

# GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION  
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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## \$750,000 BOND ISSUE IS UP TO VOTERS JANUARY 14TH

[An editorial on the beach-park plan will be found on page two, column one]

On Monday, January 14th, the electors of Grosse Pointe Park will ballot on the question of authorizing the Village Commission to issue \$750,000 in 30-year bonds for the purchase and development of a private beach-park on a proposed 11-acre site at the foot of Trombley Road with 750 feet frontage on Lake St. Clair.

Condemnation proceedings instituted last September by the Village Commission are now in Circuit Court seeking to prove necessity.

Examination of witnesses at the trial revealed what Civic News has pointed out before, that the size and location of the proposed site were decided upon without settling numerous important questions.

### Witnesses Embarrassed

Having no expert's counsel to submit in defense of their choice of the Trombley Road site, the officers of the village and the members of the special committee of citizens responsible for selection of the property in question were placed in a most embarrassing situation when they took the witness stand. Waldo J. Berns, city clerk, reported that there was no record of the special committee's appointment, though there was a record of its report and recommendation. Alfred J. Garska, president, declared that he had no definite knowledge of how the park site would be used, other than the general plan suggested by the committee for landscaping, building a pier and providing a community house and refreshment and parking facilities. Joseph Kolley, commissioner, in reply to a question as to whether he knew that the water in the vicinity of the proposed beach had been condemned by health authorities as unfit and dangerous for swimming and bathing, said he did not. William P. Shoemaker, commissioner of public safety, admitted that he knew there had been several

drownings in the Alter Road district west of the proposed beach, but could not say from his own knowledge whether or not the proposed park site had a marl beach (mud and muck). Thomas McGilligan, commissioner, admitted he believed the proposed beach-park site was the best available because he had heard so.

Frederick C. Sutter, member of the Board of Education in Grosse Pointe and chairman of the committee that recommended the Trombley Road site, testified that his committee held two meetings and personally inspected the shore line throughout the village before arriving at its decision. He said he believed the proposed site was too small and had so expressed himself to his committee, urging that more lake frontage be taken, but acquiescing in the majority view that the site be confined to the 750 feet frontage in the Houseman-Spitzley Corporation's subdivision, adjacent to Windmill Pointe. Asked if he were aware that a village cannot restrict a park's use to its own residents, when the site is condemned or purchased by the village, he declared that he did not know of the existence of any such law.

Norbert A. Hoffman, member of the committee, said one thing that had influenced him in his choice of the Trombley site was asking some children he saw wading which place they liked best. Asked if he did not think it would be a drawback to have a large beach-park in Grosse Pointe Park which all residents of Detroit and Michigan could use at will, Samuel Bastien, commissioner,

said he would still be in favor of condemning the proposed site.

### All Jurors Live in Park

Completion of the condemnation proceedings is hardly to be expected before the special election on January 14th when the electors of Grosse Pointe Park will be asked to approve the issuance of three-quarters of a million dollars for the purchase and improvement of the proposed beach-park site.

The condemnation trial is being conducted under Judge L. Eugene Sharpe. The jurors who will determine the necessity and, if there is a necessity, the damages in the case, are: Peter Katus, 1035 Yorkshire; Oscar Becker, 1209 Nottingham; William C. Coelius, 1331 Bedford; Oscar Kretzshmar, 859 Pemberton; John M. Fuchs, 1228 Kensington, (Fuchs & Fleischhut) treasurer of the Northeastern Detroit Amusement Company; Nick Weins, 1452 Bishop; Otto E. Hinz, 1429 Three Mile Drive, of the Detroit Corliss Limb Specialty Company; Waldemar C. Moesta, 1344 Somerset, building contractor; Albert E. Klem, 1356 Buckingham, building contractor; August Fruehauf, 961 Westchester, president of the Fruehauf Trailer Company; John Stockman, 1106 Wayburn, carpet layer; and Walter H. De Simpel, 1440 Bishop, builder.

### ARTISTS PLAN MEETING AT NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB

A meeting of all residents of Grosse Pointe who are interested in art work has been called for January 22nd at 8:30 p. m. in the Neighborhood Club, 17145 Waterloo Avenue, for the purpose of planning an exhibition by Grosse Pointe artists. Notice of the meeting was given Civic News by John L. Vogt, an artist living at 1304 Grayton Road. All artists, metal workers and art students who are interested in exhibiting their work are invited to attend the meeting on Tuesday, January 22nd.

### TO VOTERS OF GROSSE POINTE PARK:

Vote Monday, January 14th, for  
or against \$750,000 bond issue to  
purchase public park. (See articles  
elsewhere in this issue.)

## Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

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### Does Grosse Pointe Park Want a Public Beach That Must Be Open to All Detroit's Pleasure-Bent Couples and Picnicking Families?

A public, not a private, park will be saddled upon the Village of Grosse Pointe Park, it now appears certain, if the condemnation proceedings under way to acquire the proposed 11-acre parcel at the foot of Trombley Road are successful and if the voters approve the proposed \$750,000 bond issue at the special election next Monday, January 14th.

This being the case, the voters can extricate the Village Commission from a very embarrassing position by voting "No" on the bond issue. For, should the condemnation suit prove necessary and should the voters approve three-quarters of a million dollars for purchase and improvement, there would now be no way, apparently, to avoid the gift of a 750-foot bathing beach (in the center of Grosse Pointe Park's exclusive mile-and-a-half shore line on Lake St. Clair) to the eagerly-waiting million-and-a-half residents of Detroit who have long been clamoring for access to water elsewhere than at crowded Belle Isle's 1,000-foot beach. Twenty thousand people of every nationality and color congregate at Belle Isle Beach on hot days during the summer.

#### Mr. Turner's Survey

The contention that the proposed park would have to be opened to the public and that therefore great damage would be done to the surrounding property and indirectly to all property in Grosse Pointe was advanced in Circuit Court on January 3rd by James Turner, attorney of the law firm of Angell, Turner & Dyer, representing respondents

in the condemnation suit. Mr. Turner cited numerous cases in which the courts in other states have denied municipalities the authority to exclude any resident of the state in which the city or village was located from use of a park acquired by direct purchase or through eminent domain proceedings. (No case has as yet arisen in Michigan.) Only where a municipality has received an outright gift of land is it possible for a donor to specify that its use be restricted to residents of the community, according to Mr. Turner's conclusions based on a survey tendered to Judge L. Eugene Sharpe. Judge Sharpe advised the jurors that they might consider the village's suit as being a proceeding to acquire a public park, not a private park. The judge refused to reverse himself in this advice as requested by the village attorney, who contended that the jury is the sole judge of the law and the facts in a condemnation case.

Asked if he did not think it would be a serious drawback on property values in an exclusive community like Grosse Pointe Park to have a large metropolitan-size beach-park which all residents of Detroit and Michigan could use at will, Samuel Bastien, village commissioner, testified that he would still be in favor of condemning the proposed 11-acre park.

Fred Sutter, trustee of the Grosse Pointe Board of Education and chairman of a special committee of citizens which recommended the 11-acre site for a private park restricted to residents and their guests only, declared on the stand that he was unaware of any law that might prevent exclusion of the general public from a park acquired by a municipality through purchase or condemnation. He said he would not favor purchase of a public park.

#### What Public Use Means

As is well known, the Village of Grosse Pointe a year ago had a most unpleasant experience with public use of its four-acre lake-front park. Flivvers in various stages of dilapidation, as well as tourist cars, were parked on the village streets for blocks in every direction while their occupants made merry in the park, often in such noisy and uncontrollable fashion that residents demanded relief from the din and the disturbance to their peace and quiet. The village council, basing its action

on a clause in the deed restricting the park to use of residents, passed an ordinance restricting the park to residents only.

Grosse Pointe Farms has long sought to exclude the public from its lake-front park with but fair success. Grosse Pointe Park is closer to Detroit than either the Farms or the Village. Picnicking and swimming facilities, together with refreshment stands and recreational structures such as the officials propose to provide in the Park at an expense of a quarter of a million dollars, would give this village's park a public character wholly foreign to the private parks of the Farms and the Village, and far from being in keeping with the high character of residential development in Grosse Pointe Park.

When they cast their ballots on January 14th, voters will do well to consider the disadvantages of a public park as well as the burden of an expenditure of upwards of a million dollars for a bathing beach, possibly open without restriction to the general public.

### YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION

Every resident of Grosse Pointe Township is eligible to membership in the Citizens' Association of Grosse Pointe Township.

Indirectly, during the five years of its existence, the Citizens' Association has been responsible for the saving of many thousands of dollars to taxpayers through study of problems and suggestion of remedies before rather than after the problems became acute. There are still many ways in which taxpayers' money may be saved and, when expended, may be wisely spent if proper attention is given. Every taxpayer in Grosse Pointe has benefited in lower taxes through the activities of this non-partisan association.

Civic News, the monthly publication of the association, is sent free of charge to all residents of the township whether members or non-members of the association. Those who have not yet become members are invited to do so by sending their subscriptions to C. H. L'Hommedieu, treasurer, 612 Union Trust Building. Contributions are permitted to range from \$1 to \$35 annually, no contribution being accepted in excess of \$100 in advance for a three-year period.

**TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATION****Article No. 8**

The treasurer is the financial officer of the township. He is elected yearly and is allowed by statute to succeed himself but once. He has custody of all funds and he or his bondsman must make good any unlawful expenditure. His work parallels the work of the clerk somewhat, for where the clerk writes the warrant, the treasurer issues the check and keeps books of account. As collector of taxes he is charged with collection of more than \$1,000,000.

In place of provision for developing a trained office force which can work smoothly under the high pressure at tax collecting time, township law prescribes that the collector and his assistants be elected yearly. They are frequently men without training in office routine.

The collection of taxes is further complicated by the shortness of the period in which the taxes can be paid without penalty. The treasurer receives the tax roll on December 10th from the supervisor. From then until January 10th the taxes can be collected without penalty. From January 10th until March 1st a penalty of 3% must be added. There is nothing in the law which requires pre-billing of taxes. Such an idea would have seemed ridiculous 75 years ago in rural townships, but the practice is now established in Grosse Pointe of pre-billing taxes. About 14,000 bills are prepared and sent out by the treasurer in December.

Difficulties in pre-billing in Grosse Pointe arise from the fact that the state, county and good road taxes are not known until after the Board of Supervisors meets early in October. The supervisor is allowed until December 10th to spread the taxes, when the books are turned over to the treasurer. By intensive effort he is able to get bills to the taxpayers by December 25th, which allows 10 to 15 days for the collection of 90% of the taxes.

For this work the treasurer is rather well paid—in fact, his is the most remunerative office in the township. He is paid a salary of \$4,000 and is allowed an extra \$1,300 for clerical help. He estimates that about six months of the year are spent on work of the township divided as to (1) preparation of bills and collection of taxes which ex-

tends from December 10 to the following March 1st, (2) attendance at the semi-monthly meetings of the township board which are attended to simplify the procedure, and (3) the collection of delinquent personal taxes.

**LIBRARY SERVICE**

The Wayne County Library, which is financed by an appropriation from the Board of Supervisors for the purpose of extending library service to those parts of Wayne County not in incorporated cities, now maintains the following agencies in Grosse Pointe:

The Grosse Pointe Branch, 17121 Waterloo, is the central distributing agency for the township. It has a collection of 3,604 books and 1,340 borrowers. During the month of November, 2,920 books were borrowed for home use. It is open daily from 1 to 9 p. m., and Saturdays from 10 a. m. to 9 p. m., and is closed Sundays and holidays.

The Grosse Pointe Park center on the ground floor of the Grosse Pointe Park municipal building, 15115 East Jefferson, has just been opened with an initial collection of 500 books. Fiction and non-fiction, adult and juvenile books are included in this selection. It is open one day a week, Tuesday, from 1 to 9 p. m. If the use justifies it, this center will be open another day a week.

The Lochmoor center, located in the Goodrich Confectionery store at 21884 Mack Avenue, Lochmoor Village, has a collection of 215 books. Books may be borrowed any time during business hours.

Grosse Pointe Shores has a center in the municipal hall, Lake Shore Drive and Vernier Road. It is open one day a week, Wednesdays, from 3 to 5:30 and 6 to 9 p. m.

All of the 42,600 books in the Wayne County Library are available to the patrons using these library centers. By a system of rotation all books will be sent to the various agencies, but books on special subjects and titles not in the collection may be requested through the agency at which a patron is registered or by calling the Grosse Pointe Branch, Hickory 5621. Through the county service it is also possible to borrow special volumes not in the county collection from the Detroit Public Library for short time loans.

**ST. PAUL-AUDUBON SITE HELD BEST FOR SCHOOL**

A report by Charles L. Spain, assistant superintendent of the Detroit Board of Education, on his survey of the Grosse Pointe school district for the purpose of recommending the location of sites for junior

high schools, was received at the regular meeting of the Grosse Pointe Board of Education on January 7th. Mr. Spain recommended a two-junior-high-school system with one school in the vicinity of St. Paul and Audubon in Grosse Pointe Park, the other in Lochmoor. A third, he said, might be needed in the Farms some day, but need not be considered now, because the Senior High School can serve this area's Junior High students for many years.

The request for Mr. Spain's survey was made by the Board after the Board's designation of a site in Grosse Pointe Village at Kercheval and Cadieux Road for one of a two-junior-high-school system had been protested at a public hearing on November 19th. Mr. Spain said the Kercheval-Cadieux site was three-quarters of a mile east of the best and most central location for the western Junior High School district.

