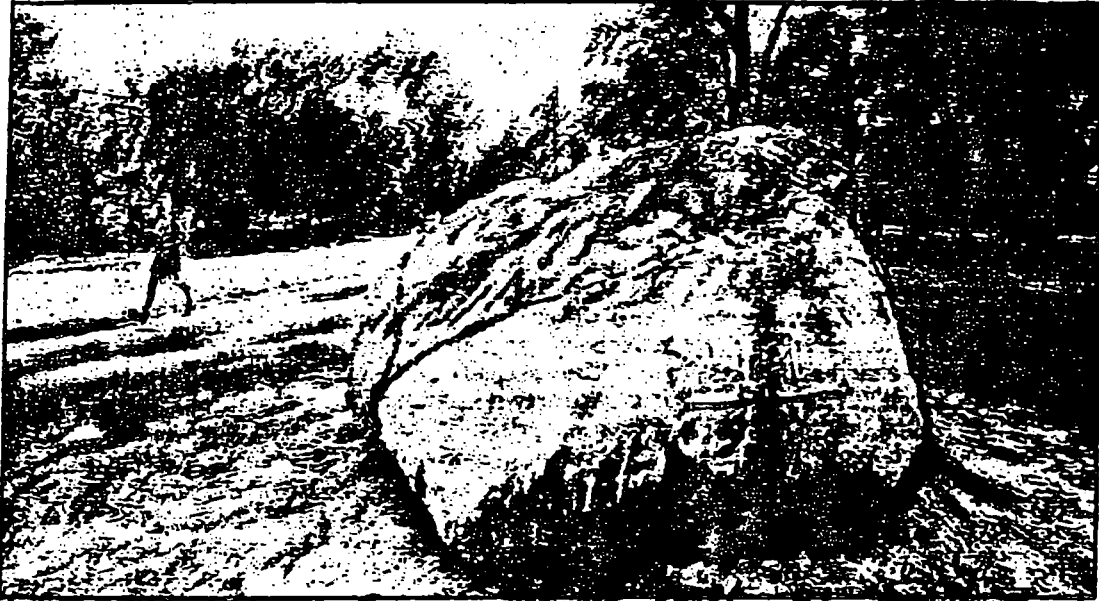


# ROCK UPROAR

Hearing Wednesday on landmark's fate



NEWS PHOTO • TRACEY STEELE

The rock at the corner of Washtenaw Avenue and Hill Street will be the topic of a public hearing about its possible removal.

By KARL LEIF BATES  
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

**The Rock: landmark or lightning rod?**

At the request of neighbors who say they've had enough of the painting, yelling and vandalizing that surrounds the huge boulder at Hill Street and Washtenaw Avenue, city officials are holding a hearing Wednesday night to determine the future of the fieldstone.

Neighborhood residents have painted a picture of rock decorators as vandals and drunkards and say removing the rock will end the offensive behavior.

Defenders of the dolomite say the

rock isn't the problem, just some people are.

This will be more than City Council can simply brush aside.

"First of all, I'm not convinced that all of the homeowners want it out of there," said Polk Wagner, president of the University of Michigan Interfraternity Council.

Secondly, "It's an Ann Arbor tradition," Wagner said. "Everybody paints the rock. It's an Ann Arbor thing, not just a U-M thing and not just a Greek thing."

While he acknowledges the sur-

# Supporters don't want U-M landmark removed

rounding neighborhood ought to be disgusted with the empty cans and spray paint spattering their shrubbery, sidewalks and fence posts. Wagner believes other measures can be taken to control the spillover, short of rolling the rock. He suggests a trash can on the site, for starters, and some signs prohibiting painting anything other than the rock.

Placed where it is, at a major entrance to the central city, The Rock also announces in colorful fashion that one has arrived in a student town.

"It's a fairly harmless thing," Wagner said. "It allows the students to express some ideas and show their support for their school."

Neighbors are having a hard time believing that vulgar expressions painted on the rock are an important expression of heartfelt student spirit.

When the idea of removing the rock was first suggested to the city's parks department last month, Parks Advisory Commission members wanted to move ahead with the action and get it done before students return for classes in the fall.

"I can certainly understand why they're doing this during the summer, but it's underhanded," Wagner said. He advocates waiting until the students return before making a final decision, just so everyone has a chance to say their piece.

"We had a flurry of calls here right after the article (June 16 in The Ann Arbor News)," said Ronald A. Olson, superintendent of parks in Ann Arbor. "It seems like we've gotten more calls from people concerned about the rock going away."

Even if the rock stays, the parks department will be stuck with a bill for cleaning up soils on the tiny triangular park which are tainted with

**THE ROCK**

■ **What:** Hearing on the fate of The Rock at Hill Street and Washtenaw Avenue.

■ **When:** 7:30 p.m. Wednesday.

■ **Where:** Ann Arbor City Council chambers, second floor of City Hall, 100 N. Fifth Ave.

lead, mercury, cadmium and titanium from thousands of gallons of spilled paint. Olson said they haven't figured out yet how much the cleanup or the rock removal would cost.

If you cannot attend the hearing, the city is accepting comment by mail. A post card or letter can be sent to: The Rock, Department of Parks and Recreation, P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, MI 48107.

## LOCAL

### Neighbors' complaints lead to hearing on Rock

The Rock landmark or lightning rod? At the request of neighbors who say they've had enough of the painting, yelling and vandalizing that surrounds the huge boulder at Hill Street and Washtenaw Avenue, city officials are holding a hearing Wednesday night to determine the future of the fieldstone.

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