

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

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OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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EXPERTS DIFFER ON HIGH SCHOOL PLANS

A joint meeting of the Grosse Pointe School Board, the building committee, and representatives of the Detroit Board of Education was held at Cadieux School, Thursday evening, November 19th to discuss written criticisms of the plans for the new high school which had been made by Detroit school officials and by W. L. Coffey, assistant state superintendent of public instruction.

E. L. Miller, assistant superintendent of Detroit schools, in a letter addressed to the Grosse Pointe School Board, reproduced below, had indicated decided disapproval of the plans. At the meeting however, he expressed his views rather cautiously. He began by saying that the Grosse Pointe plans were fully as good as those of Detroit high schools. If he meant this statement to suggest that the proposed Grosse Pointe school would not suffer by comparison with those in Detroit built a number of years ago, but would not prove equal to Detroit's newest high schools, he did not stress the point. He went on to indicate certain defects in the plan, such as the proximity of several classrooms to the gymnasium and cafeteria, objectionable on account of the noise.

G. L. Schultz, head of the department of architectural research for the Detroit Board of Education, following Mr. Miller said that the plan could be improved in a great many instances, some of which he pointed out. Both Mr. Miller and Mr. Schultz agreed that the two gymnasiums should be placed together in the one wing instead of being separated.

The normal capacity of the school, it was declared by the Detroit experts, would be about 1800 pupils. Superintendent Walling, who had specified that the school should accommodate 1000 pupils, submitted some rather hasty calculations of population growth to show the need for the larger capacity.

The specific objections against the plan raised by the assistant superin-

tendent of public instruction reproduced below, received considerable attention from the two men who found most of the objections untenable.

The discussion also included remarks by George J. Haas, architect of the Grosse Pointe School Board, and his assistants, and several citizens. Finally, the School Board passed a resolution calling for another meeting of the interested parties, at which specific answers to the objections from the state superintendent's office were to be formulated.

The meeting left the impression that the defects in the plans could be remedied without radical revision of the whole plan, such as the correspondence already referred to seemed to call for. The external appearance of the building received nothing but praise.

Other developments concerning the plan and the payment of architect, came to light at the last regular meeting of the School Board on November 11th. Through letters received from the Department of Public Instruction, it was learned that the plans had been strongly disapproved. Disapproval by Detroit officials had been disclosed at a previous meeting. Both reports were directly in conflict with the reports of W. L. Walling, Grosse Pointe Superintendent of Schools, who previously represented that the plans met the approval of both offices. That the plan had been approved by the Department of Public Instruction was also asserted by George J. Haas, architect of the building.

Preliminary plans and sketches of the building were formally presented at a joint meeting of the School Board and building committee in October, at which time features of the building, its capacity, and cost were discussed. The building was planned to house both Junior and Senior High School grades 7 to 12, and was based upon the superintendent's requirements for 1,000 pupils.

Minutes of this meeting show that

the building committee recommended that the plans be accepted as presented as the preliminary plans for the new Grosse Pointe High School. The recommendation of the building committee was concurred in by the School Board and the architect was instructed and authorized to proceed with the preparation of detailed drawings and specifications.

A subsequent meeting of the School Board raised the question of presenting the plans to Detroit school men in order that Grosse Pointe might have the benefit of their experience in school planning. Moreover, it was pointed out, by a member of the School Board, that Detroit's approval of the plan was necessary before it would be accepted by the Department of Public Instruction. This information had been given by the Detroit superintendent of schools. Accordingly, with a view to gaining Detroit's approval prior to submitting the plans to the State Department, the Board directed its superintendent to arrange for a study of the plans by Detroit's educational staff. But before an interview had been held with Detroit, W. L. Walling, Superintendent, and George J. Haas, architect, acting upon their own initiative and without instruction from the School Board, made a special trip to Lansing and succeeded in having the rubber stamp of approval placed upon the plans by a subordinate official. A written report of the trip made by the superintendent assured the School Board that the building was acceptable to the Department of Public Instruction, that in fact, it had been "enthusiastically" received.

The meeting with Detroit school men, which had been authorized by the Board to precede any attempt to gain the State's approval of the plans, was next held and a report that the plans met with approval of Detroit educators and that they had suggested only minor changes, was made to the Board by Supt. Walling.

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Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

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

H. P. Breitenbach, Consulting Editor.

H. G. Fishack, Editor.

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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FALSELY REPORTED

Reports have been circulated recently that the boundary line between the City of Detroit and Grosse Pointe Park has been altered so that all lots on the west side of Wayburn Avenue are wholly within Grosse Pointe Park.

