

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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ASSOCIATION UPHOLDS RIGHTS OF CHALLENGERS

As a result of alleged violation of the election laws in the recent village election in Grosse Pointe Park, the Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney recommended warrants for the arrest of George Defer, president of the village and Samuel Bastien, trustee.

The basis for the arrest centers around the ejection of Harold D. Strickland and John H. Flancher from the polls, thus preventing them from carrying out their duties as challengers.

Both Strickland, who was acting in the capacity of challenger for the Progressive party, and Flancher, appointed as challenger by the Citizens Association of Grosse Pointe Township at the request of Grosse Pointe Park voters, were denied the right to remain inside the enclosure during the counting of the ballots.

Section 3694 of the Compiled Laws of 1915 gives duly appointed challengers the "right to remain during the canvass of the votes and until the returns are duly signed and made." Both challengers state that after the polls had closed and the ballot box was opened prior to counting the vote, Defer ordered that they be ejected from within the enclosure where the votes were being counted. Upon being advised by the challengers that they had a right to be present for the counting of the ballots and intended to remain, Defer again ordered them out and directed Bastien to do the same. As a result of their refusal to go, village police were called and the challengers were ejected by force.

Prior to the incident, directors of the Citizens Association of Grosse Pointe Township met and passed a resolution stating that the Association would prosecute to the full extent of the law any violation or infringement of the rights of challengers. Rumors of previous violations prompted this action. The Citizens Association of Grosse Pointe Township took this action and the responsibility of placing the facts before the prosecuting at-

torney because it is interested in the principle involved and not in the personalities of the case. The Association is committed to the policy of furthering good government within the township of Grosse Pointe and believes the present case has an important bearing upon the voter's rights to fair and unaltered election returns.

The Association is organized to guard against abuse of the elective franchise and to seek to preserve the purity of elections. In the present dispute, the question of the validity of the returns is not raised but the Association believes that toleration of a system which prevents authorized scrutiny of the counting of ballots is contrary to the basic principles of popular government. A condition under which a political group count their own and opponent's ballots in secret may properly be questioned. In an election in which the result depended on a few votes, the value of an independent check of the count as provided in the election law relating to challengers might be highly important.

A hearing of the facts before Judge Gordon in the Justice Court to determine its trial in Circuit Court was held May 11th. The attorney for the defendants argued that the alleged violations were only technicalities. Judge Gordon forthwith dismissed this plea, stating: "A felony is never a technicality."

After three hours of testimony and argument the case was extended for further hearing before Judge Gordon on May 18th at 2:00 o'clock.

GROSSE POINTE SHORES ELECTION

Tuesday, May 19th, is the date set for election of village officers in Grosse Pointe Shores. Petitions for re-election of the present incumbents have been filed as follows:

President (1 year term) George Osius.

Clerk (1 year term) William C. Roney.

Trustees (2 year term, 3 to be elected) Ford Ballantyne, Hobart B. Hoyt, John T. Hurley.

ANNUAL SCHOOL ELECTION

Attention of the qualified school electors is called to the fact that the date for the election of School Board Trustees this year is June 9th. By action of the electors at the annual meeting last year the date was moved forward from the second Monday in July to the second Monday in June.

The state law requires that to qualify as a voter at school elections a person must be a legal resident of the school district, owning property within the district or be the parent or legal guardian of a child between the age of five and twenty years. Where property that is taxed for support of the school is held jointly by husband and wife both are entitled to vote.

The election of one school trustee for a three-year term and the voting of bonds to acquire a high school site will be balloted on this year.

PUBLIC PARK UNDER CONSIDERATION

Two petitions are being circulated in Grosse Pointe Park for the acquisition of a public park fronting on Lake St. Clair.

Both petitions designate particular pieces of property for the park. One of them asks that the lake frontage on the east side of Trombly Road in what is commonly known as the Jacobs property be acquired. The second petition opposes the acquisition of the Jacobs site and suggests the acquisition of the E. J. Hickey property fronting on Jefferson Avenue and extending to Lake St. Clair.

Grosse Pointe Park is the only one of the four villages that does not now have a public park on the lake front. Such a park has been advocated from time to time, but no definite plan has ever resulted.

While no official action on either site has been taken by the Council, it is important that the features of both sites be carefully and openly considered before a decision is reached. A referendum vote by the people might properly be held to determine the question.

