

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

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AN ILLEGAL APPOINTMENT

Special Building Committee Exceeds Its Authority by Voting on Election of Architect for Lochmoor School

THE School Board is in the limelight again, this time through the illegal appointment of an architect for the Lochmoor School, made at a secret session of the Board and the Special Building Committee on November 29th. In the light of facts relative to the appointment, it is apparent that the Board must expunge records of the November 29th meeting and proceed in a legal manner.

The facts in the matter are as follows:

On November 29th, 1927, the Board of Education and the special building committee met jointly and went into executive session at which a vote was taken on the appointment of an architect for the proposed Lochmoor School. On the authority of at least three members of the School Board, it is known that only two of the five school trustees voted for Mr. Haas, the appointee.

On the decisive ballot the vote was:

For Haas: Messrs. Muir, Berns, Poupard, Trowbridge and Beaufait.

For Smith, Hinchman & Grylls: Messrs. Maire and Parcels.

Not Voting: Mr. Bradley.

Mr. Bradley did not vote, either, on the formal motion to make the appointment unanimous.

There are three good reasons why the Board should immediately take action to expunge the records of the November 29th secret session and start with a clean slate to reconsider the appointment of an architect for the Lochmoor School.

Exceeds Authority

First: Voting on the appointment by the building committee was illegal. The appointment was, therefore, illegal. (On this score, Civic News received the following opinion from the State Department of Public Instruction: "The members of a special building committee have no authority in

the selection of an architect. School architects can be elected only by members of the school board at a regular school board meeting. If members of the special building committee voted and the architect was selected by a majority, including votes of the building committee, the election was not legal. Briefly, the building committee has no authority except to suggest and advise with the board. All action must be the result of a majority rule of the board of education.")

Second: Contrary to good public policy and upon the express wish of the building committee, the matter of appointing the architect was taken up in executive session. One of the moth-eaten, imperialistic ideas about the conduct of government is that of secrecy at meetings of public bodies. Where public business is being transacted, it is only on extremely rare occasions that the public has not a right to be present. Enlightened and unselfish public officials welcome a display of interest in public affairs by citizens.

Democratic Principle

In Detroit, every committee meeting or regular meeting of the Council, is open to any citizen who wants to attend. The same is true of the Board of Education, except that the unsatisfactory committee system was abolished long ago by the Detroit board. Newspaper reporters, the unofficial representatives of the people, have ready access to all records and meetings. That is the recognized American system of conducting popular government in full view of the governed. The official who has nothing to hide is not timid about standing in the spotlight.

Scarcely an election ever passes that this principle of popular government is not reiterated by some candidate. At the last school board election in Grosse Pointe, the successful candi-

dates made the implied promise to voters: "If you are interested in better administration of Grosse Pointe Schools where matters of importance will be settled at *open* meetings, vote for Charles A. Poupard and Julius Berns."

Messrs. Poupard and Berns seemingly forgot their June election promise in November. If they were sincere in that pledge of open meetings, they will undoubtedly welcome an opportunity at the next monthly meeting of the School Board on January 9th, to expunge the November 29th action and take up the architect's appointment at an open and regular session of the Board.

Hardly a Wise Choice

Third: It is extremely doubtful if the appointment made November 29th is a happy one. The relations of the School Board with Mr. Haas in the past have been anything but pleasant. (Except on the occasions, perhaps, when Mr. Haas serves cake to the Board after long night sessions awarding contracts on furnishings for a school building.) Suggestions and demands of the Board from time to time have been entirely ignored by Mr. Haas, as records of the School Board and past issues of Civic News will reveal to anyone interested in a recital of the details.

To sum up, there is no doubt but that the matter of appointing an architect for the Lochmoor School must be taken up again. The previous action was illegal and unnecessarily secretive, and it is doubtful if the architect was well-chosen. To sell bonds to pay for work done by an architect whose appointment is questionably legal would be quite difficult, also. If only to correct the technical error in the appointment, the matter must be taken up again.

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

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AN ANTIQUE CHARTER

Complete separation of legislative and executive functions is considered the most efficient and economical method of administering government.

The village attorney of Grosse Pointe Park has drawn up a new charter which has been formally approved by the Charter Commission, the Attorney General and the Governor, and is now ready for submission to the voters. A vote by the people may be arranged for about February 13th, according to present plans. An outline of the charter's provisions was given in CIVIC NEWS in November.

As soon as possible an accurate report of a study of the new charter will be sought from experts. Meanwhile, CIVIC NEWS feels obliged to call attention at this time to the fact that the new charter is far from being modeled on the widely-known Cleveland commission-manager form of government.