Such reports are entirely unfounded inasmuch as the present boundary cannot be changed by any agreement between Detroit and Grosse Pointe Park officials. Any change in the present boundary can be made only by annexation of the entire lots now in dispute to Detroit or to Grosse Pointe Park. To accomplish this would require a majority vote of both municipalities and of the territory in dispute.

In order to definitely locate the boundary a survey made by Detroit engineers showed that the line was twenty and a fraction feet west of the westerly line of Wayburn Avenue and passed through the front porches of the houses along the street.

For a number of years this line has been recognized by Detroit and residents on the west side of Wayburn Avenue have been registered on the city rolls and have voted in Detroit elections. At the same time they have been permitted to register and vote in Grosse Pointe Park.

This condition was pointed out by the "Civic News" during the village election last spring with the hope that village officials would be active in correcting a condition that permits illegal voting. Two remedies are offered:

1. The present boundary can be changed by annexation;
2. Registration lists can be corrected to include only those actually residing within the limits of Grosse Pointe Park.

Responsibility for proper registration is definitely fixed by Section 1 of Chapter IX of the State Law relative to elections which states that "whenever it shall come to the knowledge of any township, city or village clerk that there is probable illegal or fraudulent registration in his township, city or village or any precinct thereof he shall have the power and it shall be his duty, to make full investigation of the facts concerning such registration and to ascertain whether any names have been illegally or fraudulently registered."

It is important that an agreement in the present controversy be reached in order that the residents in question may be definitely and properly instructed as to their voting privileges. The question has been raised before but has been disregarded by village officials. Their duty in the matter seems clear. The interests of all parties concerned requires early and definite settlement of this long pending question.

SIDEWALKS ORDERED CONSTRUCTED

Sidewalks along the north side of Grosse Pointe Boulevard have been ordered laid by the Village of Grosse Pointe Farms. A portion of the walk between Oak Street and Moran Road already has been constructed. Other sections will not be completed before spring in order that trees now in the line of the walk may be removed.

Residents of Grosse Pointe Farms living in Oak Street are much interested in the early completion of the improvement. At present the children of this neighborhood who are attending Kerby School are required to cross Grosse Pointe Boulevard at Oak Street and again at Kerby Road in going to or coming from school. Because of considerable traffic on the boulevard this condition increases the possibility of accidents.

Inasmuch as school bus service is not furnished this neighborhood and children therefore walk nearly a mile to the Kerby school, it is hoped that the new walk will be completed soon.

ANOTHER VILLAGE IS PLANNED

A petition for the incorporation of the new village of Lochmoor to include all territory in Grosse Pointe Township not now within the limits of the present villages is being circulated. The territory extends from the back line of Grosse Pointe Shores to the Gratiot Township line, 1650 feet west of Mack Avenue, and from the boundary of Grosse Pointe Farms at Weir Lane to the Macomb County line. Approximately three and a half square miles are within these boundaries which includes the small strip of territory lying west of Mack Avenue that voted against annexation to Detroit in the last election. Its area is considerably greater than any of the present Grosse Pointe Villages. According to Edmund C. Vernier, township treasurer, between 900 and 1,000 persons reside in the territory. Mr. Vernier also states that as soon as one hundred signatures are obtained, which is the number required for the petition, an effort will be made to hold a special session of the Wayne County Supervisors to act upon the petition and that incorporation of the village will be carried forward as rapidly as legal requirements permit.

It is understood that the area is being incorporated in order to obtain water, sewers and other municipal improvements not obtainable while remaining as township territory.

When considered in relation to the area to be served, the population is rather small to attempt any extensive program of public improvements.

MUNICIPAL GARAGE

Grosse Pointe Park Council has authorized construction of a municipal garage and repair shop to be placed on village owned property at the rear of the municipal hall site. Construction of the building, which will be 90 by 42 feet on one wing and 88 by 26 feet on the other wing, was awarded to Herbert J. Williams, a resident of Grosse Pointe Park.

It is understood the cost, \$21,140, will be paid from taxes rather than by bonding for the amount.

In addition to housing all motor equipment of the village with the exception of fire trucks, ample space will be provided for repair work. A repairman who will have charge of maintaining motor equipment has recently been added to the village payroll.

(Continued from Page 1)

That the plan apparently did not meet the approval of Detroit was learned soon after this meeting. The following letter stating that only a brief review of the plan had been allowed, was received by the Secretary of the School Board:

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Detroit, Michigan

October 28, 1925

Mr. C. A. Paye,
Board of Education,
Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

Dear Sir:

Mr. Frank Cody, Superintendent of Public Schools, Detroit, directs me to report to you on the plans for the proposed new high school in Grosse Pointe.

