain if we get defeated."

If talks do not reach an agreement, the three residents living on the land would vote along with East Lansing residents on whether the land would be annexed into the city, officials said.

"At this point we are trying to cut ourselves out," said Township Supervisor Bob Zeib.



Zoning decisions

A DeWitt group wants to reverse these zoning decisions on the Chandler Farms development.

- 1 187 acres for small office/business
- 2 740 acres for residential use
- 3 24 acres for medium-density housing
- 4 228 acres for a golf course and single-family homes
- 5 70 acres for medium-density housing and business
- 6 22 acres for business
- 7 148 acres for residential use

Lansing State Journal

East Lansing officials said they could annex the land, but would rather reach a compromise.

"We feel it's better to negotiate and avoid a political fight," said East Lansing Mayor Mark Meadows. "There's a way to resolve the issue that's good for both parties."

Township Treasurer Eric Peterson said township officials will fight for the best offer.

"The reality is (East Lansing) has been holding toward the potential of annexing DeWitt Township for a long time," he said. "There was a reluctance on their part to step up."

"In the present form, I don't think we can say (the agreement)," Peterson said. "We will go with our hands out to salvage what we can."

Zeib said the referendum tied the township's hands.

"The township worked real hard," Zeib said. "Here was an opportunity for the township to bring in additional tax base and say, East Lansing, you will have to pay for it."

Key meetings

East Lansing and DeWitt Township will have public hearings Tuesday on a proposed land-sharing agreement that will allow them to share taxes from the development of 930 acres of land on Chandler Road.

■ East Lansing, 7-30 p.m., Council Chambers, 101 Linden St.

■ DeWitt Township, 7 p.m., DeWitt Township Hall, 16101 Brook Road

of this but these people certainly did kick the in the head."

Developers say they will pay more in taxes, with East Lansing's 18.09 mill rate compared to DeWitt Township's 8.97 mills, but say lower costs on utilities and other services make the deal worth even for them.

Land deal

DeWitt made best of it

Like it or not — and most of DeWitt Township doesn't — the decision to give up 925 acres to East Lansing is the better of two bad choices.

Over a span of 30 years, the township and the city will share tax revenue on the soon-to-be developed property.

East Lansing will reap the largest benefit, up to \$1.2 million annually, based on its tax rate.

DeWitt Township could collect about \$250,000 a year once the land is developed into a subdivision with houses, offices and a golf course.

Eventually, the property adjacent to East Lansing's northwest corner will become part of the city.

On Tuesday, both township and city officials approved the agreement, which bypasses an annexation vote.

As dismayed as township officials are to relinquish the land, they properly concluded this is better than annexation.

If the land were annexed — and it likely would have been — the township would immediately lose all tax revenues.

This way, at least, the township forestalls forfeiting all property tax revenue for three decades.

Ironically, a small group that opposed development by Chandler Farms LLC actually forced the township into this untenable position. The group's opposition caused developers and East Lansing to explore a tax-sharing law known as "Act 425." That state law allows local governments to agree on tax-sharing, and eventual control, of the land by one of the governments.

As a result of opposition by Citizens Against Urban Sprawl but against the group's wishes, the 925-acre rural tract will still be developed. The difference? The township loses because it won't receive most of the new tax revenue.

Township officials grimaced at the prospect, yet knowing they were over a barrel. They agreed on the tax-sharing deal — correctly choosing to leave the bargaining table with some money than none at all.

ing State Journal

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DeWitt Twp., city will share land

East Lansing gains control of 925 acres and expands borders

By Tim Martin
and Louise Knott
Lansing Post-Press

DeWitt Township soon will be a percent smaller.

In a decision many want to make, the Township Board Tuesday approved a land-share agreement that shifts control of 925 acres to East Lansing.

East Lansing officials also approved the deal Tuesday.

The transaction likely will clear the way for a proposed development of Chandler Farm

Road — including housing, offices and a golf course.

Through the so-called "Agreement," DeWitt Township will continue to collect some taxes on the land for the next 30 years. The other alternative was annexation of the land by East Lansing, which would have left the township with nothing.

