

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

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OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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LAKE FRONT PARK PROPOSAL

\$490,000 BOND ISSUE AUGUST 25TH

On August 25th Grosse Pointe Park Council will place before their taxpayers a bond issue for \$490,000 for the purchase of a water front park.

The piece of property under consideration comprises the first eight lots in the Windmill Point Subdivision in the extreme southeastern corner of the village. The area is bounded on the south by the lake, on the west by the outlet of Fox Creek, on the north by the Windmill Point Drive, and on the east by what would be Pemberton Road if that street were continued to the lake.

Frontage at this point runs about 400 feet deep and it is estimated that it can be obtained for approximately a dollar per square foot. The property in view is 800 feet on the lake, giving an area of 8 acres, which would mean a land cost of \$320,000, leaving \$170,000 for improvements.

No definite plan of improvements has been made, but members of the Council have expressed themselves as favoring a dock built out in some such formation as to form a harbor for boats, a clubhouse, tennis courts, beach for adult swimmers and a wading pool for children; all set in a harmonizing landscape of lawn, trees, and shrubs. The park would be enclosed and guarded for the exclusive use of residents and their visitors.

There have been many attempts made to obtain a park in Grosse Pointe Park, the most notable being last year's defeat of a site proposal east of the Trombly Road to cost three-quarters of a million dollars. The taxpayers defeated this issue after the Council had spent \$30,000 in condemnation proceedings.

The new proposal, however, carries none of the features that proved ob-

stacles in the 1929 issue. It is a cheaper plan by a quarter of a million dollars. It involves but a small amount of legality, for there are no buildings on the property and the owners are willing to sell. It will produce the minimum depreciation on neighboring lake front property, because the site to the south of it is in the City of Detroit and is occupied by the Marine Hospital; and a high class, well maintained park might be considered a fitting buffer between the Detroit property and the beautiful residences to the east. The land adjacent to the proposed park area is vacant for 700 feet and owned by the same party holding the proposed park site.

What appears to be an ideal park condition has been worked out in Grosse Pointe Village and in Grosse Pointe Farms. These communities have relatively small parks on the high priced lake front with piers out in the water making up for lack of frontage. Then in the less expensive section of the interior is a recreation area of several acres. Such a plan lessens congestion in a particular part and brings the recreational facilities closer to the majority of users in the more populated districts.

The fact that the average resident in Grosse Pointe Park is twice as far from the lake as in the other villages means that such a system would be even more valuable here.

Members of the Council questioned on this score said that they had small hopes of ever working recreation park areas into the interior of the village. Attempts along this line have met with sharp objection from the property holders in the neighborhood where such parks might be placed. The community is built up and Grosse Pointe Park is starting late to get an ideal

park system. For this reason it seems practical to purchase a large area on the lake and have a combination park, making it do for every purpose, although it is the most outlying piece of property in the village.

It seems typical of so many taxpayers in Grosse Pointe to want their schools and parks placed outside of their immediate neighborhood. Convenience of use is a secondary consideration. To develop a community on this principle works a double hardship. It puts the facilities in an inconvenient place for the user, which as time goes on becomes a multiplied trouble. For example, a school placed one mile out of the way for the purpose of satisfying the feeling of a particular neighborhood produces an increasing hardship upon children who walk that extra mile each way, year after year, for the next fifty or one hundred years. And so it is with the proposed park. Small children using a pool that will be supplied with water perhaps from a Mack Avenue main, tennis players, and nurses with babies will be required to walk 1½ to 2 miles from the spot where these facilities would receive the most average use because of sectional and selfish public attitude.

The new park proposal nevertheless seems to be a feasible solution to a problem that has been paramount as long as the village has existed. It presents the fewest objections to property holders because of its isolation. Its land cost is reasonable. It is an imposing spot, commanding an excellent view at the head of the lake and the mouth of the Detroit river. It is large enough to take care of the expected population. It appears to be the best proposition that has come before the voters to date.

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 1)

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

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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:

Lincoln Maire, President.
 Charles H. L'Hommedieu, Vice-President.
 James E. Morrison, Secretary.
 George Porter McMahan, Treasurer.
 Henry S. Slyfield. Charles S. Cole.
 Benjamin G. Vernor. Frank H. Dewey.

