

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

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OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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LAKEFRONT DEVELOPMENT

Improvement of the water front, including development of a municipal park and dock facilities at Lakeshore Road and Vernier Road, is being undertaken by Grosse Pointe Shores. The village is working in conjunction with the re-organized Grosse Pointe Yacht Club, which is planning further water front improvement of the property adjoining the proposed municipal park. Plans for the development have been considered for more than a year and the final plan as approved is the result of close co-operation between village and yacht club officials.

Approval of the plan was obtained recently when the voters at a special election expressed themselves overwhelmingly in favor of the improvement and by an almost unanimous vote authorized a bond issue of \$134,000 to finance the project. Part of the issue—\$30,000—has been used to purchase a piece of property 76 feet wide adjoining the municipal hall site on the north. The lake frontage of this property, together with that of the municipal hall site and the village owned property at the foot of Vernier Road, will be used for the park development.

The improvement to be undertaken by the village consists of filling in a section of the lakefront 400 feet along the shore and for a distance of approximately 600 feet into the lake, giving the village an attractive park of nearly six acres. In addition to the park the village will construct a pier approximately 600 feet long and an inner harbor for bathing and for an anchorage for small boats. An outer harbor for larger craft also is included in the plan. Both harbors will be open to residents of the village and to members of the yacht club.

Construction of the breakwater and making of the fill are already under way. Contracts totaling \$101,000 have been awarded for the village's portion of the work. Of

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TOWNSHIP HALL REMODELED

Repairs to the township building, situated at the southeast corner of Maumee Avenue and Roosevelt Place, have been completed and the building was occupied on September 2nd, for a meeting of the township board.

The improvements made, which, according to the supervisor, cost approximately \$3,000, consisted of placing a basement under the building, installing a heating plant, construction of a vault, on the first floor, and the removing of several partitions to enlarge the meeting room. Painting and decorating was done by a member of the township board.

The first meeting of the township board in the remodeled building was attended by a group of persons interested in township affairs, including several former township officers. This meeting convened an hour earlier than usual and the routine affairs of the board were quickly attended to. The business meeting was closed prior to 9:00 p. m., after which refreshments were served to mark the opening of the remodeled hall.

VILLAGE TAXES

Village taxes, which have been due and payable since July, must be paid before the third Monday in October to avoid being included on the delinquent tax roll. The state law requires that all village taxes outstanding on this date must be reported to the county treasurer, after which payment must be made at the county treasurer's office.

Penalties now being imposed by the village for late payment of taxes workers in the other precincts re-

Grosse Pointe Park	1%
Grosse Pointe Village	2%
Grosse Pointe Farms	2%
Grosse Pointe Shores	3%

In addition to penalties imposed by the village an amount will be added by the county treasurer to all delinquent payments. To avoid such additional charge, taxes should be paid to the village treasurer on or before October 18th.

STREET IMPROVEMENT GRANT

The township board recently allowed Grosse Pointe Park \$10,000 from the highway fund to pave a proposed street along the north side of the new Trombly School site in Windmill Pointe. This allowance from township funds concludes a dispute between the school board and Grosse Pointe Park council over the additional expense of this pavement.

The request for additional funds for the improvement originated last spring when the school board petitioned Grosse Pointe Park to vacate the unpaved portion of Nottingham Avenue running through the school site. A strip of school property wide enough for a new street was offered in exchange. Grosse Pointe Park officials refused the request and asked that in addition to the land offered the school board acquire additional land to open the street to Westchester Road and further that the cost of paving be assumed by the school district.

Upon learning that the school district could not legally spend funds for street opening and paving, village officials suggested that the township contribute toward the improvement. This suggestion was based upon the fact that property in Grosse Pointe Park and the other villages pay the greater portion of the township highway fund, but received no benefits in return. The additional expense of improving the street, it was argued, would greatly increase the village tax, and in order to avoid this village officials suggested that relief be sought from the township. The burden of the improvement would thus be spread upon the entire township. Accordingly, a member of the school board and a member of the village council met with the township board and after stating the situation the village was granted \$10,000 to be used in making the improvement.

