

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

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OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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AN IMPORTANT ELECTION

Grosse Pointe Park to Ballot July 9th on \$795,000 Bond Issue for Proposed Sewer in Black Marsh Ditch

A SPECIAL election has been called in Grosse Pointe Park for July 9th to vote on two proposed bond issues: an issue of \$80,000, 15-year, 4¾% bonds to finance the construction and equipment of a new fire hall; an issue of \$795,000, 30-year, 4¾% general obligation bonds to finance construction of a proposed 14-foot closed sewer in Black Marsh Ditch from Cadieux Road to the Detroit limits.

The polls will be open from 7 a. m. to 8 p. m. Under the new charter adopted last February, the village was divided into two election precincts. This is the first election in which the two precincts will be in use. Precinct No. 1, including all of the territory south of Kercheval Avenue, will vote at the Municipal Building. Precinct No. 2, territory north of Kercheval Avenue, will vote at the Defer School.

Should the proposed sewer bonds be approved, the village's debt will be increased more than 50 per cent. Estimating the present village population at 9,000, the present debt of \$1,445,349.19 is \$155 for every man, woman and child in the village. The per capita debt will rise from \$155 to \$244 if the proposed issue of \$795,000 is approved. With these bonds added to the village's debt, the taxpayers' interest charges will be increased \$36,000 annually, \$3,000 per month.

For this reason the sewer bond issue is uppermost in the voters' thoughts.

Ditch History

A review of the efforts which have been made from time to time to solve the Black Marsh Ditch problem in Grosse Pointe may be of help to the voters in deciding how to cast their ballots on the bond issue. The Ditch was first deepened in 1875-76. The fall at that time

was only a fraction of a foot from the upper terminal at Milk River to the outlet at Fox Creek.

Two attempts to create a flow, the last one in 1908, by dredging and deepening, failed. In 1923, a fourth action started, its object being the dredging of the Ditch to a depth 6 feet below the then existing lake level, at an estimated cost of \$200,000 to be defrayed by a special assessment on benefited property. Macomb County asked to be excused from participation in the project, declaring it was not vital enough to her territory to warrant the expense involved. Due to delays, the plan was abandoned and the petition denied.

In the spring of 1926, another effort was made, sponsored by the Health Officer of Grosse Pointe Township. A meeting was held of the village representatives with the State and County Drain Commissioners. The consensus of opinion at the meeting was that a closed drain would be the most desirable solution. Close co-operation with Detroit was urged by E. L. Hunter, State Drain Commissioner, who expressed the belief that a closed drain was the logical and permanent solution. The expense could be met, it was stated, by issuing County Drain Bonds. A resolution was passed instructing the township supervisor to confer with the township attorney and State Drain Commissioner on necessary legal steps.

Two New Plans

In September, 1926, two new plans were advanced.

One proposed to convert the Ditch into a main trunk sewer to serve Grosse Pointe Township and the City of Detroit, this sewer to be an extension of the large intercepting sewer on Jefferson Avenue.

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 3)

FRED SUTTER IS ELECTED SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEE

At the annual election of the Board of Education on June 11th, Mr. Fred Sutter was elected over Mr. J. Fred Edgar by a vote of 466 to 292, to succeed Dr. L. E. Maire as Trustee. The bond issues carried as follows:

\$240,000 for purchase of new sites,
by 446 to 239.

\$140,000 deficiency issue, by 441 to
214.

\$360,000 for a new elementary
school at McMillan and Ridge, by
448 to 237.

The electors at the annual meeting passed a resolution establishing a system of recreation, decreeing that playgrounds be used only by school pupils and only when supervisors were present, and authorizing the expenditure of \$2,500 for recreational purposes. A motion was also passed authorizing the president to appoint a library commission.

This action was taken after Mr. Fred Shipman brought out, in questioning the treasurer, Mr. Charles A. Poupard, that no funds were being raised at present for library purposes.

A joint Parent-Teachers Association testimonial to Dr. L. E. Maire, retiring Trustee, was presented and unanimously concurred in. The testimonial was as follows:

"Be it Resolved, that we, the electors of the School District of Grosse Pointe in annual meeting assembled, adopt this testimonial of our great appreciation of the service which Dr. Maire, during his long and busy life in our midst, has performed for this community and for this school district, of our great love for him as a man, of our high respect for him as a citizen, and of our hope that he may live among us for many years to come, to enjoy the fruits of a life well lived and of duties well done."

F. W. HUBBARD,
L. S. TROWBRIDGE,
J. F. KEYS,
HOBART B. HOYT,
F. C. SHIPMAN.

In acknowledging the resolution, Dr. Maire reviewed his 15 years' work in behalf of Grosse Pointe schools, and was greeted by hearty applause.

