

# REPAVING JOB IS APPROVED

Commission Again Endorses Proposed West Maple Avenue Project

The City Commission Monday night gave its approval to a letter written by City Manager James W. Parry to V. B. Steinlaugh, deputy state highway commissioner, in which the manager makes it in that local officials are heartily in favor of the repaving of West Maple avenue.

It was revealed recently that the city highway department had been given some consideration to including this project in its list of jobs to be financed with federal road funds, and Mr. Parry's letter served as official notification to the department that it would meet with opposition here.

While favoring the repaving project, the letter made no concession to the Commission's stand that the city should complete cut-off of the old Grand Trunk right-of-way before the repaving of West Maple could be started.

With the letter, Mr. Parry sent to the Commission Jan. 3, 1934, enclosing the proposed repaving of West Maple as a "useful and constructive project."

Referring to the resolution, Mr. Parry wrote that "it expresses the opinion of the Commission that the project has merit and gives the Board of the City Commission to it. Recent conversation with Mr. Steinlaugh indicates that they are still of the same mind. The resolution adopted dealt only with the area between Southfield and Lusher roads, but any extension of it would be equally approved. The possibilities on the street are. We have a city plan and the

project should be adapted to the requirements of that plan as nearly as possible. We have also made various studies in the different areas involved and I would anticipate no particular difficulty in developing it as a satisfactory project.

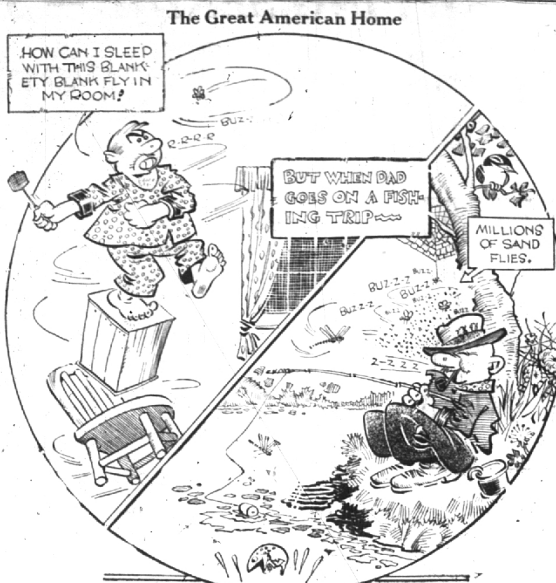
"I am also attaching herewith a map from our city plan report, which indicates a cut-off to Woodward avenue by way of Merrill street, which we believe would be a valuable addition to the city's right-of-way. If such cut-off were completed there would be less need for any widening of pavement between Southfield and Woodward avenues. This we do not look upon as an entirely practical operation under existing conditions with a 66 foot right-of-way. Resurfacing is badly needed."

(Concluded 1 from Page 1) state highway administration for their own property in connection with the relocation of the right-of-way.

The act will enable business establishments along the old right-of-way to acquire title to new sites on the new right-of-way and, according to City Manager James W. Parry, will probably result in a withdrawal of suits filed by the city against oil companies on the old right-of-way whose tanks are alleged to be in violation of the city's fire ordinance.

Edward H. Laird, 288 George street, received the gavel as president of the Birmingham Rotary Club Monday noon at the organization's regular meeting in the Community House. He succeeds F. Morse Cooke, who has headed the club for the past 12 months. Mr. Cooke automatically becomes vice-president, and J. R. Howarth and Charles B. Randall continue as secretary and treasurer, respectively. The meeting included the assignment of committee duties by Mr. Laird, and the reading of a comprehensive report of the club's activities during the past year by Mr. Howarth.

The Birmingham Knights of Pythias Lodge held its annual memorial service Tuesday at Greenwood Cemetery in honor of the late Warren D. Clizbe, former village president and past chancellor of the Domain of Michigan. The service was opened by J. S. Caputo, chancellor commander of the Birmingham Lodge, after which a wreath was placed on Mr. Clizbe's grave by Austin



