

# GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION  
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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Number 10

## SURVEY PROMISES IMPROVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

**R**ESULTS of an educational survey of grades two to eight in Grosse Pointe public schools were reported to the Board of Education on March 9th. The survey, made under the direction of Dr. Samuel M. Brownell, superintendent, gives promise of being a far-reaching step toward finding and curing the weaknesses in the instruction given Grosse Pointe public school students. The study reveals that something is wrong. What is wrong and how it should be cured still remains to be disclosed by diagnosis.

That there are defects in the school system was determined by Dr. Brownell through application of the Stanford Achievement Tests. These are a series of examinations designed for the rapid measurement of the ability of elementary school pupils. Just as the physician's thermometer shows if there is something wrong with his patient, so do the achievement tests reveal roughly the degree of variation from normal in the child's knowledge of word-meaning, ability to comprehend sentences, ability to understand paragraphs, arithmetic computation, arithmetic reasoning,

nature study and science information, history and literature information, language usage and spelling.

### Steady Decline

Beginning with the 2B Grade, which is above standard in all tests, the general tendency is toward a rather steady decline in the standing of Grosse Pointe pupils grade by grade, as compared with the average achievement in other parts of the United States, according to Dr. Brownell.

The results of the tests indicate, he states, that:

1. The average achievement in Grosse Pointe schools in Grades 2 to 5B and in 7B is close to the standard.
2. The average achievement in Grosse Pointe grades 5A, 6B, 6A, 1 7A, 8B and 8A is considerably below standard.
3. The 8B Grade seems to be notably below standard. The deficiency is sufficiently great to warrant special investigation to determine which ones of many possible causes produce the condition.
4. Results on tests 4, 5 and 9 indicate

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(Civic News is publishing without charge the following official notice. The Citizens' Association of Grosse Pointe Township is always ready to co-operate to promote the interests of the public.)

## ELECTION RESULTS

In the township primary on March 5th, a total of 2,184 votes was cast.

Nomination on the Democratic ticket in Grosse Pointe Township being equivalent to election, the election on April 2nd will be in the nature of a formality to name Edmund C. Vernier, supervisor; Daniel G. Allor, clerk; Charles A. Paye, treasurer; James W. Carter, justice, and Andrew T. Phillips, James M. Rasmussen, Ommett O. Penticost and John Baker, constables, and Jerry Vanderbush, member of the Board of Review.

### Grosse Pointe Village

Richard P. Connor, president, Norbert P. Neff, clerk, Neil Blondell, treasurer, Theodore Damerow, assessor, D. M. Ferry, Jr., and William Fisher, trustees, were re-elected; the third trusteeship went to Chester Carpenter. Three improvement projects, involving \$46,000 in bond issues, were approved.

### Grosse Pointe Farms

A total of 517 votes was cast. Daniel G. Allor was re-elected president, John R. Kerby, clerk, James M. Rasmussen, William J. Mason, and Herman Dondero, trustees, Alonzo Bachman, assessor, and C. P. Semon, treasurer.

### Grosse Pointe Park

Alfred J. Garska was re-elected president, Waldo J. Berns, clerk, Samuel Bastien, William P. Shoemaker, and Thomas W. McGilligan, commissioners.

### Lochmoor

Joseph E. Beaufait defeated Edmund C. Vernier for president. Arthur H. Post and Edward Vanderbush were re-elected commissioners, and Clyde M. Goodman was named commissioner to succeed Mr. Beaufait.

## NOTICE

THURSDAY, MARCH 29th, 8 P. M.

At the New

GROSSE POINTE HIGH SCHOOL

(Fisher Road and Grosse Pointe Boulevard)

There will be a meeting of particular interest to all school patrons.

The Board of Education is considering the selection of five sites to be used for elementary and junior high schools at a later date.

The reason for selecting sites now, and for choosing certain locations, will be discussed at the meeting. Opportunity will be given for asking questions concerning, and raising objections to, the plans under consideration.

Wise selection of school sites is of vital importance to all school patrons and all taxpayers. YOU are invited and urged to be present at the meeting.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Rural Agricultural School District Number 1, Grosse Pointe Township

## Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

P. O. Address, 51 Warren Ave., W., Detroit

H. P. Breitenbach, Consulting Editor

B. E. Meyers, 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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### A GLANCE AT THE PAST

IN an open letter signed by several leaders of the Grosse Pointe Park Protective Association, disagreement has been expressed with views of the Citizens' Association, and the charge has been made that the Citizens' Association was delinquent in dealing with the zoning problem in that village.

Inasmuch as in the entire history of the Citizens' Association no group of citizens has ever before taken issue on a matter of public policy, the situation deserves some comment.