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

H. P. Breitenbach, Consulting Editor.

H. G. Fishack, Editor.

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FUTURE TOWNSHIP EXPENDITURES

At the primary election September 14th, the question to incorporate the remainder of the township into the Village of Lochmoor carried by a vote of 116 to 25, or nearly five to one. A charter commission of five was elected and within a few months village officials will be chosen and the fifth village in Grosse Pointe Township will start its career. This new village, covering all territory of the township outside of the present villages, places Grosse Pointe Township in an uncommon position, since no portion of the township will remain outside of an incorporated village. Upon incorporation, certain activities of the present township government will fall automatically to the new village, which raises some question of the township's future duties.

At present the duties carried on by the township briefly are as follows: To assess property, levy and collect taxes for state, county and township purposes, including the health district and schools, to conduct state, county and township elections, to provide justice courts for the trial of minor offenders, and constables for the serving of legal papers, to disburse poor relief, to furnish police protection, street lighting and highways to territory outside of the villages.

During the last fiscal year \$54,232.74 was spent to carry on this work. This figure excludes interest charges on bonds, deposits made to the sinking fund and an item of \$3,000 transferred to the health fund. It represents, therefore, only the cost of labor, material and serv-

ices and the salaries of township officers.

Further subdivision of the amount shows that nothing was spent for maintenance of justice courts and constables. Both justices and constables are supported by fees, not from taxes, and the amounts so collected as fees are not shown in the accounting for township funds. Poor relief orders to the amount of \$10,987.66 were allowed. Of special interest is the fact that maintenance of services within the area now being incorporated as a village required more than \$19,000. This amount, which is more than a third of the total amount spent for operation of the entire township government, is composed of \$5,502 for police services, \$9,432 for highway maintenance and repairs, and \$4,424 for street lighting.

The cost of these services, which in the past have been paid from taxes levied on the entire township, including the four villages, will be paid in the future by the new village alone. The township will be relieved of activities which at present are a big item of its expense. Such substantial reduction in the duties required of the township forecasts a corresponding reduction in the amount of funds required for operation of the township government.

ZONING

The need of zoning restrictions in Grosse Pointe has been advocated from time to time in the columns of the "Civic News" and now is claiming the attention of public officials in two Grosse Pointe villages. Within the past few months Grosse Pointe Village and Grosse Pointe Farms have authorized the preparation of zoning ordinances and have employed T. Glenn Phillips, Consultant to the Detroit City Plan Commission, to advise in preparation of the ordinances.

Preliminary work in mapping the territory of each village, location of present dwellings and determining the character of the several districts is now under way. At present no definite information is available regarding the date when the ordinance will be drafted and ready for public hearing.

There can be little question that zoning regulations will be an ad-

vantage to the Grosse Pointe villages and will serve as a barrier to undesirable buildings in this high class residential community. A well planned zoning law for any of the villages setting aside particular streets and districts for the several types of buildings will insure the orderly development of the community. Naturally, the logical time to adopt such restrictions is during the development of the community, while few, if any, undesirable conditions exist. Because zoning does not appear to be an immediate problem, it often is neglected until evils which it is designed to prevent have sprung up. At this time the problem becomes doubly difficult if not impossible to solve.

The need of zoning in Grosse Pointe will become more acute each year, and it is believed will become a more difficult problem, as time goes on. One village, Grosse Pointe Shores, adopted zoning regulations several years ago and with the completion of the ordinances now being considered Grosse Pointe Farms and Grosse Pointe Village will be adequately protected against indiscriminate growth. Village officials advocating the ordinances in these villages should be congratulated on their progressive policy.

PRIMARY ELECTION

At the primary election, September 14th, a total of 2,070 votes were cast, more than half of them in Grosse Pointe Park. With one exception, the presidential election in November, 1924, this is the largest vote ever recorded in Grosse Pointe Township.

The total cost for salaries of election clerks and inspectors was \$984. Because of the heavy vote in Grosse Pointe Park, clerks and inspectors in this precinct were each paid \$30.00 for their services, while workers in the other precincts received \$20.00. In Detroit \$16.00 is paid, regardless of the number of votes cast or the hours that inspectors and clerks are on duty.