"We're like a bear caught in a trap," DeWitt Township trustee Wayne Chandler said. "We're in the miserable position of having to get our leg out to get out."

The 30-year agreement covers 925 acres on the DeWitt Township-East Lansing border, Chandler said. About 625 acres would be set aside for a

development proposed by Chandler Farm LLC.

East Lansing — which also is a city of the 1st class — has gaming power in the land issue — a college gets the better end of the deal. But the township still could opt out in 10 or 15 years, when the land is fully developed, for the length of the agreement.

DeWitt Township has the lowest assessed value — about half its nearest village rate — for the next 10 years. The township now collects 2 mills for the second 15 years.

East Lansing gets all the tax revenue after 10 years. The city has jurisdiction of the land for the length of the agreement, during which it will act as a 10-

mill rate.

If the development has been entirely within township borders, officials there estimate it would have brought in up to \$200,000 a year, in East Lansing, it would bring in up to \$100 million annually, because the city has a higher tax rate.

East Lansing City Council passed the deal unanimously in DeWitt, the vote was 8-1.

"I have to support the agreement. It turns my stomach to do it, but I have to do it," Township Clerk Diane Mosier said.

A group called Citizens Against Urban Sprawl said they would continue to oppose the development. Some of the group's objectives are listed

for public in the township in the position of land Tuesday.

After DeWitt Township had approved agreeing to allow the project, the citizens group gathered around signatures to put the issue on the June 1 election ballot. The vote would have allowed township residents to decide whether the land should be annexed.

Chandler Farm threatened to sue for annexation to East Lansing, which prompted the land share talks.

"I think the referendum should not be placed," said Don Denner, a retired resident who opposes the project. "We hope this will send the message to the Township Board that development is out of control."

Communities

Ashtabula City 2

East Lansing steps into its new territory

City, fire, police forces take over 926 acres in deal with DeWitt Twp.

By Amy E. Lee
Lansing State Journal

In just two weeks to erase Jerry Dowry's, at one affiliation with DeWitt Township.

East Lansing assumed police and fire responsibilities Tuesday for a 926-acre parcel of former township land. It's East Lansing's first action on territory acquired in a land-and-tax-sharing agreement last Monday that allows East Lansing to annex the land and pay only three new residents, including River.

DeWitt Twp.

Tuesday marked the official beginning of an agreement between the two cities — as well as the end of a protracted fight by a group opposed to the development, a political drive to force the issue to a public vote and tense negotiations.

Last Monday's land-share agreement, officials say, rendered the referendum moot.

"It's good to stress how important

the future of East Lansing is," said City Manager Ted Stator.

"It's an opportunity to grow economically, physically and provide different types of housing. It's a very big deal."

Chandler Farms, a development group, plans housing, businesses and a golf course for the land. Construction of the 280-acre manufactured housing center begins this fall. "It's going to change the entire character of that whole piece of land," said Howard Solter, Chandler Farms' attorney.

Township officials chose to share 100 revenue with East Lansing on the land rather than face an annexation by East Lansing that would have a certainty. The township will share tax revenue with East Lansing for 20 years beginning Dec. 31. East Lansing will get most of the money.

The city must provide public safety, utility services and most improvements, and it assumes total control of the land when the 20-year agreement expires.

"I know the township isn't happy with the extent that a win-win-win situation could be produced, and has been produced," Stator said.

DeWitt Township Superintendent



Photo courtesy of Chandler Farms

Coming: Developers say homes of this type will make up their manufactured housing development in DeWitt Township.

Ken Ryan Wood said the township is "trying to regroup" after losing the land, which sits south of I-69, west of I-67 and along East Lansing's north city limit.

"There's a viable community here and it will remain so," Wood said.

Residents upset about the massive size of the project and petitioned for a public vote on the township's January decision to secure the land for development.

The vote was set for August, but the city asked Chandler Farms to become more aggressive in pursuit of the rezoning, Solter said.

"There was an extreme amount of financial burden placed upon them due to the unnecessary delay," Solter said.

Leaders of the citizens group said they intend to continue opposing

the development for as many years as possible.