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TAXES

Collection of village taxes is now under way in Grosse Pointe. Due to the loss of considerable personal taxes during the past year, readjustments in assessments and changes in tax rates have been radical in some instances.

Lochmoor's total budget has jumped from \$77,665.05 in 1929 to \$99,224.70, of which \$85,000 has been ordered spread on the tax roll.

The Grosse Pointe Farms' budget remains at practically the same figure as last year, \$431,386.50, but due to a four-million-dollar drop in bank stock assessable, the tax rate has increased from \$17.50 to \$18.50 per thousand. A greater increase in the rate was avoided by increasing realty assessments from fourteen to sixteen and a half millions. The total to be raised by taxes is \$400,846.50.

Grosse Pointe Village anticipates a jump in tax rate from \$14 to \$17.60 per thousand, though expenditures remain practically the same as last year. Grosse Pointe Park's rate has gone up 12 cents from \$12.13 to \$12.25 to raise \$450,424.35. Decrease in total assessed valuation was only \$737,716 to \$36,803,506. Various offsets, including a transfer of \$28,033.14 surplus from the Fox Creek Sewer Fund to the sinking fund, and changes in assessments enabled the Park to minimize the loss of several millions in assessable bank stock.

Valuations of the township, upon which school, county, state, township, health and good roads taxes are collected in the winter, are expected to drop about \$8,000,000 this year, according to the supervisor's clerk.

ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS

The annual school election June 9th resulted in the election of J. Lee Barrett and the re-election of Charles A. Poupard as trustees for three-year

terms, without opposition. Of 372 votes polled, Mr. Poupard received 355, Mr. Barrett 340. A few scattered "sticker" votes were cast for Messrs. John R. Kerby, Alfred J. Garska, Gerald Pitt and Julius L. Berns, the latter retiring trustee who did not file for re-election.

At the annual meeting, following the election, officers' reports were read. Secretary Charles A. Parcells, commenting on the change in conduct of the business affairs of the Board of Education in the last three years, declared that service on the board had changed from an "onerous duty" in 1928 to a "delightful duty," a joy and a pleasure, in 1930. He cited the fact that 50 meetings were required for the board's business in 1928, 41 meetings in 1929 and only 31 meetings during the past year.

On July 2nd, the board adopted its budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1931, totaling approximately \$880,000 in anticipated expenditures, compared with estimates last year totaling \$764,000 and actual expenditures during the year of \$723,000. Increases in salaries for eight office employees, totaling \$1,090, were allowed by the board, but scheduled increases for janitors and engineers, with a few exceptions, were denied. Increases due teachers under the new salary schedule adopted last winter were allowed to stand.

Enrollment during the past year has increased 13.4 per centum, compared with the 15 per centum increase in the budget, the superintendent reported. Summer school attendance this year has jumped to 325 from 183 a year ago. Plans are going forward for removal of the board offices from the high school to the Cadieux School this summer to make way for expansion in high school enrollment. The attic in the high school is also to be finished off to help care for additional pupils. The summer recreation program at the Trombly, Defer, Mason and high school grounds is under way as usual, except that at the request of residents it was decided to close the Defer grounds at 8 p. m. daily and all day Sunday, only the tennis courts to be open on Sundays.

ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL MEETING

Three new directors, all residents of Grosse Pointe Park, were elected

to the executive board of the Citizens' Association of Grosse Pointe Township at its eighth annual meeting in the Grosse Pointe High School June 12th. Four residents of the Park are now on this board of eight directors, indicating the increasing influence of that village in the association's affairs.

The new directors, elected for three-year terms, are: Henry S. Slyfield, attorney, 895 Edgemont Park, senior member of the law firm of Slyfield, Hartman & Mercer; Charles S. Cole, real estate, 1014 Kensington Road, of Charles S. Cole & Company; and Benjamin G. Vernor, banker, 1122 Bishop Road, vice-president of the First National Bank, Detroit.

