

# GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

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## LAKE SHORE ROAD WIDENING

**S**INCE 1925, when the Wayne County supervisors discussed plans to widen the Lake Shore Road to 120 feet and to condemn portions of the lake frontage for a public park, all articles on the subject, until recently, have ended with the refrain, "No action was taken."

Out of the maelstrom of ideas and plans and proposals that have been discussed and studied in the last four years, Grosse Pointe Shores came to an agreement with the Wayne County Road Commission and is now to enjoy the start of construction at county expense of a parked, double roadway on a 120-foot right-of-way to replace the present 18-foot pavement. When the project is completed, there will be two 27-foot strips of concrete with a parkway between. Dedications of property to the 120-foot boulevard have been obtained by the Shores and the road is shortly to be turned over to the county for the period of construction. When construction is completed, the road will be turned back to the Shores' jurisdiction, but the County will continue to maintain and beautify it.

In the surveys and locating of the concrete and right-of-way in the Shores, every effort has been made to preserve shade trees and other landscaping improvements when at all possible, as is the practice of the road commission. Between Weir Lane and Vernier Road, the road commission is building a sea-wall 70 feet out in Lake St. Clair as part of a filling-in project to provide a portion of the 120-foot roadway.

That Jefferson Avenue and the Lake Shore Road must eventually have a 120-foot right-of-way from the Detroit City Limits to New Baltimore to solve present congestion and to take care of future public demand was embodied in a resolution of the Wayne-Macomb Superhighway Commission in 1926. Due to the narrowness of the Lake Shore

Road through the Farms and Shores the widening of the road in these villages has become an immediate objective of the metropolitan road builders.

### Two Plans Advocated

With the superhighway commission's insistence on a 120-foot right-of-way, there is much disagreement among property owners in the Farms as there was in the Shores before the details were worked out and the road located satisfactorily to practically every one. As a result of activity by opponents of the 120-foot right-of-way in the Farms, this village, it now seems likely, may be asked to decide some time, probably at an election in November, between two plans for wiping out the present "bottle-neck" situation:

1. Acceptance by the village of a new 55-foot right-of-way in dedications by property owners, upon which the village would build a pavement at its own expense.

2. Acquisition by the village through dedications or condemnation of a 120-foot right-of-way to turn over to the road commission for construction of a single 54-foot concrete strip or two 27-foot strips (as in the Shores) at county expense. (Estimated cost to the county is between \$600,000 and \$700,000.)

The advantage of the 120-foot right-of-way development in the Shores lies in the one-way traffic lanes with room for parking as well as two lines of traffic in each direction, and with a parkway between that will bedeck a fitting drive through one of the most beautiful residential sections of Detroit. A simple, unboulevarded 54-foot strip of concrete on a 120-foot right-of-way is the present minimum that the Wayne County Road Commission will approve for construction through the Farms.

### How Trees Would Be Saved

At a meeting of the Grosse Pointe Farms' council with the road commission on March 26th, the latter body described the necessity of a 120-foot right-of-way for the Lake Shore Road from the standpoint of traffic and beauty and pledged itself to do all in its power to save or replace trees wherever possible after the right-of-way has been surveyed. If one 54-foot strip of concrete is laid, there would be 66 feet—33 feet on either side—where trees could be left standing just as they are. The concrete could be partly in two 27-foot strips and partly in one 54-foot strip or all in one 54-foot strip, whichever the village and the property owners might decide to be in their best interests, the road commission stated.

The course of procedure which the village council at present seems about decided to pursue is to have surveys made of the 55-foot right-of-way favored by some of the property owners and the 120-foot right-of-way proposed by the Wayne County Road Commission. The tentative plan being discussed is to use colored stakes to indicate the different property lines and thus afford an opportunity for first-hand study of both plans by all interested residents and property owners, the objective being to assist in formulation of intelligent public opinion based on facts.

### EXPERTS SPEED REPORT ON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The study of Grosse Pointe school district's junior high school needs now being made by Professors George D. Strayer and N. L. Engelhardt of Columbia University, will be completed and a report ready for personal presentation to the Board of Education on April 29th, the experts have notified the Board. The Board is planning to invite the public to hear the report on that date in the high school auditorium.

**Grosse Pointe Civic News**

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

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**COMMITTEE STUDYING LIBRARY SYSTEM PLAN**

A THREE-YEAR contract between the Board of Education and the Wayne County Library to foster an increased and unified library service for the Grosse Pointe district is recommended in a survey of the five Grosse Pointe villages now in the hands of the library committee appointed last year by the Board of Education. The survey was made under the direction of Adam Strohm, Detroit librarian, at the committee's request.