I have not had an opportunity to examine these plans critically, but my impression of them is that they are considerably out of date. There are several features which are being avoided in modern buildings. It is, therefore, my opinion that the plans should be entirely redrawn so as to give to the people of Grosse Pointe a school that represents the best modern practice and design.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) E. L. MILLER,
Assistant Superintendent.

At the Board's meeting of November 11th, the following letters addressed to Mr. Haas were presented to the Board.

Lansing, November 4, 1925.

Mr. George J. Haas,
1101 Kresge Bldg.
Detroit, Michigan.

My Dear Mr. Haas:

I talked with you yesterday concerning the plans for Grosse Pointe, preliminary of which had been approved by Mr. Goodrich in my absence.

I told you over the phone that it had been the policy of this Department to ask that plans for school districts in the vicinity of Detroit, included within the metropolitan area, be taken up with Supt. Cody. Our reason for this is to ascertain whether the arrangement of the plan of the building is such that if the metropolitan area is brought under the jurisdiction of one school district such plan would lend itself to administration of the general school system under such conditions. The idea is that a matter of this kind should be taken care of at the time of building so that the people will not have a financial loss due to radical changes that would need to be made to make the building fit into the general program for the metropolitan area.

You stated that you had had the plans in Mr. Cody's office and that you would have that matter taken up and let me know concerning their advice as to whether the arrangement would meet the metropolitan area requirement.

Will you kindly have Mr. Cody write me a letter in order that we may have this information here?

Yours very truly,

W. L. COFFEY.

Mr. George J. Haas,
Detroit, Mich.

My Dear Mr. Haas:

I wrote you the enclosed letter, but held it up thinking you would be in to discuss the plans for Grosse Pointe.

After talking with you the other day I went over the plans very carefully, and the enclosure represents the items that need consideration.

The scheme of construction used by spreading the building over as much ground as you will, makes the building considerably more expensive. However, we would not refuse to approve plans on that ground if the people of Grosse Pointe wish to pay this additional money.

One thing that impressed me in going over these plans is the fact that you have sacrificed the internal part of the school building in order to give a beautiful architectural effect outside. I think a school building should be beautiful. It has its effect on the community, and in a community like Grosse Pointe where there is a great deal of wealth and where there are many fine homes, a school building should be in keeping architecturally with the rest of the community, but of course in doing that, the interior arrangement must have first consideration. That is where the children work, and that is the part of the building for which the state has made provision that school districts shall tax themselves to build.

The cafeteria going through two floors is wasteful, and the study rooms as large as they are are not in accordance with present-day practice.

As mentioned in the outline enclosed, there are five vital things that would need consideration: The size of the study room. The cafeteria. Lack of provision for additions to the building. The gymnasium. The community room.

In considering these plans, other items of arrangement may come in, but these five items, as well as some minor items would need to be cared for before plans and specifications can be approved by the Department.

Undoubtedly you will find it convenient to come to Lansing and go over this matter with me. However, I shall be out all of next week, and the first two days of the following week.

I am anxious that Grosse Pointe shall have a fine school building, yet I do not want to approve anything which is contrary to modern school practice and for which this Department could be justly criticised, and anything in the building that could be questioned from the best present-day educational practice.

In my letter of the 4th, suggesting that this matter be discussed with Superintendent Cody, I had in mind, as stated in that letter, the general arrangement which would need to be considered if this district became a part of the metropolitan area, which it no doubt will if the same procedure is followed in Detroit and vicinity that has been followed in other great metropolitan areas. In other words, the building should be such that at any time it could be changed to meet any kind of a school program.

Lansing, Mich.
November 7, 1925.