"Constant vigilance is the price of good government," President Lincoln Maire pointed out in his remarks at the annual meeting. "Grosse Pointe," he said, "is too large to get all the information it needs from notices tacked on telephone poles and apparently too small as yet to support a newspaper, so there is a very vital need for the Association's CIVIC NEWS, which acts as a liaison between elected and electors.

"Competent officials," he concluded, "welcome publicity, and the others need it."

At the organization meeting of the new executive board Mr. Maire was re-elected president. Other officers chosen were Mr. Charles H. L'Hommedieu, vice-president; Mr. James E. Morrison, secretary; Mr. George Porter McMahan, treasurer. The board also received and accepted with regret the resignation of its executive secretary, B. E. Meyers, who has been editor of CIVIC NEWS the past three years.

MEETINGS

Lochmoor Commission — Every other Tuesday. (Next one Aug. 26).

Township Board and Board of Health — Every other Wednesday. (Next one Aug. 20).

Grosse Pointe Shores—First Monday of the month.

Grosse Pointe Farms—First Monday of the month.

Grosse Pointe Village—Third Friday of the month.

Grosse Pointe Park — First and Third Fridays.

Board of Education—First and Third Mondays.

FARMS RECEIVES BIDS

At the regular meeting of the Village Council July 7th all bids were rejected on approximately \$400,000 worth of contemplated construction. The Council ordered a readvertisement for bids and specified that bids were to be received, opened and read in its presence. This action was taken after the president and engineers had received and tabulated bids previous to the meeting.

Lowest bids on the proposed new waterworks plant and Charlevoix water main, which were properly advertised upon authority of the Council, were found to exceed the \$314,000 bond issue authorized by the voters in March by approximately \$30,000 after eliminating terrazo floors and postponing installation of filters and miscellaneous items.

"We should keep within the bond issue in my opinion," Trustee Rasmusen declared when President Moore suggested that the excess might be financed either by calling a special election to vote an additional bond issue or by carrying it as a deficit in the water fund to be repaid out of income, raising the amount in the meantime by general taxation. Based on the consulting engineers' figures of costs and income of the project voters were assured that the expenditure for the waterworks would likely be repaid out of income within a decade while the earnings from then on would annually go into the village treasury.

Asked to explain the discrepancy between their estimate and the actual figures in the bids, representatives of Hoad, Decker, Shoecraft & Drury, of Ann Arbor, consulting engineers, declared that the structure designed to house the waterworks would be one of the most beautiful on the Great Lakes in keeping with the character of its location and of the recommendation of the village president's special consulting architect on the job, Robert O. Derrick, Inc., as to the type of roof and the substitution of tile terrazo floors for plain concrete, and an increase of five feet in the depth of foundations deemed advisable to provide a better design. But these items, the engineers said, were minor matters, adding that they were probably low in some of their original estimates.

The fact that they received only three bids on the Charlevoix water

main was very disappointing, the engineers said, declaring that this was not good competition. They recommended rejection of the lowest bid, \$29,700, which was \$4,000 over their estimate. The engineers said they had made a mistake in including one item of \$2,890 in the specifications for bidders.

At a subsequent meeting new bids were obtained on the proposed work and resulted in the following contracts being awarded:

Water plant, general structure, to Christman & Burke for \$265,925.00. Pumps (four units) to De Leval Co. for \$16,990, and water mains to Tee-taert & Moran for \$25,215.99.

Rebidding resulted in a saving of over \$10,000. However, the above total contracts plus an 8 per cent engineers' fee and a 2 per cent engineers' fee paid by the village during the course of construction will carry the cost over the bond issue about \$20,000. This amount will be handled by spreading it on the tax rolls.

Wm. Benton of Mt. Clemens, Michigan, was low bidder by \$4,000 on the general contract. The Council awarded this contract to Christman & Burke, second low, on the recommendation of the engineers. As a result Wm. Benton has taken the matter to Circuit Court and the village must show cause for their decision. The date of the hearing was set for Aug. 14th.

It was estimated by the retiring village engineer, E. P. Walter, who was ordered to get bids on the job by the president, that the construction now under way on Lake Shore Road paving would cost approximately \$20,000. The pavement is to be widened from 18 to 40 feet. Mr. Walter, who has been village engineer the past nine years, will be succeeded by Murray Smith, a University of Michigan graduate, engaged last year in a special capacity on the proposed waterworks project.