If the Board of Education approves the program of development outlined in Mr. Strohm's survey, the district will be assured an excellent library start, in the opinion of Mr. Strohm and his collaborators, Constance Bement, director of the extension division of the Michigan division of the Michigan State Library, and Loleta Dawson Fyan, county librarian.

Every resident of Grosse Pointe will be interested in this proposed library program, which is outlined below.

**The Survey**

The library survey is divided into two parts: (1) a report on library service now available; (2) a report on minimum standards for library service recommended for the Grosse Pointe district. Each of these principal parts treats public library service and school library service separately.

Public library service now available is given and supported largely by the Wayne County Library, supplemented by village appropriations in Grosse Pointe Park, Grosse Pointe Shores and Lochmoor and gifts from the Neighborhood Club and individuals in Grosse Pointe Village, which cover housing, heat, light, janitor service and half the

equipment. Books, supervision, salaries, supplies and half the equipment is supplied by the County Library, the expense last year of which was \$3,600, compared with \$1,418.41 paid by Grosse Pointe district toward the total county tax of \$53,365. A total of 1,493 borrowers made use of 3,931 books, valued at \$5,110 during the past year, total circulation being 27,434 from the Village branch and the Shores sub-branch. Now there are also sub-branches in Lochmoor and the Park. A full-time trained and experienced librarian is in charge, assisted by part-time clerical workers.

How this service is proposed to be enlarged may be judged by a comparison of items:

	Now	Minimum Proposed
Support .....	\$3,600	*\$28,000
Borrowers .....	1,493	5,100
Circulation .....	27,434	85,000
Organized Reference Service .....	Little	Adequate
Book Collection .....	3,931	17,000
Housing .....	1 branch 3 sub-branches	2 branches 3 sub-branches
Trained Librarians....	1	5

\*This would include a suggested \$17,000 appropriation, the \$3,600 in county library funds, and an estimated \$7,000 now in local library fund and local support.

**School Libraries**

Present school library service support is derived largely from penal fines distributed the first of August every year and frequently allowed to cumulate by the various school districts. Grosse Pointe last year spent \$1,202.72 from this fund for books and supplies and had a balance July 11, 1928, of \$3,699.93. The high school library has 2,200 volumes housed in a well-furnished room, 30 x 72 feet, 2,160 square feet, seating capacity for 90 pupils. The room is in constant use as a study hall, no instruction is given in use of books and libraries, and the person in charge, who has had only summer library school training and experience, acts as a study hall teacher. Of the elementary school libraries, Trombly and Vernier have well selected books, the Cadieux books are reported in poor condition; the Kerby has many adult books not suitable for grades 1 to 6. The Vernier School has graded collections in every room with reference books in the office. The Defer has a well-furnished and well-arranged library room, according to the survey.

How the school service would be

improved and extended may be judged by the following comparison: HIGH SCHOOL

	Now	Minimum Proposed
Support .....	\$1,202.72 (h.s. & elem.)	\$1,125.00 (h.s.)
Book Collection ...	2,200	4,500
Instruction .....	None	Adequate
Housing .....	2,160 sq. ft. study hall	25 sq. ft. per reader library only
Personnel.....	1	2

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

Support .....	\$1,202.72 (h.s. & elem.)	\$1,500 initial outlay — \$750 annually
Book Collection...	4,174	2 books per pupil above second grade chosen to fit needs of curriculum
Instruction .....	Next to none	Adequate
Housing .....	Varied	Class - room collections where no library room
Personnel .....	Part-time teacher attention	Supervising librarian

(Parochial and private schools would be given extension service from the public library.)

"Any recommendations for library service for Grosse Pointe should stress the fact that increased facilities will depend upon public appreciation of a growing service rather than upon the erection of a central building," the report states, "and that the problems involved in the organization of a unified system of circulating and reference centers can hardly be met in less than three years.

**Favors 3-Year Contract**

"If any form of increased library service is to be undertaken, an appropriation of \$17,000 should be available for the first year, \$20,000 for the second and from \$23,000 to \$25,000 for the third. Such appropriations plus the library funds now included in the budget of the public schools and the service from the Wayne County Library will give Grosse Pointe an excellent library start and show the possibilities for the developing of ultimate as well as minimum standards."

