

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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LAKE SHORE ROAD

Wayne County and Grosse Pointe Farms officials have been cooperating in obtaining the right-of-way for the new waters edge roadway. The County engineers have arranged the necessary surveys and the Farms officials, aided by some of the property holders, have so far succeeded in getting all of the necessary deeds excepting a dozen hold-outs.

The Farms Clerk, John R. Kerby, explained that the negotiations with the remaining few were proceeding in an encouraging manner. Two have assured that they will sign upon return from vacations. One or two are holding out until a suitable arrangement is made about the steep grade at the Moran Road, two more until the outline of the road at a bend is agreed upon. One man wants to reserve the right to bridge over the road to his lake front. (It is unlikely this will be allowed.)

The rest of the outstanding deeds are due to minor and special improvements such as irrigation pumping systems which property holders contended should be reinstalled at public expense. The Council of Grosse Pointe Farms recently met and authorized that this matter be cared for by the Village, thus removing this contention.

It is predicted that work on the sea walls, drain and filling will start this late summer. No paving is planned for this year, giving the new filled-in land a winter to settle in.

As explained in the December Civic News, the present drive will be removed and the land thus vacated deeded back to adjacent property holders in exchange for the dedication of a new right-of-way 120 feet wide, which will be a continuation of the road now existing in Grosse Pointe Shores. The land deeded to the property holders from the now existing road varies from thirty to sixty feet.

JUDGE LAMB REBUKES PARK ON USE OF CHARTER

In a recent decision of Judge Frederick S. Lamb, of Cadillac, sitting in the Circuit Court for Wayne County, in the case of Munz-Sprawlawn Company vs. Grosse Pointe Park, there was administered to the village authorities a very pointed rebuke which is of interest to the citizens of Grosse Pointe Park and the other villages in the Grosse Pointe district.

The suit was brought to set aside the award of a contract for the installation of an automatic sprinkler system in the public park recently opened by the village, and was based upon the claim that the plaintiff company had been deprived of an opportunity to bid upon the job because plans and specifications for the improvement had not been made prior to the advertising for bids and that the advertisement itself was so vague and obscure that it did not indicate the nature of the improvement, or form the basis of an intelligent bid. Judge Lamb, in his opinion setting the award aside, said:

"I take the position that when a person bids he accepts what he has to bid upon and, of course, is not in a position to complain of not having more. But this proposition goes farther than that. It goes to the very fundamental principles involved in the letting of public work for the purpose of letting the work to the best advantage of the people who have to put up the money to carry it out.

"Having had considerable experience in one way and another in municipal affairs ever since I have been in practice, I cannot fail to give you the benefit of some of the conclusions I have come to in relation to the necessity for carrying out charter provisions substantially as the charter calls for.

"Now, when a piece of public work is proposed, about the first

thing that the body authorizing it has to do is to determine the necessity for the work, and for this job, similar to any one of these involved in this case, they turn it over to the engineer to prepare plans and specifications for that particular job or piece of work. The engineer reports back to the Commission or the Common Council. The Common Council, if it is a job of any considerable size, will advertise for objections, and people can come in and object to it if they have any objections to make. The Council then determines whether that job shall be performed in accordance with its plans and specifications, and if it does, it orders them and directs the clerk to advertise for bids for carrying out that piece of work. Those bids are submitted in accordance with the plans and specifications on file in the clerk's office. Then the Council opens the bids and selects the bid that they deem the most advantageous, coming within the charter provisions that their judgment dictates.

"Now, there are two reasons for having specifications in all these pieces of public work. One is to give the bidder an opportunity of knowing just what he is bidding upon, and the other reason, and one that is very important, is that the public may know what they have a right to expect of the bidder when once he bids, is to do in carrying out this project.

"Now, putting the 'ad' in question here and the action of the Commission to these tests I have indicated here, and we can come to no other conclusion than that they have failed absolutely in carrying out the purpose of their charter in those respects.

