

# Thurston Pond Debate Lengthy

More than 100 residents of Orchard Hills subdivision and vicinity met for 3½ hours last night in the auditorium of Thurston Elementary School to discuss the proposed nature study pond area on the school grounds. No solution resulted.

John Levens, president of the Parent-Teachers Organization committee which has been promoting the nature area, outlined the history of the development and illustrated the planned layout of trails, walkways, and plantings.

William Stapp, conservation consultant for the Ann Arbor Public Schools, discussed how a natural area is used by school children and community groups. Stapp observed that recently more bird and wildlife had been seen there than on many of his field trips to more remote areas.

Stapp also said he believes control of algae and mosquitos there can be achieved, a matter raised by foes of the development of the nature center.

Ron Summerville, speaking for opponents of the nature center concept as proposed, who have pressed for draining and filling the pond area, voiced a number of objections.

He stated that he believed that "true conservation means avoiding wastefulness," and that there were alternatives for the submerged land which would meet the "real needs" of the community.

He referred to pond samples he had taken and had analyzed by the county health department which contained a "significant level of coliform bacteria."

At this point there developed a controversy over the meaning of such samples and the significance of coliform count.

After MAY 16 - 1966, Joseph Price, county health engineer, was read, which stated in part that "these (coliform) counts are within the range of values found in the Huron River or other surface waters."

Spenser Havlick of the environmental health department at the University offered data on the results of a summer-long study of the Huron River, which showed coliform counts far above those found in Thurston Pond.

Summerville also commented upon the mosquito problem and the dangers to children inherent in a water area close to a school.

After the formal presentations the meeting was opened to questions from the audience. Some of these involved safety and liability in case of accident, and others were concerned with the availability of play space in the area.

The meeting ended with a decision to distribute a ballot to all homeowners in the Orchard Hills subdivision. The results of this ballot would be sent to the School board as an expression of the sentiment of the homeowners on the pond and nature center proposal.