Because the present form of the Grosse Pointe School District is that of a consolidated Rural Agricultural District, the report points out, the school board cannot appoint a library board, but it can make a contract for library service with some existing library. This action the report recommends, declaring

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 3)

## WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD?

Article No. 3

*(In the last two issues of Civic News appeared the first articles in this series. They raised the question: Why cannot the intelligent group of public servants on the Board of Education conduct its affairs in a business-like manner, in a reasonable length of time and without undue burden to its own peace of mind and that of the taxpayers? The answer given was that the Board is hampering itself by clinging to antiquated business methods inherited from previous boards; is permitting local politics to color its decisions; and is disregarding expert counsel to follow personal opinion unsupported by facts. This and subsequent articles will survey specific cases and suggest remedies in a constructive program.)*

**A**N instance of how political wire-pulling has been permitted to color the decisions of the Board of Education is to be found in the history of last year's handling of the Board's insurance business. A committee appointed to study the insurance situation reported a lack of uniformity in policies and a lack of facts or appraisals by which to judge whether insurance of various kinds was adequate or inadequate. The committee recommended a new method of allotting insurance, called the counselor plan.

This method, the committee stated, would also give the Board the advantage of expert counsel and experience. The committee went on to explain that under the new plan, one broker would be given charge of all the insurance but would agree to split his commission with five other brokers. The latter would have nothing to do with counseling the Board or writing the insurance but would be sent commission checks.

The Board adopted this plan and on April 9, 1928, at the committee's recommendation, appointed a local agency insurance counselor with the provision that this company split its commissions with five other brokers.

No claim was made that the recently-formed local agency was particularly experienced or expert in the insurance field. In fact, the actual detail work as well as counseling on insurance procedure has been done and is still being done by one of the brokers designated for a "split" in the counselor's commissions.

Two public-spirited brokers designated for a "split" in the commissions petitioned the Board to re-

consider the plan adopted at the insurance committee's recommendation or to drop them from participation in a transaction which, they declared, "under certain conditions, might develop into a serious one for the School District of Grosse Pointe." Brokers who did not object to the split-commission method in which they were invited to participate included a son of one of the trustees, a brother-in-law of another trustee, and an agency, one member of which is a village official from whom one of the school trustees receives appointment to a \$3,000-a-year part-time public office.

The law specifically states that a member of the Board of Education shall not be personally interested in any way whatever, directly or indirectly, in any contract with the district in which he holds office, any violation thereof being deemed a misdemeanor for which he shall be liable to punishment provided for such offense. It is axiomatic that public officials should avoid all possible suspicion of favoritism in the letting of contracts for public business. Yet, here we have an example of men in honorable public positions following a procedure expressly forbidden by the statutes.

The patronage system evolved by the insurance committee is a sample of the activities to which the Board of Education has unnecessarily stooped, resulting in discredit to the intelligent group of public servants of which it is composed.

How political wire-pulling, plus disregard of expert advice, contributed to the juggling of junior high school sites for more than a year will be reviewed in the next article in this series. The proposed remedies for the Board's ailments, to be discussed at length in a later article, are briefly: (1) Business-like conduct of affairs in short sessions open to the public and devoted to fundamental policies, assignment of duties and supervisory action; (2) School Board candidates who have no entangling alliances and who will shed their local attitudes when they get on the Board and represent the whole district; (3) Reliance by the Board on disinterested expert judgment rather than biased, personal opinion unsupported by facts.

## PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITIES

Bids are to be received April 22nd by the Village of Grosse Pointe Farms for sewer construction in connection with the closing of Black Marsh Ditch, the financing of which was approved at the spring election. Bids for the Ditch sewer project in Grosse Pointe Village were obtained prior to the election in which the voters approved financing plans but the letting of contracts is being held up pending conclusion of condemnation proceedings now in court to acquire necessary right-of-way for the work.

Construction of the barrel sewer in the Ditch through Grosse Pointe Park is nearing completion. Upon the petition of property owners in the Cadieux-Harvard area where Detroit was planning to erect a pumping station with permission of the village commission, the Grosse Pointe Park commission has asked the Detroit engineering officials to amend its plans and locate the pumping station north of Mack Avenue in return for right-of-way to build an open-cut sewer in the Park along Cadieux Road between Mack and Waterloo to connect the Detroit sewer with the Ditch sewer.

### \$200,000 Paving Program

Right-of-way has been obtained and construction is now started on the Lake Shore Road sewer in the Farms. Two small lateral sewer jobs are on the boards for Lochmoor in the Brys-Roslyn-Hampton area, while work is expected to start shortly on approximately \$200,000 worth of paving, 29,344 square yards of concrete in the Country Club Woods Subdivision and 26,152 yards of asphalt in Eastmoreland Subdivision. Paving of Roslyn Road between Mack and Marter to make Roslyn a through paved artery from Mack to Lake Shore Road is also being discussed.