"Now, this 'ad' was a general 'ad' and might just as well have been for the improvement of a highway as for a sprinkler system. On reading that 'ad' one would not know

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Grosse Pointe Civic News

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DOES THE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION PAY?

Starting the tenth year of the life of the Citizens Association, it becomes fitting to review some of the things accomplished. For the purpose of limiting this article, let us take up the subject from a financial point of view, with the idea in mind of estimating whether the work of the Association pays the public it serves.

The high points of such an analysis indicate that big dividends are realized. On an estimate it may be safely said that for every dollar invested in the Citizens Association the taxpayers of Grosse Pointe have been saved twenty dollars.

The Association was organized in the later part of 1922. Since then its total cost of operation has amounted to the approximate sum of \$35,000. Nearly all of this amount was spent in the publication of this paper.

Over and against this expenditure can be placed the following savings to the public: In 1926 the Association, cooperating through the pages of Civic News, with two members of the school board and the school board building committee, called in the services of Dr. Moehlman of Ann Arbor, who revised the plan of the High School at a saving of over \$400,000. Anyone who followed the situation in Grosse Pointe at this time will know that this saving could never have been accomplished without the aid, or perhaps leadership, of the Association.

In 1925 the Association secured the services of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research in making a report on the school board. This report outlined a modern business administration, including a budgeting system which has meant a savings impossible to estimate or give as a figure.

For three years the Civic News published at cost the annual reports

of the school district. By law, these reports must appear in a local paper. The Detroit newspapers, the only available press, would have charged many times the cost of Civic News space. Estimated savings on this item might be placed at \$5,000.

In January, 1929, the Civic News aided in defeating a \$750,000 bond issue for a lake front park. The officials of Grosse Pointe Park repeatedly "blamed" the Association for this bond defeat. In August, 1930, a \$500,000 bond issue for the park was obtained—rendering a savings of \$250,000. In fairness to the Grosse Pointe Park officials and to their park committee, it should be borne in mind that this saving was largely an indirect result of a change in land values due to the business depression. However, this does not alter the effectiveness of the quarter of a million dollars saving "blamed" on the Civic News.

The above detailed \$655,000 represents a saving of \$30 to a property holder whose home is appraised at \$5,000. A taxpayer possessing an estate appraised at \$100,000 can thank the Association and his cooperation with this paper to the extent of \$600 on the above saving.

In March, 1930, the Association recommended the approval of a bond issue for a filtration plant for Grosse Pointe Farms. This improvement is unique in that it promises to develop a sizable revenue and as such becomes more than a saving. It becomes a good paying investment.

The real value of the Association cannot be measured in dollars and cents. The display of issues, an enlightened and interested electorate, the encouragement rendered public officials doing good things, and the check upon inefficient public policies are all important. The general development of community spirit resulting from the liberal and free-willed contribution of over 600 citizens is in itself an outstanding feature. However, in times like the present it is particularly satisfying to realize the Association's success from the standpoint of public savings. The Association pays the people of Grosse Pointe big dividends.

The future holds much in store. The next few years can mean the saving of more money. With the tax situation becoming acute because of the depression, the work of

the Citizens Association becomes more important.

ANOTHER RECOGNITION

The Grosse Pointe High School is the first public school to be admitted to membership in the Secondary Education Board, national organization of many of the leading private schools of the country. Announcement of the election of the Grosse Pointe High School to membership was announced recently in a letter from Roger Twitchell, secretary, to Dr. S. M. Brownell, superintendent of schools.

By this affiliation with many of the leading boarding and day schools of the country, the Grosse Pointe High School is able to assure pupils who transfer to preparatory schools elsewhere that they will receive full credit for subjects in which they have taken the Secondary Board examinations.

The Secondary Education Board, in its origin and development, represents an affiliation of progressive, independent schools. Each member school participates in such activities of the board as it elects, but its membership in the board does not in any way restrict any other activities that the school may wish to carry on.