The Grosse Pointe Park Protective Association came into existence in August, 1927, for the avowed sole purpose of getting the village officials to enact a zoning ordinance that would bar "institutions," apartment houses and multiple-dwellings which might tend to undermine the residential character of Grosse Pointe Park.

In June, 1923—nearly five years ago—a group of residents organized the Citizens' Association of Grosse Pointe Township, a non-partisan body whose by-laws protect it against being used for political purposes. Its objects are "to seek to preserve the purity of elections, to guard against abuse of the elective franchise, to publish information regarding public affairs and to promote governmental efficiency within the township of Grosse Pointe."

For the last five years the Citizens' Association has pursued its objects, making monthly reports in Civic News on governmental affairs in the township, always with the endeavor to be constructive and to point out better methods. So it has been the consistent aim of the Citizens' Association to disclose defects in advance rather than to find fault

afterwards. Such was the case in the matter of zoning.

### Discussion Opened in 1924

In Civic News of January, 1924, there appeared an article on the Grosse Pointe Park building code. It pointed out that two per cent of the frontage in this village was sold as unrestricted property. It also noted that the promotion of highly-restricted subdivisions had, up to that time, made a zoning ordinance seemingly unnecessary.

In Civic News of September, 1924, a news item revealed plans for a large apartment building in Grosse Pointe Park on a site on the southwest side of Bishop Road from Jefferson Avenue to Lake St. Clair. The article called attention to the fact that the village had no zoning law and that the building code did not prohibit the construction of apartments.

In Civic News of November, 1924, an article nearly two columns long discussed "The Need of Zoning" to protect the residential character of the Grosse Pointe communities and to avoid haphazard growth of apartments and business structures. Though these buildings were held not necessarily objectionable in themselves, it was pointed out that they would be likely to prove a menace if permitted to develop irrespective of surrounding property. The article related that the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores was the only one in the township that had a zoning ordinance. Continuing, the Civic News article observed that well-planned zoning laws would benefit each community without working a hardship on any individual.

"The directors of the Citizens' Association," this article of 1924 concluded, "believe that concerted action by all the Grosse Pointe villages should be taken in the near future. They do not advocate any particular zoning program but recommend that the whole subject have careful, official study."

In Civic News of February, 1925, the following article appeared:

### "WOULD ZONING HELP?"

"Recent reports of the possibility of Jefferson Avenue property in Grosse Pointe Park being used for an apartment site is credited with being responsible for an indefinite delay in the erection of a large residence on property near the site in question.

"In another case called to the attention of the Citizens' Association, a property owner in Grosse Pointe Park chose to build in another village to gain the protection offered by a zoning ordinance."

In Civic News of May, 1925, it was recorded that Grosse Pointe Park had passed an ordinance prohibiting apartments or residences housing more than four families and that the Council had announced that it was considering a zoning law. From 1925 to 1927 Grosse Pointe Park officials took no action on the zoning law. In the meantime, in September, 1926, Civic News recorded that Grosse Pointe Village and Grosse Pointe Farms had hired a zoning expert and begun serious work on ordinances. This article further remarked:

"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. The need of zoning in Grosse Pointe will become more acute each year."

### Emergency Arises

Still, Grosse Pointe Park officials delayed action on zoning year after year until last summer when an emergency arose such as the Citizens' Association had warned would happen. Thereupon, indignant citizens formed the "Grosse Pointe Park Protective Association" and pushed through to completion the fine, modern zoning ordinance which went on the village books February 27, 1928. Action, at last!

Naturally, the Citizens' Association felt that the spark of interest in public affairs struck by the zoning emergency might be used to kindle a steadily-burning flame of public opinion. Leaders of the Protective Association were urged to broaden the new association's objects to include study and action on other civic matters besides zoning. These leaders, however, declared that zoning was all their association was interested in.

Nevertheless, in February, 23 leaders of the Protective Association published a letter urging voters to vote "yes" on the new charter, February 13th, and to re-elect Messrs. Garska, Berns, Bastien and Shoemaker. This plea resulted in the charter being adopted by a narrow margin, 340 to 303—a charter which experts had declared antiquated.

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**GROSSE POINTE PARK PASSES NEW ZONING LAW**

What is declared by experts to be one of the very best zoning ordinances ever drawn was adopted unanimously by the Village Council of Grosse Pointe Park on February 27, 1928. Its enactment followed several months' intensive study of zoning by a council committee composed of Messrs. Alfred J. Garska, William P. Shoemaker, Joseph L. Kolley and Samuel Bastien and a committee of the Grosse Pointe Park Protective Association composed of Messrs. Fred C. Sutter, W. W. Hannan and William Kriehoff. The above-named gentlemen were

assisted in their work by Herbert C. Munro, Detroit attorney and specialist in real estate law; Julius L. Berns, village attorney and municipal law specialist, and the firm of T. Glenn Phillips, city planner and consultant of the Detroit City Plan Commission. Suggestions of Edward M. Bassett of New York City, father of zoning in America and the foremost zoning authority in the country, were also incorporated in the ordinance.