Information was given the Council that during three days in June and on July 3rd and 5th, the water pressure was so low in part of the village that the Cottage Hospital on Kercheval Avenue was without water at various periods. The Detroit Water Board had been asked to advise the village what was wrong and what should be done. The Detroit advice was that with the present system of water mains

in the Farms it would not be possible to eliminate poor pressure periods entirely but that expenditure of about \$5,000 to place a new meter well connection on the Detroit system at Moran and Mack would alleviate some of the difficulty now encountered. The connection with Detroit at present is at Mack and Moross. The Farms' water system having been designed for receiving water from Lake St. Clair, this "back-door" connection with Detroit and Mack Avenue makes it necessary for Detroit to pump through the small end of the system to the larger with the result that at heavy demand periods, especially when the sprinklers on the Country Club grounds are in full use, the pressure to the rest of the village drops 20 pounds and more.

The president recommended that if the Council considered abandoning the plans for its individual waterworks it would probably be wise to make the additional connection at Moran and Mack as suggested by the Detroit Water Board, but that if it was still the Council's intention to proceed with the waterworks project this \$5,000 expenditure might well be avoided, perhaps, by asking the large users of water in the village to hold themselves in readiness to curtail abnormal consumption at any time it might be necessary to ask them to do so to rescue the hospital and other users in the lower end of the village from drought. The latter course was decided upon.

Two alleged murderers of Patrolmen Claude Lanstra and Erhardt W. Meyer of the Grosse Pointe Park Police Department were bound over to the Circuit Court, without bail, following arraignment June 30th before Justice Walter Schweikart of Grosse Pointe Township. The policemen were shot and killed at 2:35 a. m. June 1st in front of a restaurant at 15017 Jefferson Avenue while engaged in a search for a hit-run driver who had fractured a woman's skull a short time before.

The men now held for trial, Nick Dellavonti and Frank Salamoni, were arrested shortly after the double murder and have been connected with it through fingerprints taken from a bullet-riddled coupe found by Detroit detectives in a garage at the rear of 13094 Rosemary Avenue.

(Continued from Page 1)

The Windmill Pointe Subdivision restriction will have to be altered to permit a park within its limits. The original plot allowed for a possible subdivision clubhouse on this property, and the step to a village park is not entirely foreign to this idea. The property can be acquired by direct purchase from the realtors, and should property holders in the subdivision take exception to the use of the property, the Council would be defendants in any action. Because the village has the power to condemn, the result would be a foregone conclusion.

An interesting feature of this location presents itself in the fact that the lower 200 feet of the proposed site is within the limits of the City of Detroit. This brings up the question of policing and taxation. The

president of the village said they had legal advice that gave the Council confidence they could establish a private park on the premises, regardless of boundary line. He also felt certain the property could be taken off the tax rolls of Detroit. The City collects \$1,108 a year taxes on their part of the proposed site. The Corporation Council's office, in the absence of Col. Barlow, could not give a decision on this case, but pointed out that in a general case property of one municipality within another is tax exempt, such as the disposal plant of Grosse Pointe Village on Warren Ave.

TOWNSHIP

Upon the suggestion of Justice Walter Schweikart, a member of the township board, the board voted a month before the expiration of the

justice's two-year term to appoint him attorney for the board at a salary of \$300 a year to succeed Howard Colby, who has been the attorney by appointment of Supervisor Edmund C. Vernier. Recently, Colby and Schweikart have both been directed by the board to represent the township and the supervisor in the Mack Avenue widening case, the Eight Mile Road assessment case and the rumored plans of Wayne County to seek the supervisor's removal for refusal to spread the Eight Mile Road assessments on the tax roll in Grosse Pointe Township.

A hearing in the proposed Mack Avenue widening was called for July 10th by the state highway commissioner. At a previous hearing the commissioner's representative was served with an injunction preventing him from confirming the assessment rolls totaling more than \$5,000,000.

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Popular desires are no criteria to the real needs; they can be determined only by deliberative consideration, by education, by constructive leadership.

—Herbert Hoover.

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