In Cleveland, the Council appoints a city manager, who is the chief executive officer of the city and responsible to the Council for the proper administration of affairs. The manager appoints heads of departments, who are responsible solely to him.

Under Grosse Pointe Park's new charter the commissioners would each be the head of a department. The Commission would appoint a treasurer, assessor, solicitor, engineer and any other employees it felt necessary, including, if it saw fit, a so-called city manager.

Under such a system, the policy-forming officials are also charged with executing the policies decided upon. There is no clear-cut division of responsibility between a policy-forming body and an executive responsible to that body for the proper carrying out of its policies. This system merely perpetuates the old council idea under a new name and accentuates the possibilities for political mischief-making in government administration. It attracts detail men to legislative offices, and precludes the possibility of service by men of affairs.

This commission-manager form proposed for Grosse Pointe Park is at best an optional manager type, really a straight commission type that is now obsolete. Buffalo has just abandoned it and very few cities still retain it.

If the Charter Commission, composed of Robert M. Allan, chairman; Fintan L. Henk, Louis A. DeHayes, Alfred J. Garska and Julius W. Berns, sees fit to submit this charter for the voters' approval in February, they will be welcoming almost certain defeat of a plan which no expert on modern government administration would approve.

SEWER PLANS APPROVED BY GROSSE POINTE PARK

Plans and specifications for a proposed covered sewer in Fox Creek from Cadieux Road through the Village of Grosse Pointe Park to the Detroit city limits, were approved by the village council on December 3rd. Work has now begun on consideration of the contract which Grosse Pointe Park and the City of Detroit expect to agree upon for the use of the sewer by both municipalities.

The proposed sewer, which would cost an estimated \$725,000, must also be approved by the City Engineer of Detroit. It is planned as a unit to aid in solving the drainage problems of the 25 - square - mile Fox Creek Drainage District, as well as to aid Grosse Pointe rid itself of the so-called Black Marsh Ditch eye-sore and potential menace to health.

The council of the Village of Grosse Pointe has ordered its engineer to confer with the engineer of Grosse Pointe Park on the aspects of the closed sewer plan as it may affect solution of the ditch problem through Grosse Pointe Village.

NEIGHBORHOOD DOINGS

Basketball, boxing and dancing vie for attention at the Neighborhood Club, St. Clair Avenue, Neff Street and Waterloo, in January. In the midst of the merriment, the board of trustees will hold its annual meeting and elect officers on January 12th, at 10 a. m.

Tentative and fixed dates for some of the month's entertainment follow: Grosse Pointe Athletic Club dance, January 7th; College All-Stars vs.

Grosse Pointe Athletic Club, basketball, January 9th; community dance in charge of the House Council, January 14th; chauffeurs' card party and dance, January 18th; ten amateur boxing bouts, January 19th, if A. A. U. sanction is obtained; Police and Firemen's Ball, January 28th.

The Girls' Class A basketball team will play the Flint-Buick girls at Flint, January 10th. Other games are being arranged. A girls' basketball team is entered in the Settlement League and three boys' teams.

More than a thousand children and parents, nearly double what was expected, crowded the gymnasium for the Christmas party, December 29th.

HARBOR WALL COMPLETED

The harbor wall has been completed and the fill is nearly so in the municipal park and dock development project at Lakeshore and Vernier Roads, in Grosse Pointe Shores, it was announced in December by Arthur H. Bennett, superintendent.

A 600-foot fill is being made on 380 feet frontage owned by the village. Beyond the fill an approach pier 700 feet long extends to the breakwater or harbor wall, which projects another 450 feet out into Lake St. Clair—a total of 1,800 feet, almost to the Harbor Line.

An adjoining fill is being made on 170 feet frontage owned by the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club, which is bearing a portion of the cost of the outer harbor, 450 by 550 feet, which will be open to residents of the village as well as members of the yacht club. When the project is completed, the village will also have an attractive municipal park of six acres, and an inner harbor for bathing and small boat anchorage.

LOCHMOOR IMPROVEMENTS

A \$300,000 issue of 30-year bonds for the installation of sewers was approved at a special election in the Village of Lochmoor on December 19th, by a vote of 74 to 19. One of the total of 94 ballots cast was spoiled.

Sixty-inch sewers are to be installed on Seven-Mile and Mack through the village, down Hollywood to Marter Road, over Marter to Vernier and down Vernier to village limits, on Marter to Hampton and down Hampton to West, with an arm on Goethe from the north village limits to a block south of Amita.

Gas mains and Detroit water mains were installed in Lochmoor last Fall.

