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Boat Club loses bid for new trial

Judge dismisses motion; eviction efforts lawful

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The Lansing Boat Club lost again in its continuing court fight against the city to maintain its leased westside home in Grand River Park.

On Wednesday, 54A District Court Judge Amy Krause denied the boat club's motion for a new trial.

"I do not believe a new trial is warranted," the judge said during a morning hearing. "I did follow the law."

Last month, after listening to the judge's instructions, a six-person jury ruled that Lansing properly pursued eviction proceedings against the club, giving the club adequate 30-day notice. The club argues 60 days notice was needed.

Club members now must decide whether they will file an appeal in Ingham County Circuit Court, said their attorney Thomas Rasmusson.

"I would be optimistic," he said. "They have a good case."

Boat club members could not be reached for comment. They have not signed a new lease since the last one expired on Dec. 31, 2006.

In court documents, they have said that the last agreement now should apply because of a carry-over provision that it established.

Lansing's acting deputy city attorney, Don Kulhanek, represented the city in court Wednesday but declined to comment afterward.

Meanwhile, before this week's court appearance, the club submitted to the City Council a notice publicizing its willingness to negotiate a one-year lease if both parties could come to agreeable terms.

Randy Hannan, Mayor Virg Bernero's deputy chief of staff, has indicated that the city's not much interested in a return to lease negotiations.

"Continuing the status quo doesn't represent progress," Hannan said. "It's time to turn the page and return the property to its rightful owners, the people of Lansing."

The city has tried to negotiate a one-year lease with the boat club for approximately two years. Bernero has said the city is interested in developing Grand River Park into a full-fledged urban marina and would prefer the flexibility that a one-year lease would allow.

When the boat club publicized its lease dispute with the city in February, members emphasized that a five-year agreement was preferable.