



**City of Rochester Hills  
AGENDA SUMMARY  
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS**

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**Legislative File No:** 2007-0367

**TO:** Mayor and City Council Members  
**FROM:** James Rosen, City Council President  
**DATE:** July 20, 2007  
**SUBJECT:** Area Maintenance Meters

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We are bringing back the question of ending the sale of Area Maintenance Meters (AMMs) at the request of Mr. Hooper. However, I have some serious questions about the effectiveness and fairness of the proposal.

First, I do not believe ending the sale of the meters will be effective in reducing the peak water usage. The City is effectively built out and there will be relatively few new homes built – probably less than a thousand over the next ten years. That would probably result in only a few hundred fewer AMMs. That will not make a noticeable difference in peak water usage.

Second, I do not believe ending the sale will have more than a token effect on overall water consumption. Weather and the cost of water will have a direct effect on the use of water. The more expensive water is, the less people will use for watering lawns. We cannot charge more for water used in AMMs (and in fact we charge less because we do not charge for sewer). We can raise the overall cost of water if we believe it is in the public interest to simply conserve.

Third, I think there is a fairness issue involved. If we ban AMMs now, there will be people who got their AMM in time and those located on the same street or in the same subdivision who are not allowed to have them. That creates a problem for me. In this regard we should treat everyone the same. Businesses will be in the same position, particularly if they redevelop or rebuild their site. There is also the question of what happens if your AMM breaks. Will a homeowner be able to get a replacement? If not, does that violate the contract with the City, and would that be a liability issue to the City if an owner sued the City?

Finally, ending the sale was suggested to lower water rates. I believe the most effective thing we can do to lower water rates by reducing peak usage is to restrict lawn sprinkling during the peak hours. The peak hours are clearly between 5am and 9am in the morning and between 5pm and 9pm in the evening. Most people with AMMs have timers that can be set to water at specific times (they usually cannot be set to water odd / even days). It is a relatively simple matter to run the irrigation cycle outside these peaks. It is what I do, and have done for years because of the relatively low pressure during these peak times. Rather than imposing the odd/even restrictions that we have now, that people don't follow, and we don't enforce, we should simply restrict hours of lawn irrigation to outside the peak hours. It is what Plymouth Township now does, and what other cities will be doing.

Let's work on something effective. Let's pass an ordinance to restrict hours of sprinkler operation, and develop an education and awareness program to make it effective.

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**RESOLUTION**

**NEXT AGENDA ITEM**

**RETURN TO AGENDA**

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