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

P. O. Address, 316 E. Jefferson, Detroit.

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Printed once a month as the official publication of the Citizens Association of Grosse Pointe Township, under the authority of the following board of directors:

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CITIZEN INTEREST AND THE BUDGET

Few citizens, especially those of smaller communities, realize the importance centering around their municipality's annual budget, or appreciate the value of following the preparation of this document.

Briefly, the budget is the city's or village's wants for a given period reduced to terms of dollars and cents. It is an estimate of the amount of money needed by the government to carry on certain work. The citizen should be interested in what that work is and how much it is going to cost.

In addition to giving a comprehensive plan of money to be spent and of the work to be financed, a municipal budget should show the sources of revenue or how the money is to be raised. In other words, it should be a balanced budget.

The budgets under which the several political units in Grosse Pointe Township are now operating very widely. Some have the advantage of operating under a clearly detailed balanced budget that sets down, for the public's information, the various expenditures proposed by the departments. It is followed closely by officials as the financial program for the year. Others are still struggling with a financial program expressed in large sums, which neither citizens can understand nor officials explain.

During the May and June meetings of the village councils, budgets for the year will be passed. If you are interested in knowing what money your village plans to spend and what services are to be given in return, attend the budget meeting of your council. Ask questions relative to costs. How much does the police department

plan to spend and what portion will go to salaries, supplies, etc? What is planned in the way of public improvements? Such questions are answered in a well-planned budget.

Citizen interest in the budget acts as a guide to conscientious public officials in the performance of their duty. Interest in the financial program may be placed second only to the duty of selecting reliable officials at election time.

APARTMENT HOUSE ORDINANCE

Grosse Pointe Park

Numerous communications protesting the possible building of business places and apartments on Jefferson Avenue at Trombly Road have been received by the Grosse Pointe Park Council. As a result of these communications and in order to prevent the erecting of apartment buildings in Grosse Pointe Park, the council passed the following ordinance:

Section 1. That no building shall hereafter be erected in the Village of Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan, which shall house or provide apartments or residences for more than four families.

Section 2. Any person, firm or corporation who shall violate the provisions of this ordinance shall be punishable by a fine not exceeding \$100.00 or imprisonment in the Village or County Jail for a period not exceeding 90 days or both, such fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the court.

Section 3. Any ordinance which conflicts with the provisions of this ordinance is hereby repealed insofar as such ordinance conflicts with this ordinance.

Section 4. This ordinance is deemed to preserve the public health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the village of Grosse Pointe Park and is directed to take immediate effect.

Members of the Council have stated that a complete zoning ordinance is being planned and that the present ordinance was made effective in order to give time and study to the zoning problem. The present ordinance affects only apartment houses, providing for more than four families and in no way regulates commercial buildings, garages, and similar buildings regarded as hindrances to a residential community.

At present no information relative to the proposed zoning law is available. The present ordinance will restrict the building of large apartments which is considered by residents as the most threatening menace and will give members of the council time to consider the many phases that make up a sound zoning ordinance.

THROUGH TRAFFIC ORDINANCE

Grosse Pointe Park

Residents of Grosse Pointe Township should familiarize themselves with provisions of the following ordinance adopted by Grosse Pointe Park, April 7, 1925. The ordinance enacted is now in effect.

Section 1. That the following streets are designated as through traffic streets, to-wit: Mack avenue, Kercheval avenue and Jefferson avenue from the Easterly to the Westerly village limits, and Charlevoix avenue from the Easterly village limits to the line east of Somerset Road.

Section 2. It shall be unlawful for any driver or operator of any vehicle to enter or cross any through traffic streets without first having come to a complete stop before entering or crossing such streets.

Section 3. The provisions of this ordinance shall not apply to vehicles operated by the police or fire departments in the discharge of the duties of such departments and shall not apply where a traffic officer is on duty in which event the vehicles shall move at the direction of such traffic officer.

Section 4. Any person who shall violate or assist in the violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall be punishable by a fine not exceeding Twenty-five (\$25.00) Dollars, or imprisonment in the Village or County Jail for a period of thirty (30) days or both, such fine and imprisonment within the discretion of the court.

Section 5. This ordinance shall take effect twenty (20) days from the date of its enactment.

Grosse Pointe Park is the last of the four villages to recognize the importance of a through traffic ordinance. The need of uniform traffic regulation for all of the Grosse Pointe Villages was pointed out in the November, 1924 issue of the "Civic News" and through traffic ordinances for all of the villages were advocated. Mention of the article is warranted here since it indicates that need of the ordinance has existed for some time.