**'Hornin' In'**  
(Concluded 2 from Page 1)  
of currently paid taxes for the period beginning 1923, for this city and the former village, is 87 per cent. There appears to be slight probability that the percentage of collections for current tax years will for some time exceed 50 per cent.  
It must be conceded that for many years real estate has borne an unfairly large part of the tax burden. In addition thereto a large portion of real estate is now, and will be for some time to come, unable to produce tax revenues.  
**Expenses Continue**  
This is true not only with respect to vacant and unimproved property, but is also conspicuously true of income property which has not produced for some years, and is not now producing sufficient to pay carrying charges and taxes. To these items must be added the lack of ability of home owners, due to the substantially decreased earning power, to easily pay the taxes levied against real estate.  
In the meantime, this city is confronted with the necessity of providing revenues necessary to carry its operating expenses, such as fire and police protection, care and maintenance of streets, sewers, administrative costs, et cetera, and to also pay interest upon its funded debt, and to provide for the eventual payment and retirement of such debt.  
A few of several methods of approach to this problem may be mentioned: The city may, of course, levy sufficient taxes on the taxable real and personal property of the city to produce adequate revenues, assuming a current tax collection of 50 or 60 or some other percentage. This remedy is worse than the disease itself.  
**Scorn Other Taxes**  
The city may devise other forms of taxation. A moment's reflection will reveal that such devices are not practical, are inequitable, and worse than useless. The city may, for instance, levy nuisance taxes in the guise of vocational, business, or use license fees. Such license fees, if levied at such time as the facts are available to produce tax revenues, should be seriously considered.  
As a background to what I have

said, it must be remembered that something like 70 per cent of all the real estate descriptions are vacant subdivision lots or undivided acreage. The assessed value of such properties is 23.7 per cent of the entire assessment roll.

For several months last past some of the members of this Commission have given a great deal of time and study with respect to the feasibility of the city's generating electric energy and distributing it to the residents of the city. Sufficient progress has been made to justify, in my opinion, the making of a comprehensive survey of the city for the purpose of determining whether such a project is feasible or not.

**Other Plants Cited**  
A great many municipalities in this state and a great many more municipalities throughout the country now operate such municipal plants and distribution systems with such efficiency and economy of operation as to produce in most cases much of the necessary operating revenues for the municipality, and in some cases more than enough net revenue to provide for all of the operating services of the municipality. An especially attractive part of such situations is that citizens pay a part of their tax and with no increase in the cost to them of the current uses.

I appreciate the reluctance with which all of us approach any proposition looking toward municipal ownership or operation of such facilities. I am also fully aware that the questions involved are highly controversial. However, the problem of providing necessary revenues for an exclusively residential community in an industrial area such as we are within, is a real problem, which must be solved.

I, therefore, recommend to the members of this Commission thoughtful consideration of the possibility of obtaining necessary revenue from the ownership and operation of a municipal electric light and power plant and the distribution by the city of the electric energy produced from such plant. The first step in obtaining the necessary facts from which it can be determined whether such a plant is either feasible or desirable, is to obtain a comprehensive survey by some one competent to make it.  
In view also of the wide and constructive interest of the citizens of this community in the welfare of the city as a residential suburb it would also be my conviction that a citizens committee be appointed at such time as the facts are available to study and counsel with the Commission on the subject.

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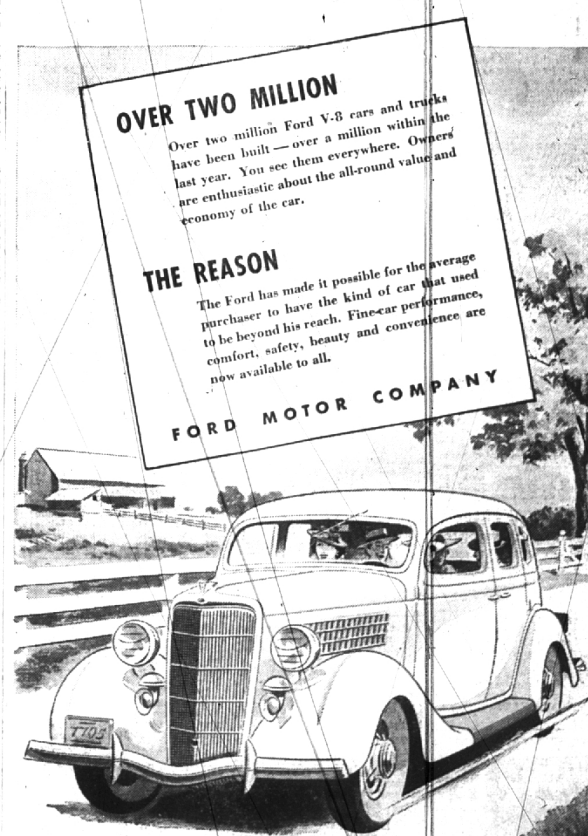
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