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

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BLACK MARSH DITCH

In another column of this issue of Civic News, there is a review of the various attempts that have been made in the last five years to solve the Black Marsh Ditch problem. For some reason or other, each new scheme has fallen by the wayside.

Now, it seems, definite action is to replace words. Grosse Pointe Park has already spent some \$5,000 in engineering fees on plans for a 14-foot conduit which will be built in the Ditch through the Park if the voters approve the proposed \$795,000 bond issue on July 9th.

If the voters feel that \$800,000 is too much to pay for closing the ditch, they may vote "No." Here at any rate is a solution offered for consideration.

The proposed sewer naturally will be of great assistance to Detroit in carrying sewage and storm water from the district north and west of Grosse Pointe to the Jefferson intercepting sewer. For this reason many property owners feel that Detroit should bear a portion of its cost.

"This sewer will be of benefit to the whole 25-square-mile Fox Creek District," runs the argument of these people, "so why should not the whole drainage district be taxed?" A fair question. Legislation is to be sought at the next session of the state legislature to pave the way for formation of metropolitan districts to deal with just such problems as this.

The Ditch will continue to be offensive because of the sewage dumped into the open cut of a sluggish stream. And, the question arises, are the villages justified in waiting longer to determine if a new division of cost would not be more favorable to them? The study of

the Fox district made by the sanitary expert from Boston contained a very careful analysis of the drainage problems, irrespective of political boundaries, so that this might be considered a metropolitan district study in all but legal nomenclature. The fairest division of cost, it was agreed at meetings of representatives of the Grosse Pointe villages with Detroit officials, would be for each governmental unit to defray the expense of construction within its limits. Whether waiting for the formation of a metropolitan district would result in lowering the costs to Grosse Pointe is problematical.

That the villages north of the Park will all be able to build similar low-level sewers in the Ditch, as fast as they see fit, and thus clear up the Ditch all through the township, is the assurance of Perry A. Fellows, Detroit city engineer, and the belief of the engineers of the villages concerned, so it is apparent that the engineering problems have been surmounted. The Ditch being primarily an engineering and financing problem, half the battle appears to be won. The voters of Grosse Pointe Park will say on July 9th whether they are satisfied with the financial arrangements.

VILLAGE TAXES DUE

Annual village taxes are now due and payable at the several village halls. Collection without penalty will continue until August, the last date for payment without penalty varying in each village. The custom of village treasurers is to pre-bill taxes to all property owners who have previously paid taxes. New owners may receive bills by asking for same over the telephone or by letter to the village office, if it is desired to pay by check and avoid a personal call.

Grosse Pointe Park is this year raising \$412,530.91 at the rate of \$11.47 per thousand on an assessed valuation of \$35,972,382. Last year the budget called for collection of \$383,800 at the rate of \$11.48 per thousand on \$33,436,365. The difference between \$383,800 and \$412,530.91 does not indicate the difference in cost of running the village government this year compared with last because, for one thing, the budgets overlap a period of three and one-third months. (An analysis of the budgets to provide an accu-

rate picture of financial administration is being made and will be published in a succeeding issue of Civic News.)

Grosse Pointe Shores is raising \$10,858.02 more by taxes this year than last. The rate this year is \$12 per thousand on an assessed valuation of \$5,698,560 for a total levy of \$68,382.72. Last year the rate was \$15 per thousand on an assessed valuation of \$3,834,980 for a total tax levy of \$57,524.70.

Grosse Pointe Farms' tax levy has increased from \$306,868.03 in 1927 to \$385,305 this year. The rate has gone up from \$15 to \$17.50 per thousand, the assessed valuation from \$20,477,830 to \$22,081,780.

A total of \$397,155.28 is to be raised by general taxes in Grosse Pointe Village, compared with \$246,448.07 in 1927. The rate last year was \$11.50 per thousand on an assessed valuation of \$24,218,623. This year the tentative rate set at the time Civic News went to press was \$14.40 per thousand on a tentative assessed valuation of \$27,660,037.

Lochmoor's tax levy of \$64,072.09 is an increase of more than \$15,000 over 1927. The 1928 budget was reviewed in Civic News in May. The tax for 1928-29 is to be raised at the rate of \$7.90 per thousand on an assessed valuation of \$8,110,392.10. Last year the rate was \$6.50 per thousand on \$7,454,261.

The budgets will be reviewed in a later issue of Civic News.

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 2)

Since there was no special need of additional sewerage facilities in Grosse Pointe Park, which has a connection with the Detroit system costing a nominal sum of \$1,500 annually, discussion of this plan did not last long.