ARCHITECT OF HIGH SCHOOL SELECTED

George J. Haas, architect, 2231 Park Avenue, Detroit, has been selected by the School Board as architect for the new Grosse Pointe High School.

Both the School Board and the Building Committee were unanimous in the selection of Mr. Haas due to their satisfaction with his work in designing the Defer School.

Preliminary sketches of the new building and work on the plan will be started immediately in order that contracts for its construction may be let as soon as the case in Supreme Court respecting the site is settled.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statements of the financial transactions of two Grosse Pointe villages have been published within the last few months and should be studied by taxpayers interested in the keeping of municipal accounts. A review of these statements shows a wide range in the recording and reporting of financial transactions. A brief review of the reports is given here because little or no publicity, except in general terms at election time, is given to this important phase of municipal work. It is suggested that citizens obtain copies of the financial report of their village to be more familiar with the amounts used by the village departments and the means of showing such expenditures.

The statement for Grosse Pointe Park divides village expenditures into several funds, as follows: General Highway, Emergency, Water, Interest and Sinking Fund, in addition to separate funds for various water main extensions, street resurfacing and special assessment rolls. The twenty-four page booklet shows the source of receipts and nature of disbursements for each of the many funds as well as opening and closing balances for the fiscal period.

But the division of expenditures in the various funds as carried on in Grosse Pointe Park makes it difficult if not impossible to determine what expenditures are made by a single department or to know the cost of any particular activity. To be understandable and informative, a financial report should give a consolidated statement of all receipts and disbursements, as well as showing expenditures for each department according to a uniform classification. Such a classification would group salaries, labor, equipment, material and supplies under separate headings and totals would show various department costs. At no place does the report for Grosse Pointe Park show a complete consolidated statement of the money received and spent by the village. Such information can be gained only by adding the figures contained in the forty-three funds.

The report does no more than fill the legal requirements, and as a document planned to be informative to citizens falls far short.

In contrast to a financial statement of unrelated figures is the report of Grosse Pointe Village for the fiscal period ending February 28, 1925.

This report is well arranged, showing a consolidated statement of all receipts and expenditures followed by a uniform classification of expenditures for each village department. The cost of operating any department and the expenditures for salaries, materials and labor within the department are clearly shown. Statements of unpaid taxes, bonded indebtedness and sinking fund are also given. In short, the report prepared by Ernst and Ernst, auditors for the village, is a clear and concise statement of the village's cash transactions for the year.

Grosse Pointe Village started the fiscal year, March 1, 1924, with a balance of \$11,672.08, to which was added receipts totaling \$310,357.37. Of this amount \$217,469.24 was current and delinquent property taxes, the balance coming from a number of sources which included current and delinquent special assessments, \$30,972.81 water rates, \$17,172.45, temporary loan, \$30,000, and the balance from interest and penalties, licenses, fines, etc.

Disbursements for the year totaled \$286,925.37, leaving a closing balance of \$35,104.98. This is an increase of \$23,432.00 over the balance of the previous year. The greater part of disbursements, \$236,903.77, are classified by budget expenditures which shows the cost of operating the different village departments, additions to the sinking fund, and the cost of improvements undertaken during the year. Operation of the village departments totalling \$134,820.62 of the above figure is divided as follows: Administration, \$17,975.51; Police, \$30,927.17; Fire, \$27,325.17; Public Works, \$3,580.83; Disposal Plant, \$15,873.57; Highways, \$39,137.83. Interest and Sinking Fund required \$54,787.16, payment on land contract, \$17,836.65 and for public improvements of various sorts \$29,459.34.

Financial statements for the past fiscal year have not been published by Grosse Pointe Farms and Grosse Pointe Shores. The brief reviews given here were taken from the unpublished reports of these villages.

Grosse Pointe Farms March 1, 1924 had a cash balance of \$55,108.67 to which was added receipts from taxes, fines, interest, water rates and bonds, \$279,195.80.

Disbursements for operating expense was \$168,246.80, and for capital

outlay \$114,895.04, leaving a closing cash balance of \$51,162.63.

In Grosse Pointe Shores revenues totaling \$73,663.91 were received. Of this amount, \$45,622.40 was from real property tax, \$8,746.80 personal property tax, and \$2,337.31 special assessment, the balance coming from interest on the sinking fund and bank deposits and from miscellaneous fees. Disbursements for the year amounted to \$59,041.19, leaving a balance of \$14,622.72.