From an initial membership of 20 schools, steady growth has brought the number up to more than 130. Among the member schools are the Beaver Country Day School, The Choate School, Culver Military Academy, Greenwich Country Day School, Grosse Pointe Country Day School, Groton School, Hill School, The Hotchkiss School, Lawrenceville School, Loomis Institute, Phillips Academy (Andover), The Phillips-Exeter Academy, The Taft School and many others.

Membership in the Secondary Education Board is the second national recognition that has been accorded to the Grosse Pointe High School within recent years. The High School has been a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools since 1927. The High School's membership in this association permits its graduates to enter any college or university in the North Central group without examination, provided their records in the Grosse Pointe High School have been satisfactory.

SCHOOL MEETINGS

At the July 1st meeting of the school board, the 1931-1932 school budget was adopted amounting to \$803,875. While last year's budget was \$874,609, \$833,379 was expended, which means that this year's budget represents a \$30,000 reduction (actually \$29,504).

This proposed reduction was planned upon the following points:

Stop bus service to all above the sixth grade.	\$11,257.00
Close Vernier School....	6,000.00
Close all but one coaching room	7,000.00
Put night school on fee basis	2,000.00
Reduce janitor's salary..	590.00
*Discontinue home teaching	750.00
Discontinue librarian service below sixth grade..	2,000.00

*The home teaching service was accomplished by a circuit teacher visiting at intervals the crippled children. It is understood twelve pupils were being educated in this manner.

At a meeting July 20th, the tax levy for this budget was set at \$850,000 upon the recommendation of Mr. Carl Chatters, director of Municipal Advisory Council representing the banks that may be called upon to advance delinquent tax loans to the district. The result of the \$850,000 budget tax levy means a school rate of \$7.93 per thousand. This is an increase of \$1.71 per thousand over last year's tax, and can be traced largely to the 10% reduction in valuations and to the delinquent tax situation which necessitates borrowing money.

JULY 20th MEETING

The July 20th meeting was attended by a group of citizens who apparently came with the idea of further reducing the budget.

The president of the school board, Mr. Chas. Parcels, explained to the assembly that they were about to set the tax levy for 1931-1932 at \$850,000, that this levy was the result of an \$803,875 budget approved at the meeting before but according to the school attorney any or all of this budget could be reconsidered at this meeting. He gave the assembly to understand that the board was interested in any feasible reduction of expense and suggestions would be most welcomed.

Following is a report of what took place:

Tall gentleman with glasses advances to front of room with pencil and long list of figures in hand.* "I understand that Detroit has only one assistant principal in the high schools. I would like to know what we are doing with an assistant superintendent in a school of 1,400?"

Trustee Watkins: "Are you talking about an assistant principal of our High School or an assistant superintendent of all our schools? At one time you speak of an assistant principal and at another time an assistant superintendent?"

Answer: "I am talking about the assistant principal to the High School."

Trustee Watkins: "I will answer that by simply saying that we have none."

Tall gentleman with glasses looks up and down his list of figures, starts to speak, stops, returns to rear of room and sits down.

Lady to right of room reports that she has personally investigated some of the schools, talked to the teachers and found out that the classes in the Kerby School were "smaller than private school classes," one class of only 14, implied that the Kerby School might be closed, said that the Trombly School was not full and the school board had built an addition costing several hundred thousand dollars.

Trustee Watkins made reply to this to the effect that the addition to the Trombly School cost \$105,000, "not several hundred thousand dollars," and that here was an example of the inaccuracy of criticism aimed at the school board. He explained that the addition to the school was built because the rapid growth of that neighborhood at the time warranted it. That the subsequent depression which saw a drop in building could not be anticipated.

President Parcels asked the inquirer if she lived in the Kerby School district. It developed that this resident lived within a block of the Defer School on St. Paul. "Don't you think the people of the Kerby

*Detroit has assistant principals in all high schools but one. In Cass High there are 3, in another 2. Each intermediate high has an assistant principal. The assistant principal in Grosse Pointe High for last year was awarded a fellowship in Yale University. It is understood his place will be filled in the near future.