The other plan was for each village to improve the Ditch as it wished with the approval of the Wayne County Drain Commissioner. Grosse Pointe Village officials considered filling in the Ditch from Fisher to Cadieux Road but no action was taken.

Shortly thereafter the so-called Detroit Plan began to take definite shape. A survey of the 25-square-mile Fox Creek drainage district was made by H. G. Eddy, sanitary engineer of Boston, who recommended participation by all the municipalities concerned in a joint

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 1)

NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB

July is "camp month" for the Neighborhood Club, 17145 Waterloo, but kiddies of Grosse Pointe who seek the club for recreation during the summer are not being neglected. Miss Kathryn Jordan, a graduate of Ypsilanti Normal School, has been retained as playground instructor for July and August to supervise daily play by the smaller boys and girls between 1 and 9 p. m. Raymond Kaulitz is in charge of older boys' play.

Soft ball leagues are using the two baseball diamonds, while the six tennis courts are besieged from morn till night. Arrangements may be made for use of the courts 24 hours in advance. The campers the first two weeks of July are a group of 25 Boy Scouts. From July 16 to 23, a dozen or more Campfire Girls will replace the boys at Lake Ore, near Port Huron, to be followed the last week in July by a group of V. V. V. girls. The camp is under the supervision of the American Red Cross.

The Neighborhood Club is very much in need of a piano, and if someone has one which is not in use, he can win the appreciation of the Board of Trustees by turning it over to the club. Another channel for donors is in the music appreciation course, which would welcome victrola records of good music as well as sheet music.

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 3)

That great progress has been made the past year in achieving higher educational standards in Grosse Pointe was reported by Trustee Charles A. Parcells, Secretary of the Board, who added that the Board was hoping for even greater progress in the future. He brought out that during the past year the Trustees had spent a total of 176¾ hours on board work, approximately thirty six-hour days, attending 50 meetings at which the average attendance was 4.16. (The Board consists of five Trustees.) A motion was passed subsequently increasing the trustees' salaries from \$100 to \$200 per year. Another motion providing that the treasurer's salary should be \$1,000 per year, as in the past, was adopted, but not unanimously. A motion then was made to set the secretary's salary at \$1,000, but was withdrawn at the request of the secretary.

Dr. Samuel M. Brownell, super-

intendent, reviewed the year's progress, including the addition of the new High School and the Defer School addition to the educational system. Overcrowding has been reduced to almost the zero mark, he said, while semi-annual promotion of pupils is now in effect. Stanford tests of pupils' ability last fall and this spring, he reported, had shown that nine grades had improved since last fall, four had not done as well, and one remained the same. The surveys, he said, show the need of special rooms for retarded and advanced pupils.

Conferences have been held and supervision extended by the superintendent to insure proper training and full value for the school money spent by the district, Dr. Brownell concluded. He reported establishment of a central purchasing system and a record system to show the costs of the various factors entering into the expense of operating the schools. Studies have been completed or are under way of the curriculum, of text books and of all future building and site requirements of the district. A motion complimenting the superintendent on his first year's record was adopted unanimously.

(The Board of Education voted just before the annual meeting to re-appoint Dr. Brownell for a period of two years. His former contract, which expired this month, was for one year. The Board and Dr. Brownell are to be congratulated on their co-operative spirit which has been of inestimable value to the school district the last year and which gives promise of even greater progress the next two years.)

At its organization meeting for the new fiscal year, beginning July 1st, the Board of Education accepted the newly-elected trustee, Mr. Fred Sutter, re-elected officers, appointed the Commercial Service Company to audit its books and re-appointed Mr. William G. Fitzpatrick, attorney.

Architect Criticized

The Board asked a representative of George J. Haas, architect, why the architect had approved final contractor's bills before all required work had been done on the new high school, and why the completion of the school was still dragging along five months after the required completion date.

An oral progress report on the new Lochmoor elementary school construction was given by Mr. Haas' representative. The Board declared this unsatisfactory and requested regular daily, or at least weekly, written reports. The representative said he was devoting practically all his time to the Lochmoor job and was making occasional reports to his office on the "high spots," but added that he would be glad to make regular written reports to the Board on all details if it desired them.

The Board reopened discussion of the use of school playgrounds. This subject has taken up much time this spring, due to complaints of a group of residents of Grosse Pointe Park that use of the Defer School grounds by adult baseball teams using a hard ball was a nuisance to the neighborhood, especially on Sunday, and was depriving children of school age of use of the grounds.

The attorney was asked to prepare an opinion on the legality of the resolution passed at the annual meeting providing for a system of recreation and appropriating \$2,500 therefor, to which an amendment was made stipulating that the school grounds might be used only by school children and under supervision. Until the attorney's opinion is given, the trustees agreed that further permits for use of the school grounds by any group should be granted only after application therefor had been properly made in writing and contemplated use conformed to present Board rules. In the meantime, the complainants have promised to draw up a model resolution on the use of school grounds, which they will petition the Board to adopt.