Acquisition of right-of-way to cut Kercheval Avenue through from Fisher to Moross is being speeded, Grosse Pointe Farms' officials announce, with the hope of paving at least a portion of the street this year. Paving on Charlevoix is also being considered. Financing of pavement widenings on Notre Dame and Kercheval Avenue in Grosse Pointe Village were approved by the voters in March, as well as money to complete the village's tree-planting program.

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 1)

Widening of Vernier Road pavement between Mack Avenue and Lake Shore Road is on this year's program of the Wayne County Road Commission as part of the Eight-Mile Superhighway project.

#### High Water Damage

To prevent erosion of the north side of its lake-front park due to the unforeseen present and possible future buffeting by high water Grosse Pointe Shores is contemplating some sea wall construction. Piers and docks all along the Grosse Pointe shore line, both private and public, have been withstanding the recent pounding of record high water in Lake St. Clair with difficulty. One 1,600-foot private dock was reported swept away.

New fire department buildings were completed and placed in use during the last fiscal year by the Village and Park.

#### RECREATION

The plan being discussed by the Board of Education to acquire a 40-acre recreation field in Lochmoor as an outlet for the physical energies of children and adults in the whole township was held to be impractical for the solution of the recreation problem of the densely populated western end of the district by George Elworthy, director of the Neighborhood Club in Grosse Pointe.

"The facilities of our clubhouse and outdoor fields and apparatus, which are open to the whole township, are not being used anywhere near capacity," he explained, "though we are but a few blocks

east of Grosse Pointe Park where more than half the present population of the township resides. If parents complain about this short distance, what would they say to four or five miles?"

#### ELECTION RESULTS

Overwhelming approval of bond issues totaling nearly a million dollars for sewer construction in Grosse Pointe Farms and Grosse Pointe Village, which will eliminate the Black Marsh Ditch in these communities, and election of Kenneth L. Moore to the presidency of Grosse Pointe Farms in a close contest with Daniel G. Allor featured the spring elections in the township. Voters' choices included:

##### Grosse Pointe Township

Edmund C. Vernier, supervisor; Daniel G. Allor, clerk; Charles A. Paye, treasurer; John LaBelle, justice of the peace; Michael C. Beaupre, member board of review. (No contests.)

##### Grosse Pointe Farms

Kenneth L. Moore, president; John R. Kerby, clerk; Harry A. Furton, treasurer; Alonzo Bachman, assessor; Barnard B. Mason, Joseph Snay and Arthur Gardner, trustees.

##### Grosse Pointe Village

Richard P. Connor, president; Norbert P. Neff, clerk; Charles A. Poupard, treasurer; Neil Blondell, assessor; Daniel M. Cronin, Herbert Trix and Leo O. Teetaert, trustees.

##### Lochmoor

Joseph E. Beaufait, president; Philip Allard, clerk; James E. Goodrich, treasurer; Bert Allen, assessor; James Van Antwerp, William J. Michaux and John W. Holme, commissioners.

##### Grosse Pointe Park

Waldo J. Berns, clerk; Otto J. Groehn, John T. Verlinden and Joseph L. Kolley, commissioners. (No contests.)

(Concluded from Page 2, Col. 3)  
that "A contract for three years with the Wayne County Library Board would seem to be a feasible and practical solution and would give the district time to work out its own form of government before assuming the full responsibility of a library system of its own. If the present form of organization is changed to that of a third-class school district, the three years' contract with the Wayne County Library will give the new administration time to become adjusted to its changed organization before appointing a Library Board and taking over the Library, as it may want to do at the end of three years."

#### Sound Development Urged

Its recommendations, the survey notes, are based on a form of organization serving the whole Grosse Pointe district as one unit. "Grosse Pointe Park is the only village large enough for self-support," the report explains. "If separate libraries were started in each of the five villages, any future combination of the villages with each other or with the City of Detroit would present difficult adjustments."

In presenting the survey to the library committee of the Board of Education, Mr. Strohm strongly recommended a sound library development as outlined, rather than a "shoe-string" system developed piece-meal by the separate villages, some of which, he stated, are large areas inviting settlers rather than commonwealths capable of maintaining independent educational services.

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## Citizens Association

OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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Whenever a few individuals or a few interests are permitted to control local government, it is to be expected that those who are in power will take profit of their opportunities by promoting their own interests. Common negligence and indifference of the average citizen are to blame.  
—George B. Cailin.

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