County Commission accepts state grant to monitor water quality at two Grosse Pointe Farms beaches

When the 2016 swim season rolls around, two Lake St. Clair beaches in Grosse Pointe Farms will be tested to ensure that the water quality will be safe for swimmers.

Pier Park, a public facility, and the private Crescent Sail Yacht Club, both on Lake Shore Road, will be part of the Great Lakes Beach Monitoring Program, which will be paid for through a $24,578 Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Office of Drinking Water and Municipal Assistance grant. The grant was unanimously accepted by the Wayne County Commission on Jan. 21.

The grant is retroactive to Oct. 1, 2015, and runs through Sept. 30, 2016.

County officials told the Commission’s Committee on Health and Human Services that no Wayne County beaches were closed in 2015 because of contamination, but the beaches at Pier Park and Crescent Sail Yacht Club have been closed at times previously because of E. coli, a bacteria that can cause a variety of illnesses, including diarrhea, urinary tract infections, respiratory illness and pneumonia, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
“Lake St. Clair has a recent history of E. coli, and it’s important that we protect those who want to swim at those two beaches,” said Commissioner Tim Killeen, D-Detroit, whose 1st District includes Grosse Pointe Farms. “We were very fortunate to not be affected last year, but we haven’t been so fortunate in other years. We just want to ensure that everyone is safe.”

Commissioner Killeen chairs the Committee on Health and Human Services, which voted unanimously Jan. 12 to move the grant acceptance to the full Commission for final consideration.

The grant includes $3,100 dedicated to monitoring the beaches. The biggest portion of the grant, $18,000, will be dedicated to testing every public swimming pool in Wayne County. Also covered by the grant will be ensuring that well and campground water is safe and monitoring septic waste.

Since 2009, the county has accepted nearly $255,000 in state funding for water monitoring and inspections.