East Lansing officials note the new agreement solves some immediate concerns about the city's space problems. "We know that in 10 to 15 years we'll need a place to grow," Stator said.

Stator said East Lansing chose to negotiate a tax-sharing deal with the township — and not to simply annex the land — in the interest of maintaining good relations.

DeWitt Township provided police East Lansing during the May 2 riot on Grand River Avenue, Stator said, demonstrating the importance of regional cooperation.

Life goes on after these transfer agreements, Stator said. "We want to maintain a good working relationship."

Township growth a thorny issue

"I am appalled with development, which is gobbling up every square inch of space."

DeWitt
Tefertiller
township
resident



DAVID OLDS/Lansing State Journal

Planning development: Sue and Doug Scovill's rezoning request for a condominium project has been ap-

proved, but whether the project gets off the ground anytime soon remains in question.

Condo rezoning faces roadblock

DeWitt resident says he'll file petitions to block Scovills' plan

Tefertiller, through a group called Citizens Against Urban Sprawl, successfully put the 500-acre Chasidim Farms rezoning referendum question on the primary election ballot.

Tefertiller's spokeswoman said

The condo complex plans call for about 140 units on an acre, mostly two-story, attached units with some single units. Open space includes eight acres of wetlands, a pond and wooded areas.

site they are following through with this particular referendum attempt," she said.

Should petitions be filed at the last minute, it would not leave

Condo rezoning faces roadblock

DeWitt resident says he'll file petitions to block Scovills' plan

By Sally Trout
Lansing State Journal

It's like waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Doug and Sue Scovill want to build condominiums on a 53-acre site they own at the corner of State and Wood roads.

Their rezoning request got the nod from DeWitt Township planners and trustees. But whether the new zoning will go into effect the first week in August as planned is still up in the air.

Why?

Township resident Rex Teteriller recently filed his intent to challenge the zoning change.

The Scovills are nervous about the petition action. Rex and Virginia

Teteriller, through a group called Citizens Against Urban Sprawl, successfully ran the 1986-acre Chandler Farms zoning referendum question as the primary election ballot.

"Teteriller's paperwork is in place, but I can't find a paper trail and they aren't calling on me," Doug Scovill said.

Teteriller said he is gathering signatures against the Scovill rezoning.

"We have talked to people about the Scovill rezoning and have a few signatures, but we are doing this while informing people on the need to vote on the Chandler Farms question Aug. 4," he said.

Teteriller said his petition actions are a reaction to continued growth in the township.

"I am appalled with development, which is gobbling up every square inch of space," he said. "A referendum vote of the people is the only way we have of making our land use wishes known."

Scovill described his land use plan as a 20-story, 150,000-sq-ft building.

The condo complex plans call for about 200 units on an acre, mostly two- and three-story, attached units with some single units. Open space includes eight acres of wetlands, a pond and wooded area.

Business zoning is approved for the corner land where the Scovills formerly ran a farm market. The change is for his wife's home hair salon, not a commercial development, he said.

Light industrial zoning and two mobile home parks border the couple's land.

Laced with a referendum election day, Chandler Farms developers talked annexation to East Lansing. Instead, the township and city came to a deal on an agreement that gives some tax dollars to DeWitt Township for 30 years.

DeWitt Township Clerk Diane Mosier said Teteriller has until Aug. 3 to file his petition. Some 450 signatures are required for a spot on a ballot.

"The petitioners should know the petitioning process. I am just not

sure they are following through with this particular referendum attempt," she said.

Should petitions be filed in the last minute, it would not leave enough time to get a question on November's general election ballot, she also said. Another vote change wouldn't come for two years.

Scovill said he can't afford a possible two-year election delay.

A special election is possible, but the Scovills would have to pay the costs, which are estimated at \$8,000.

Teteriller, who lives less than a mile from the Scovill land, said he isn't sure he will have time to get the necessary signatures, but expects to try while trying folks to get out and vote on the Chandler Farms question.

Hoping to head off any misunderstandings, the Scovills sent out 1,000 letters explaining their project to surrounding landowners.

"We wanted people to know the facts before they signed any circulating petition," Scovill said.