**35-Foot Height Limit**

In general, the new zoning law follows the lines of the zoning laws

drawn up by T. Glenn Phillips for Grosse Pointe Village and Grosse Pointe Farms. Business districts are permitted on Mack, Charlevoix, Kercheval and Jefferson between Wayburn and Nottingham. Throughout that area, in the district south of Jefferson to Lake St. Clair between Trombley and Nottingham, and on Beaconsfield and Nottingham south of Jefferson to Essex Drive, multiple-dwellings are permitted. Practically all of the remainder of the village—approximately 80 per cent of the total area—is restricted to single residences, churches, schools, libraries and museums.

Residence A districts, where only private dwellings, churches, schools and educational institutions are permitted, restrict structures to a maximum of 2½ stories, or 35 feet, in height, on lots of 4,000 to 5,000 square feet in area for each family housed.

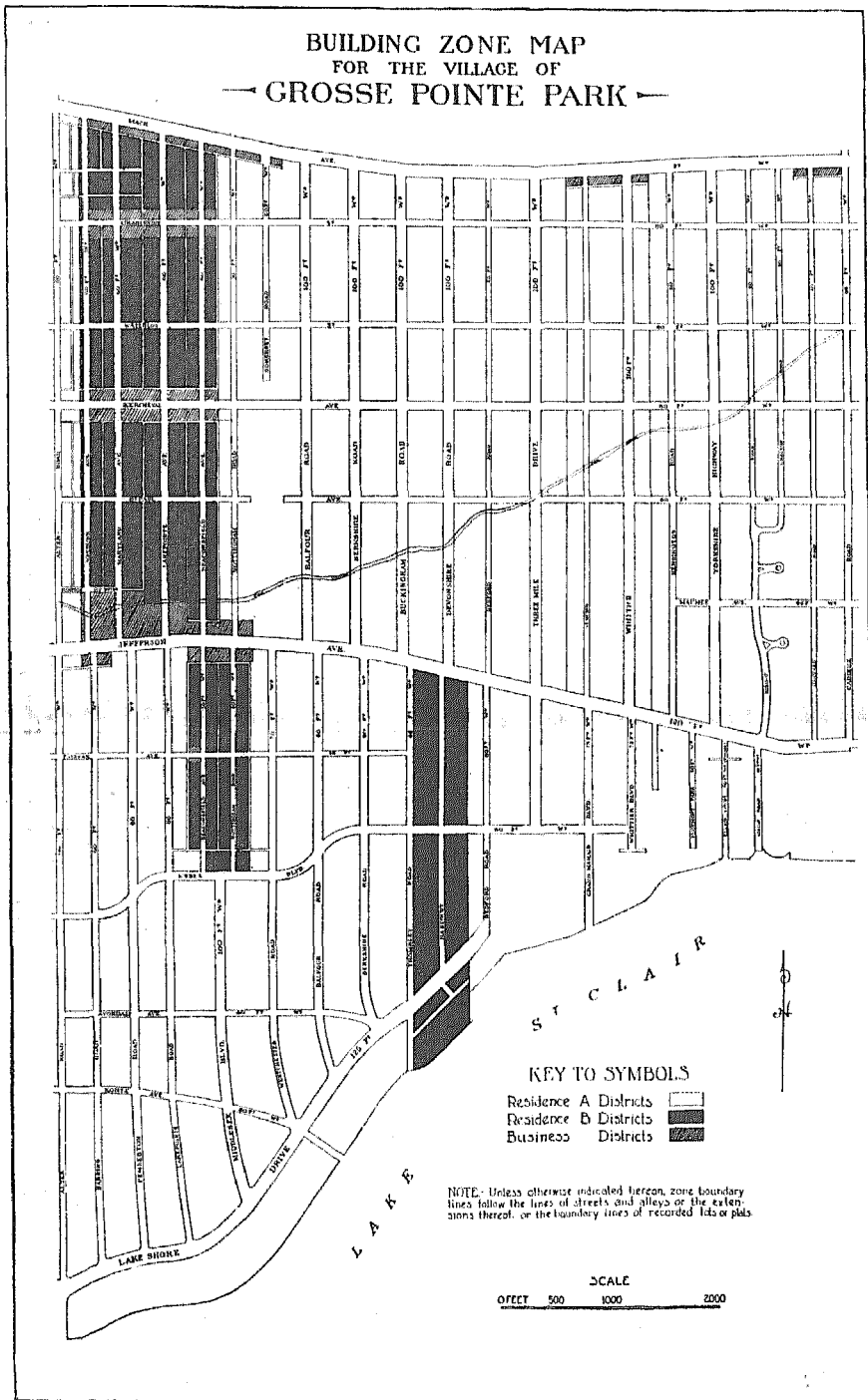
In Residence B districts, singles, two-families, four-family terraces and other multiple-dwellings are permitted, as well as all structures permitted in A districts. The height limit remains at 35 feet, the same as in A districts, lots, however, being required to have only 1,000 square feet for each family housed. It is further provided that no penal or correctional institutions, hospitals other than public hospitals, institutions for the care of the feeble-minded or insane may be built.