Mr. P. Hudson Bradley, president, reported that he has extended an invitation to several citizens to serve on the library commission, authorized at the annual meeting, and that he is now awaiting acceptances before announcing the personnel of the commission.

The school census for Grosse Pointe, completed May 31, 1928, reveals a total of 4,311 children, an increase of 558 over a year ago, approximately 15 per cent. The census showed an increase in Grosse Pointe Park from 1,945 to 2,344; Grosse Pointe Village, 941 to 1,050; Grosse Pointe Farms, Shores and Lochmoor, 859 to 917.

(Continued from Page 2, Col. 3)
 project to cost an estimated \$13,422,000. The engineer set the present population of the district at 54,000 and estimated that in 40 years the population would be 346,890. His plan called for a 16-foot, 6-inch barrel in Black Marsh Ditch from Vernier Road to Seven Mile Road, using gravity flow. At Seven Mile, a pumping station would lift the sewage to a barrel running to Cadieux Road, where another pumping station would be necessary. From Cadieux to Jefferson, the plan provided for a two-barrel sewer to empty into the Detroit intercepting sewer at Ashland, where another pumping station would be necessary. (The Fox Creek open channel from Jefferson to the Lake is designed to be used only in storm periods for overflow.)

The cost of the conduit from Vernier to Ashland was estimated at \$5,722,500; the three pumping stations, \$4,555,000; the open channel cut, \$1,412,000. A diversion works and Grosse Pointe Park north sewer was estimated at \$353,500; local pumping station, \$178,200. Contingencies and engineering fees for the entire project were estimated at \$1,220,800.

Cost Apportioned

The Eddy report recommended that a one-barrel sewer be built immediately between Ashland and Cadieux Road; also the Grosse Pointe Park north sewer and diversion works, at an estimated cost of \$3,126,000.

In November, 1926, a meeting was held of the city engineer and

public works commissioner of Detroit with representatives of the Grosse Pointe Villages and of Gratiot Township. It was agreed that joint work with Detroit would be the logical solution of the Ditch problem. The financial arrangement to carry out the Detroit plan apportioned the cost on the area in each municipality as follows:

Town	Acreage	Cost
Detroit	7,544	\$6,746,800
Grosse Pointe Park.....	1,433	1,281,500
Grosse Pointe Village....	688	613,300
Grosse Pointe Farms.....	1,788	1,599,000
Grosse Pointe Shores....	603	539,200
Lochmoor	2,141	1,914,800
Gratiot Township	1,802	1,611,400

General obligation bonds, it was felt, would be the best means of financing.

Another year passed with little progress. Then Detroit came forward with a "substitute plan" providing for a high-level sewer in Black Marsh Ditch, calling for only one barrel in Grosse Pointe Park between Cadieux Road and the Detroit limits to cost an estimated \$725,000 and to have a capacity of 762 cubic feet per second. This is the plan which Grosse Pointe Park now proposes to follow if the voters authorize the \$795,000 bond issue July 9th.

Other Details

In anticipation of the carrying out of the Grosse Pointe Park sewer project, Detroit's city engineer has obtained funds for construction of back-water gates and terminal works at Jefferson and Ashland Avenues to provide an outlet for the Black Marsh sewer. The Grosse

Pointe Park council has also granted permission to Detroit to construct a 14-foot sewer in Cadieux Road from Mack Avenue to Fox Creek, and to construct and operate a sewage pumping station on a site to be purchased near the intersection of Fox Creek and Cadieux Road.

This arrangement will permit Detroit to carry sewage from the territory north and west of Grosse Pointe Township to its intercepting sewer in Jefferson Avenue to the limit of the proposed Grosse Pointe Park sewer's capacity. Also, under this substitute plan, the villages north of the Park may build closed sewers in the Ditch and connect with the Grosse Pointe Park sewer, the same as under the original Detroit plan, except that high-level sewers will be necessary instead of low-level.

Because, in times of excessive rains and storms, the proposed Black Marsh sewer would not be sufficient to carry all the flow, the arrangement between Grosse Pointe Park and Detroit provides that a storm water overflow will be constructed from the pumping station at Cadieux and the Ditch to Lake St. Clair in Harvard Avenue, Kercheval Avenue and Bishop Road, or some other route to be designated by the Park. It is announced that under the "substitute plan" agreement with Detroit, Grosse Pointe Park will need to undertake no further trunk sewer construction other than the one-cylinder tube in Black Marsh Ditch.

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