A petition to have the state superintendent of schools review the local school board's choice was filed in December so a review by the state superintendent will follow. (Detroit authorities' recommendations, however, carry much weight with state officials.) The petitioners declared that they did not wish to embarrass the Board or Mr. Spain but that because the 90-day period for filing a petition would expire before Mr. Spain's report was received, they felt it necessary to register the petition in advance.

Progress is reported in acquisition of new right-of-way for the proposed Lake Shore Road intercepting sewer in Grosse Pointe Farms, leading to the expectation that it will shortly be possible to start construction. This sewer will definitely end all pollution of Lake St. Clair by Farms' sewage. Progress is also reported in negotiations by the Farms for right-of-way to open Kercheval Avenue eighty feet wide from Fisher Road to Moross Road. The opening was ordered by the council in 1927.

At the suggestion of Mr. John T. Hurley, the village council of Grosse Pointe Shores has appointed Trustee George Osius a committee of one to investigate the need of a contagious hospital for the Grosse Pointe district and to confer with various officials on proper measures to supply the need, if there is one.

## VILLAGE AND FARMS ACT TO CLOSE DITCH

By next fall, or sooner, Grosse Pointe will be rid of the Black Marsh Ditch, for years an eye-sore and potential menace to health of the communities through which this sluggish sewage outlet has flowed south, emptying into Fox Creek and thence to Lake St. Clair at the foot of Alter Road.

This long-hoped-for accomplishment (which, incidentally, will end pollution of the lake at Alter Road except during the heaviest storms) was forecast in December when Grosse Pointe Village and Grosse Pointe Farms obtained releases of right-of-way from the Wayne County Drain Engineer and directed their consulting engineers to draw up plans for closed sewers to be built in the ditch. Cost estimates will enable the village councils to submit bond issue proposals to the voters at the spring municipal elections on the second Monday in March. Grosse Pointe Park is now building a closed sewer in the ditch which is expected to be completed this spring. (Lochmoor is committed to a policy of draining to the north and into Lake St. Clair via Milk River. Its sewage plant, which went into operation last month, empties into the ditch.)

A high-level, closed gravity sewer, similar to the type being built in the Park, was recommended by the Village and Farms' engineers as offering the best solution of the ditch problem in their respective

communities. From an engineering standpoint, this type of sewer presents a minimum of construction difficulties, since it permits ordinary open-cut methods. Preliminary estimates place the cost of construction in the Farms at \$275,000; in the Village at \$430,000.

The Village problem differs from the Farms. The former's storm and sewage system was installed some years ago, and a sewage disposal plant was built north of Mack Avenue to avoid pollution of the Ditch. Since then there has evolved the ditch-closing plan now being followed in which sewage is to be disposed of by Detroit. The Farms' sewer system, now half completed and with sewage plant in operation, was built with the proposed Ditch sewer in mind. The Village sewer, too, must have capacity to meet requirements of tributary area north and east, including the flow that will come into it from the Farms' ditch sewer. It will also be necessary for the Village to build intercepting sewers to serve its sanitary system because the proposed main trunk in the ditch will cut off the majority of the sanitary sewers.

Schemes to permit discontinuance of the Village's present pumping station and disposal plant in Detroit north of Mack Avenue have also been prepared by the engineer. This construction, he estimates, need not be undertaken within five years, or even longer, depending on when the ultimate tributary run-off will exceed the capacity of the pro-

posed ditch sewer. It would entail a combined interceptor to serve the storm and sanitary flow. Under one plan, the Village would do its own pumping in a station at Lakeland Avenue and the ditch. Under the other, the Village would pay Detroit to do the pumping at the proposed Detroit pumping station at Cadieux Road in Grosse Pointe Park. Estimated cost of the latter scheme is \$85,000; of the former, \$121,450, including cost of the pumping station which the village would maintain and operate.

## ROY CHAPMAN ANDREWS

Roy Chapman Andrews, famed scientific explorer who astounded the world not long ago when he found a nest of fossil dinosaur eggs while exploring the Gobi Desert in Asia at the direction of the American Museum of Natural History, will be the third speaker in the Grosse Pointe lecture series at the high school auditorium on January 23rd. Unsatisfactory heating and ventilation of the auditorium which has bothered patrons of the lecture course and all other users of the auditorium of the high school is expected to be remedied before Mr. Andrews' lecture. Exasperated by the failure to get action in the matter of remedying the conditions in the auditorium through complaints to the architect, the Board of Education in November engaged another architect to make a study of the situation and suggest remedies.)

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## Citizens Association

OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP  
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*Officials fear a newspaper that has honesty and nerve and dares to fight, and is not afraid of a little unpopularity and opposition, more than they fear the courts.*

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