BUILDING ZONE MAP OF GROSSE POINTE VILLAGE

THE building zone map below of the Village of Grosse Pointe indicates the building zones established by the Zoning Ordinance which the village council adopted on October 28th, 1927, and which is now in effect.

The draft of the proposed ordinance as printed in Civic News last July was finally adopted in October with a few

minor revisions on buildable width of lots, setback lines and some slight changes in commercial and residence B districts. The map reproduced above is a copy of the official map on file at the village clerk's office, where detailed information on the ordinance is available.

As noted on the map, practically the

entire village is reserved for residence A districts, including all property south of Jefferson, ninety per cent of the area bounded by Jefferson, Mack, Lakeland and Fisher, and the southwest corner of the village bounded by Cadieux, Mack, Notre Dame and the creek. Only private dwellings, churches, parish, community or club buildings and accessory structures such as private garages, stables and employes' lodgings are permitted in A districts, the height limit being three stories or 50 feet.

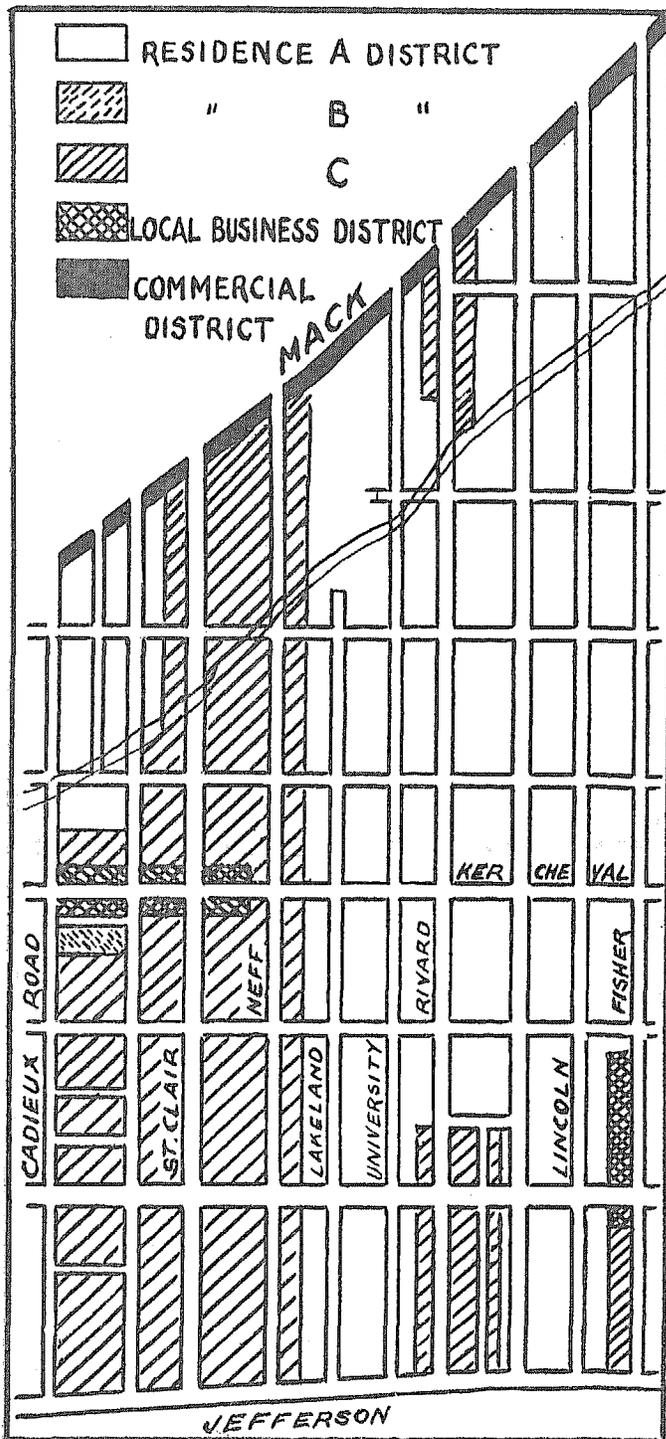
Residence B districts are confined almost entirely to the area bounded by Cadieux, Mack, Jefferson and a line midway between Lakeland and Neff. The only other B districts are on the eastern and western ends of Rivard Boulevard and north of Jefferson at Fisher. All residence A dwellings, plus terrace and two-family dwellings, public buildings and properties, farms and gardens are permitted in B districts, height limit being three stories or 50 feet.

The only residence C district is at Cadieux Road, Kercheval Place and Notre Dame Avenue. Multiple dwellings are permitted, the height limit being four stories or 60 feet, except for buildings which do not occupy more than 20 per cent of the lot area. They may be erected higher, but not to exceed 150 feet.