In addition to voting favorably upon the incorporation of Lochmoor on September 14th, electors of the area selected a charter commission of five members. After the legally required period of 60 days has elapsed a special election will be held to act upon the village charter and to elect village officers.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OPENED

The Fall semester of the public schools opened Wednesday, September 8th, with an attendance slightly lower than that of a year ago. A total of 1,731 pupils were enrolled on the opening day this year, as compared with 1,825 enrolled at the same time last year. This reduction of total figures is due to recent annexation of a portion of Grosse Pointe Township to Detroit, placing the Haustein School under the Detroit system. Enrollment in five buildings now operated by Grosse Pointe was 1,731 this year and 1,446 in September, 1925, an increase of 285 pupils.

A comparison of initial enrollment by schools for this year and for 1925 is given below:

School	Sept. 1925	Sept. 1926	Increase or *Decrease No.	%
Cadieux	377	485	108	28
High School (Cadieux Building)	202	253	51	25
Defer	489	565	76	15
Kerby	206	217	11	5
Trombly	74	120	46	62
Vernier	98	91	*7	*7
	1446	1731	285	20%

All buildings with the exception of the Vernier School show increased enrollments, which range from a nominal increase at the Kerby School to the greatly increased enrollment of the Trombly. Fortunately, the overcrowded conditions in the present Trombly School are to be corrected soon by the opening of the new Trombly School next February. Opening of this building will also relieve the overcrowding of the Defer School.

In the Cadieux building inadequate accommodations are being furnished 738 pupils of all grades from the kindergarten through the high school. A considerable portion of the total number enrolled are being housed in temporary quarters, which include two frame buildings on the Cadieux site, and the Ferry cottage which houses the kindergarten. In order to accommodate all high school classes, an additional period has been added to the schedule, which now consists of eleven periods of forty minutes each. High school classes are now held from 8:00 a. m. to 4:00 p. m.

While Grosse Pointe schools at the opening of the term were just as badly crowded as a year ago, relief is now definitely in sight. Opening of the new Trombly building within a few months will relieve conditions in Grosse Pointe Park.

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SPECIAL ELECTION UPHELD

Grosse Pointe Park council passed a resolution at their meeting September 7th, strongly condemning a statement appearing in the August issue of the Grosse Pointe Civic News. The article to which the council took exception stated that a special election was being held in Grosse Pointe Park on September 13th, the day preceding the state primary, instead of in conjunction with the primary, and that the expense of additional election inspectors was therefore required. The statement was made after review of part 3, chapter 2, section 5 of the general election laws of the state, revision of 1926, which states that: "It shall be lawful to call a special election for the submission of any proposition on any regular or special primary election day."

The attorney for Grosse Pointe Park, however, has pointed out that under the laws relating to the incorporation and general powers of villages separate election inspectors are required for the village, and that no saving could have been effected by holding the special election on the primary date. To this extent the article printed was misleading. The Civic News gladly records the correction.

The subject presented at this special election was the proposed issue of \$50,000 thirty-year sinking fund bonds for additional street lighting equipment. A total of 189 votes were cast at the election, 126 in favor of the question, 60 opposing it, and 3 spoiled ballots. A favorable vote of two-thirds was necessary so that the issue carried by a single vote. On the following day 1,188 votes were cast in Grosse Pointe Park at the primary election. Had the election been held on primary day, with a separate election board to satisfy the legal requirements, it appears that a much more representative opinion would have been recorded, and the public saved the inconvenience of going to the polls on two successive days.

The frequency with which citizens are called to the polls is largely responsible for the general lack of interest in elections and often permits control by an active minority.

Completion of the high school within the next year and a half will provide adequate intermediate and high school facilities.

BLACK MARSH DITCH

Black Marsh Ditch has been one of the outstanding problems of the community for a number of years, and more recently has been the source of much discussion by residents, village trustees, township officials and joint committees of various sorts. But in spite of meetings, conferences and numerous proposals to do away with its admitted nuisance, Black Marsh Ditch remains today as calm and as stagnant as ever.