GROSSE POINTE PLANS

1. Study rooms too large.
2. No provision to add to building.
3. Very incompact, and therefore might be questions from the standpoint of wastefulness.
4. Upper part of cafeteria and study rooms wasteful of space.
5. If junior-senior high school, the classrooms are too small for home rooms. Plat plan, however, indicates that this is to be a senior high school.
6. Assistant principal and clerk's room poor light.
7. Trophy room wasteful.
8. Shop does not lend itself to extension, and does not account for activities that a junior high school should have, providing one shop outfit is to serve both senior and junior high schools. Undoubtedly you have this in mind, inasmuch as the groups of buildings when completed would be close together.
9. Corridors 13 ft. wide. Question this width considering distribution. Probably 2 ft. wider than necessary in the clear of lockers.
10. Means of reaching stage off and from gymnasium.
11. Why have running track? Running track very seldom included because not in accordance with modern conception of people who have charge of physical education.
12. Size of some rooms in vocational school can be questioned.
13. Gymnasium not arranged for division of boys and girls.
14. What standard have you used in determining the number of toilet fixtures?
15. Why have a community room on second floor where it will not be suitable for people and where public will have access to school building?
16. The plat plan indicating location of the junior high school, if constructed in that manner, will give practically all rooms north and south light, which can be very easily avoided on a site of this kind, and which should be avoided, especially for a junior high school where children are seated in home rooms and small study rooms.

(Signed) W. L. COFFEY.

Architect's fees amounting to \$15,000 were authorized by the School Board, November 6th. The architect's contract stipulated that this amount, which is one percent. of the estimated cost of the building, was payable upon completion of the preliminary drawings. Although the architect had apparently received objections to the plan from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the board, not aware of the objections, paid the fee.

WLC:N

Yours very truly,

(Signed) W. L. COFFEY.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS RECOMMENDED

Recommendations relative to a program of acquiring additional school buildings and sites were made by the Superintendent of Schools at the October meeting of the Board.

The Superintendent suggested:

1. That an addition to Defer School be built immediately.

2. That at least the first units be erected on the Cadieux-Kercheval and Windmill Pointe sites.

3. That steps be taken to acquire as soon as possible sites on Moran Road north of Ridge Road and in the vicinity of Mater and Hampton Roads.

4. That Kerby and Vernier School sites be enlarged.

No action was taken on any of the recommendations. The fact that school enrollment has increased 541, or 37.3% during the past year, indicates that additional school accommodations are needed badly. The superintendent believes that immediate steps should be taken to relieve congestion in Defer School. This can be accomplished by an addition to the present building or by erecting a building on the Windmill Pointe site at Essex Drive and Beaconsfield Avenue. Children living in Grosse Pointe Park south of Jefferson Avenue who attend Defer School now are required to travel nearly a mile. The State Department of Public Instruction recommends that buildings be placed within a half mile of the children attending.

SIGNAL SYSTEM ENLARGED

Police and fire signal systems in Grosse Pointe Park and Grosse Pointe Village are being enlarged due to the number of new houses that have been built recently.

In Grosse Pointe Park five police and seven fire boxes are being added. These boxes will complete the signal system for Grosse Pointe Park and place an alarm station within five hundred feet of any property in the village. Officials are carrying out recommendations made by the Michigan Inspection Bureau in making these additions.

Eight new fire boxes have been installed in Grosse Pointe Village and additional protection has been afforded school children by placing a signal box in Cadieux school. Changes have also been made in the call numbers of the system so that all boxes on a street are now reported on the same alarm series.

As in Grosse Pointe Park, the changes were recommended by the Michigan Inspection Bureau. A fire-proof addition to the village garage is being constructed to house the signal batteries, switch board and generator.

Two offenders who had turned in false alarms were apprehended recently by Grosse Pointe Village police and fined ten dollars each and costs in Justice Court. The incident should help in reducing the number of false alarms that have been troubling the department.

PARENT-TEACHERS ORGANIZE

Parents of Trombly School pupils met at the school Thursday evening, November 5th and organized the Trombly School Parent-Teachers Association. Officers of the Association are: President, Mrs. L. C. Crandall; Vice-President, Mrs. L. Anderson; 2nd Vice-President, Mrs. Forrester; 3rd Vice-President, Mrs. Ethel J. Cowe; Treasurer, Mrs. Adelbert Lindley; Recording Secretary, Mrs. O. T. Coffelt; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Samuel Kelly.

The association is planning interesting meetings for each month of the school year and earnestly requests the co-operation of all parents interested in its work. The initial meeting featured talks given by Dr. L. E. Maire and Superintendent Walling who reviewed plans of the new high school. Members of Cadieux, Hanstein and Vernier Associations have also had the opportunity of hearing discussion of the plans.

The next Parent-Teachers meeting of the Trombly School will be held Thursday evening, December 5th.

American Education Week, November 16 to 22, was observed in Grosse Pointe Schools by a number of talks dealing with patriotic and civic subjects as suggested by the national bureau of education.

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CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

GROSSE POINTE, MICH.

A healthy public sentiment should be cultivated which will hold in just execration the man who misplaces the trust of the people. We need to aid us public spirited papers which will call a spade a spade.

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