Local business districts are confined to approximately three blocks on Kercheval Avenue, east of Cadieux Road, and one block on Fisher Road between Maumee and St. Paul. Same height restrictions as for residence C districts except that when buildings go above 50 feet and up to a maximum of 100 feet, they cannot occupy more than 10 per cent of the lot area.

Commercial structures are permitted on Mack Avenue frontage the entire length of the village from Cadieux to Fisher. Height limitations are the same as in residence C districts except for 100-foot maximum.

Sales of American Red Cross seals by pupils in Grosse Pointe Public schools in December totaled \$330.61. Collections turned over to the Board of Education were: Vernier School, \$95.72; Defer School, \$83.33; Cadieux School, \$62.16; Trombly School, \$50.00; Kerby School, \$39.40.



SPRING ELECTION INFORMATION

Grosse Pointe Farms

Election of village officers in Grosse Pointe Farms will take place on the second Monday in March. In case of a contest developing for any office, a primary election must be held four or six Mondays before the regular election date. Officers whose terms expire this year include: Daniel G. Allor, president; John R. Kerby, clerk; Clarence P. Semon, treasurer; Douglas T. Allard, assessor; Neil McMillan, Jr., William J. Mason and Herman Dondero, trustees.

Lochmoor

Lochmoor Village election will be held on March 4th. Candidates' petitions must be in 20 days before election. Terms expiring include those of Edmund C. Vernier, president; Philip Allard, clerk; James E. Goodrich, treasurer; Bert Allen, assessor; and Arthur Post, Joseph E. Beaufait and Edward Vanderbush, commissioners.

Grosse Pointe Village

Election second Monday in March. Petitions must be in 20 days prior to election. Terms expire of the following officers: R. P. Connor, president; Norbert P. Neff, clerk; Neil Blondell, treasurer; Theodore Damerow, assessor; William Fisher, D. M. Ferry, Jr., and Louis C. Rabaut, trustees.

Grosse Pointe Shores

Election third Tuesday in May (this year May 21). Candidates must file ten days before election. Terms expire of George Osius, president;

William C. Roney, clerk; E. R. Grace, Clarence J. Chandler and Harry M. Jewett, trustees.

Grosse Pointe Park

Second Monday in March. Nomination is by caucus, which must be held at least 20 days before election. Officials whose terms expire are Alfred J. Garska, president; Waldo J. Berns, clerk; Charles D. Heise, treasurer; John F. De Yonker, assessor; William P. Shoemaker, Samuel Bastien and Fintan L. Henk, trustees.

(Editor's Note.—The proposed new charter for Grosse Pointe Park, which was filed with the clerk on November 5th, provides for an election on the second Monday in February for the voters to pass upon the charter. Should the charter be approved, its provisions would then obtain for the election on the second Monday in March.)

Grosse Pointe Township

Primary, first Monday in March; election, first Monday in April. Candidates must file petitions 20 days before election. The terms expire of Edmund C. Vernier, supervisor; S. H. Van Tiem, treasurer; Daniel G. Allor, clerk; and Noah G. Paye, justice of the peace.

TAX COLLECTION

From January 10th to March 1st, four per cent penalty must be added to tax bills not paid previously, Stephen H. Van Tiem, township treasurer, has announced. Those who have not received bills may obtain

them by telephoning Lenox 2177 or writing to the treasurer at 15155 Jefferson Avenue, Grosse Pointe Park. (All who paid taxes in Grosse Pointe township in 1926-7 were mailed statement of this year's taxes prior to December 10th.)

Taxes unpaid on March 1st cannot be paid before April 15th, and then only at the back tax department of the Wayne County treasurer's office in Detroit, and with an additional penalty. Office hours are being maintained by the treasurer from 9 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. in the municipal building in Grosse Pointe Park. Collections thus far have been lighter than expected, according to the treasurer, who is seeking to collect a total of \$1,097,385.18.

EXTEND TIME FOR D. U. R.

The D. U. R. was granted an extension of time to May 1, 1928, to continue using the streets of Grosse Pointe Village at a meeting of the village council, December 16th. Delegations of Lochmoor and Grosse Pointe citizens appeared at the meeting to protest any action which might cut them off from this transportation service on the Lakeshore Road.

The Detroit United Railway's franchise to operate on the streets of the Village of Grosse Pointe expired in April, 1923, since which time the village has suffered the interurban cars to operate while waiting for the villages to the north to arrange for other transportation. Plans to widen Lakeshore Road are being given consideration by the Wayne County Road Commission.

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CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

GROSSE POINTE, MICH.

The safety of the government depends upon an enlightened criticism of its conduct.

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