School should be considered on such a subject as the closing of all or a part of their school?" said President Parcels. "You know the board is duty bound to represent all of the people of Grosse Pointe."

Another elector said he thought the board should do something about the Kerby School.

"Do you suggest that we close this school?" asked President Parcels.

"No, nothing as drastic as that, but why not combine these small classes and save some teachers," was the answer.

The classroom sizes of the Kerby School as planned for next year were then read as follows: Kindergarten, half day, 14; Grades 1-B and 1-A, 34; Grades 2-B and 2-A, 32; Grades 3-B, 4-B and 4-A, 27; Grades 5-B, 6-B and 6-A, 23, giving a classroom ratio of 26, with five teachers and 130 pupils.

Everyone seemed satisfied when it became known that the Kerby School ratio was this high.

"I would like to know why Dr. Brownell has thirty-two assistants on his staff," said another visitor. He was informed from the personal sheets that Dr. Brownell had one assistant and one stenographer.

The staff personnel was read as follows: Superintendent—1 assistant, 1 stenographer; Board of Education—1 stenographer, switchboard operator; Purchasing Agent—1 bookkeeper, 1 stock clerk; Director child accounting—1 assistant.

"Who does all the intelligence tests checking?" asked someone, and was informed that these charts were checked by the switchboard operator.

"Jules Berns told me that Dr. Brownell had thirty-two assistants," said a lady in an emphatic manner, rising to her feet. (A general laugh here.)

AUGUST 10th MEETING

The August 10th meeting brought forth a petition signed by 63 electors, requesting that intermediate grades be taught in the Trombly School. The petition was placed on file for future consideration.

The Detroit Edison Company outlined an electrical development costing in excess of \$3,000, that, it was claimed, would materially reduce the annual electrical expense.

Trustee Conely stated that he had found out that a saving of \$50,000 could be made on the budget, fol-

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whether highway improvements or cinderizing of sidewalks or what not was to be done. You would have to go down and find out from somebody that would know and nothing in writing to indicate what it was presumed to be and tell them to go ahead and make up their own specifications what they would stand for and not what the public had a right to expect. So looking at it as I do and having in mind the charter provision and what it means necessarily, if it means anything, the charter was not obeyed in this case, either in advertising or in the performance of its further duty in requiring specifications.

"While they advertised specifications there were no specifications at all prepared, according to the engineer, as far as the sprinkling system was concerned. Not having specifications for that branch of the work, their 'ad' was false in fact.

"Now, as I have already said, if the Munz people were interested in this alone, simply as one who was unsuccessful in bidding, that would be an entirely different proposition, and I would simply say, having bid upon what they had to bid upon, they are bound by the result. But, looking at it here from a more far-reaching standpoint, I am satisfied that this municipality under like circumstances would be made to substantially comply with their charter, and not having done so, and in view of the fact that this is a matter of public interest and that the Attorney General is a proper party to it, I think the prayer of the bill to the extent of requiring re-advertising and plans and specifications specifically covering each project should be filed with the clerk and advertise for bids. This is all I have to say. * * * * That will give the municipality to understand that hereafter in those cases they must abide by their charters substantially."

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lowing a conference with Carl Chatters, director of Municipal Advisory Council, representing certain local banks.

The board proceeded to check up the figures used by Mr. Conely and Mr. Chatters. It appeared that they had based their assertion upon figures taken from the 1929-30 records, and consequently were not coordinating with the figures used in the present budget as adopted at the July 1st meeting, which totals \$803,875.

Mr. Chatters was in conference with the Grosse Pointe School Board at the July 20th meeting, recommending that the tax levy be \$850,000; he did not recommend budget reduction.

At the last annual meeting of the Citizens Association, Henry S. Newman was elected a member of the board of directors.

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