In Business Districts the height limit on dwellings is 30 feet, on business places 43 feet.

**Board of Appeals**

The legislative body of the village is designated a Board of Appeals. This board may vary or modify the ordinance's regulations under certain conditions. It may, for instance, increase the height limit of non-dwelling structures which do not in the aggregate occupy more than 10 per cent of the area of the lot.

A fine of \$25 to \$100 or not to exceed 90 days in jail are the penalties provided for violation of the ordinance. Amendment of the law may be obtained at any time by petition of owners of 50 per cent or more of the frontage in any district or part of a district, it being the duty of the Commission to vote upon such a petition within 90 days of the date of filing.



(Continued from Page 1, Col. 2)  
 the greatest need of special work to be in arithmetic and spelling from Grade 3 upward.

5. Results on tests 6 and 7 indicate the lack in Grades 4 and upwards of information along historical, literary and scientific lines.

6. Beginning with the 2B grade, which is above standard in all tests, the general tendency is toward a rather steady decline in the standing of Grosse Pointe pupils grade by grade.

#### Pupils' Ability Differs

The survey shows, according to the superintendent, that enrollment in a certain grade does not mean that children in that grade have approximately the same achievement. There is wide variation in each grade in the ability of pupils, he says, as well as much overlapping in the ability of children in different grades.

"It is to be hoped," Dr. Brownell states in his report, "that some day Grosse Pointe schools will exceed in all grades the standards for the United States at large, but it must not be assumed that the standards set by these tests are the only goals to be sought in the schools.

"It is likewise to be assumed that the schools are striving for achievement in the development of knowledge, habits and attitudes in the field of health, knowledge and habits in the best means of study; appreciation of the good and beautiful; a desire to continue the process of learning; character and personality traits; and attitudes toward

work and play which will lead them to use effectively and for the benefit of society the tools of knowledge and skill gained through education."

#### Plans for Improvement

Some of the immediate plans toward improvement of instruction are outlined by Dr. Brownell as follows:

1. Special attention by and work with the teachers to improve content and method in the fields of arithmetic and spelling during the remainder of 1928, and at least the first semester of 1928-29.

2. A careful study by principals and teachers of all pupils whose achievement score on the entire examination indicates that the pupils differ more than one year from the standard of the grade in which the pupil is now placed. This study is to include a careful check of the child's health record, his social development, his attitude towards school, and the teacher's judgment of his ability in general and in each subject. This study should reveal the children who are most out of place at present. Where a change would be of most profit to a child and the class in which the child is located, it is advocated that there be provided special opportunities in the line of such coaching rooms as may be needed. In such rooms, pupils would receive largely individual instruction. Rather than "skipping" a grade, an accelerated child would, during the remainder of the semester, complete essential work of his present grade and that of the succeeding grade, so as to be ready for a double promotion at the end of the semester.

A pupil now behind his class, so far that much of the class work is "above his head," would not be demoted, to associate with children much younger and much less developed physically and so-

cially, but would be placed in one of these coaching rooms to receive instruction fitted to his needs. Such rooms would not only be of benefit to the pupils in them, but would tend to reduce the wide range of ability in each room, thereby enabling the regular teacher to better meet the needs of all her pupils.

3. By more complete and complete records, to build up a cumulative history of the child which will enable teachers to know better and to provide for the individual needs of pupils from the time pupils are received in their rooms.

(Continued from Page 2, Col. 3)

An article in the March issue of Civic News, which leaders of the Protective Association declare objectionable, meant no disrespect to them. Its purpose was merely to suggest that they had been misled by politicians.

The Protective Association leaders deserve credit for achieving a fine, modern zoning law. So far as the charter is concerned the Citizens' Association still believes the form of government established is antiquated. The Protective Association declares the charter is a "well-warranted piece of legislation and a decidedly progressive step in village government." Time will tell which is right. If, in the course of the next five years, the village has enjoyed a peaceful, efficient and economical administration, the directors of the Citizens' Association will gladly acknowledge that they were wrong at this time. Meanwhile . . .

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## CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

GROSSE POINTE, MICH.

"An intelligent, continuous, persistent discussion and agitation by unbiased, honorable men of the problems and methods of municipal government . . . must tend to give substance and sanity to public opinion, and it must bring a wholesome and powerful influence to bear upon existing government."  
 —Washington Gladden.

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