The system of accounting and financial reporting used by Grosse Pointe Shores varies somewhat from that of the other Grosse Pointe Villages. Here book values are kept of all capital assets of the village, such as streets, water mains and equipment. Depreciation of these assets is made from time to time. The system follows the practice of commercial concerns and at the end of the present year showed a net surplus of \$142,438.74.

Both Grosse Pointe Farms and Grosse Pointe Shores show clearly in the unpublished statements the transactions of the past year. A definite classification of both receipts and disbursements are shown. Disbursements are classified by departments. A sub-classification shows the cost of the various services and material for each department.

A summary of the reports reviewed shows considerable range in the recording and reporting of financial transactions. However, with one exception, disbursements are classified in a uniform manner for all department and consolidated statements of receipts and disbursements are given. Such features are essential to properly showing the cost of government which should be the purpose of the financial report of the municipality. Unless the report is arranged to show clearly the cost of the activities carried on it can be of little value to either officials or citizens.

The clerk and the attorney for the School Board spent several days in Lansing last month opposing Senate Bill 186, which contained a number of features believed objectionable to the interests of the local school district.

The bill was widely opposed by other sections of the state, and in the opinion of persons visiting the legislature, was definitely buried in committee before the local school board authorized the junket to oppose it.

CONTRACTS AWARDED Grosse Pointe Village

Several contracts for street improvements and water main extensions in Grosse Pointe Village were let at the regular April meeting of the Council.

The paving of Rivard Boulevard from Black Marsh Ditch to Mack Avenue was awarded to the Detroit Asphalt Paving Company for \$19,782.90. The same company was also lowest bidder on paving Cadieux Road from the ditch to Mack avenue which is being undertaken jointly by Grosse Pointe Park and Grosse Pointe Village. Grosse Pointe Park's share of the contract amounts to \$10,138.60 and Grosse Pointe Village will pay \$10,089.10. Both the Rivard and Cadieux pavements will be twenty-six feet wide and of eight inch concrete base with three inch asphalt top.

The contract for water main extensions was awarded to Lester J. Clancy, the lowest of four bidders, for \$30,601.00. A review of water main extensions to be undertaken appeared in the March issue of the "Civic News."

The completion of the work will furnish an adequate and reliable supply of water to all parts of the village. The expense of the undertaking will be paid from bonds.

STREET PAVING Grosse Pointe Park

Petitions for the paving of Trombly Road, Harcourt Road, and an extension of Windmill Pointe Drive from the westerly line of Trombly Road through the Jacobs property were presented at the Grosse Pointe Park Council meeting May 5th. Hearing of any objections of adjoining property owners is scheduled for May 19th and it is expected that the opening of bids for the improvement will be made at the regular meeting of the Council, June 2nd.

The petition covers streets in the Houseman-Spitzley duplex subdivision which lies east of Trombly Road, south of Jefferson Avenue.

Standard pavements twenty-six feet wide of eight-inch concrete base and three-inch asphalt top will be laid. The expense of the improvement will be paid by special assessment on adjoining property.

TOWNSHIP BOARD CONSIDERS NEW ROAD

A public hearing of persons interested in establishing a township road paralleling Lake Shore Road was held before the Township Board, April 29. This proposed highway, which was tentatively located several hundred

feet north of the northerly limits of Grosse Pointe Shore, was planned as an additional artery to relieve congestion on Lake Shore Road. Its connection with Grosse Pointe Boulevard at Weir Lane and the extension of Kercheval Avenue through Grosse Pointe Farms, offered another direct route to downtown Detroit.

Several property owners at the southerly end of the route, whose land was necessary in carrying out the plan were heard and the objections raised by them have held up the project, at least for the present. Under the present law townships do not hold the power of condemnation and their power to acquire land by purchase is too limited to apply in securing the proposed road. It could be acquired only by property owners granting the land necessary. Such grants could not be unanimously obtained at the time, so that the project is held in abeyance at present.

However, the Township Board adopted the policy of not accepting plats of subdivided property adjoining the suggested road unless provision is made for it in the plat. Property in the township north of Grosse Pointe Shores is rapidly being subdivided so the policy adopted definitely provides for the road at some future date.

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A municipality, like a private concern, buys only services and goods. The proper budgeting of its needs are essential to economical and efficient administration.

Mr. Bernard B. Vogt,
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Grosse Pte. Village, Mich.