Recent attempts to improve the ditch began in 1923, but long before this it was a community problem that demanded considerable attention. The ditch was first deepened in 1875-76, at which time a survey was made that showed only a fraction of a foot fall from the upper terminal at Milk River to its outlet at Fox Creek. Two other attempts, the last in 1908, to create a flow by dredging and deepening, proved unsuccessful.

In 1923 action was started to dredge the ditch for the fourth time. Petitions were circulated and a majority of interested property owners joined in the project. Plans were under way to dredge the entire ditch to a depth six feet below the then existing lake level which, in the opinion of persons sponsoring the work, would be sufficient to create a flow. The cost of the project, estimated at \$200,000, was to be paid for by a special assessment on benefit property. Court proceedings to appoint commissioners to determine the necessity for the improvement were delayed from time to time until the plan was abandoned. The petition was not granted because the proceedings were held to be defective.

For more than two years little or nothing was done and it appeared that Black Marsh Ditch would be left in its stagnant and unsightly condition indefinitely. Some attempts were made by each of the villages to clean the ditch and to connect the pools of water, but no concentrated effort to permanently improve it was made until last spring, when a joint committee consisting of one representative from each of three Grosse Pointe villages and from the township was organized.

Formation of this committee was due largely to the efforts of the lo-

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cal health officer, who for a number of years has advocated that definite action be taken to better present conditions in the ditch. As health officer, Dr. Warren viewed the situation as a health problem and stated on a number of occasions that the unsanitary conditions of the ditch should be improved. While no epidemic has been traced directly to the ditch, it has been considered as a possible and serious health menace.

The joint committee held a number of meetings at which were present state health officials and the Wayne County and Macomb County Drain Commissioners. From discussions held by the committee it seemed generally agreed that converting the ditch into a closed drain offered the most logical solution. A former petition to widen and deepen the ditch was dismissed by the Wayne County Drain Commission and a plan to present a petition to enclose the drain was agreed upon. State health officials were actively following the work at this time inasmuch as the proposed improvement was an inter-county problem and thus required state supervision.

Before petitions were presented, however, Macomb County asked to be released from participation in the project because the problem of enclosing the ditch was not vital enough in Macomb County to warrant the expense involved. Since this action on the part of Macomb County nothing further has been

done to carry forward the plan.

Two other plans for the ditch now are being advanced. The City of Detroit has proposed converting the ditch into a main trunk sewer to serve the Grosse Pointe area and city territory. The proposed sewer is planned as an extension of the large intercepting sewer now being constructed under Jefferson Avenue in Detroit. The project would cost several million dollars and would not be in operation for approximately five years. The plan, while appearing to offer a solution, places such solution indefinitely in the future. Details of proportioning the expense have not, as yet, been worked out and may further delay the plan.

Some discussion of the city's proposal has been held by Grosse Pointe Park Council, but to date no agreement with Detroit officials has been reached. At present Grosse Pointe Park is connected with the Detroit sewer system and is paying only a nominal fee for such service. The problem of additional sewer connections is, therefore, not an immediate problem in that village.

The other plan being considered is for each village to improve the ditch within its village limits in any way it desires. The Wayne County Drain Commission has indicated that it will grant permission to Grosse Pointe Village to enclose the ditch between Fisher Road and Cadieux Road and this village is considering

such improvement to be made at village expense.

Should this plan be found practicable and legal it would have the advantage of promising results more quickly than other proposals made to date. Improvement of any portion of the ditch, however, should be planned with relation to the whole ditch. No portion, much less the middle portion, can be drained without regard to the upper and lower ends. It is not intended to discuss here any of the legal or engineering questions involved, but simply to point out that proper solution is necessarily attended by problems affecting the whole area.

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this amount \$76,000 is for construction of the harbors and \$25,000 for dredging and making of the fill.

An additional fill 70 feet wide, to be made by the yacht club, will adjoin the village park on the south. This land and a small portion of the village park will be occupied by the yacht club's quarters, which will be built within a year. The work of filling in the yacht club site will be done by the same company that is carrying on the village work, but will be under separate contract.

A sketch of the complete improvement prepared by the architect indicates that it will be a distinct asset to the community and will give Grosse Pointe Shores one of the finest small park developments obtainable.

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