

Five Cities Haven't Signed Contracts for Park Funds

Doraville, Decatur Ready to Proceed

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Only two of the seven DeKalb cities participating in the county's park improvement program have reached contract agreements with the county for park funds - Doraville and Decatur.

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Doraville recently dedicated its \$300,000 recreation center and Decatur soon will begin general renovations on several parks.

However, **Pine Lake** Mayor Neil Copeland said at last week's DeKalb Municipal Association (DMA) meeting that he had turned down \$44,000 in park funds allotted his city.

"We don't want to lose control of our park by opening it up to [DeKalb County] at large," he said.

Bobby Wright, DMA president and a Clarkston City Council member, said his city was nearing an agreement with the county on a contract, and urged each city to continue trying "to strike the best deal" in negotiations.

"There are no hard, fast rules . . . you can negotiate with [DeKalb Chief Executive Officer Manuel] Maloof and the county attorney. It's not easy to get them to give you a direct answer, but don't give up," he said.

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DeKalb's cities have since been negotiating separate deals with county officials.

Mr. Wright said conflicts like the park program indicate a need to re-examine the DMA's direction.

Amid recent charges that DMA meetings had become social affairs, some city officials proposed to do away with the dinner meetings and concentrate on business.

"We have to bring some cohesiveness to the DMA if we're to address our problems successfully," Mr. Wright said.

Representatives from Chamblee, Clarkston, Doraville, **Pine Lake** and Stone Mountain agreed the organization needs restructuring, but said they wanted the monthly meetings, which they often attend with their spouses, to begin on a social note - and with dinner.

"There is more fellowship in dinner meetings. It's not only the food, but the contact with other cities that we come for," said Clarkston City Council member George Baldasare.

Officials also discussed the need for the 25-year-old organization to draw up a budget.

Stone Mountain Mayor Jane Rhodes said it is "ridiculous" that member cities are still paying annual fees of \$25 each.

"We give out more than that in charity donations," she said.