

Cooperation, Publicity Make Planning Work Best

Since October, 1948, nine civic-minded citizens have devoted hundreds of hours in the study and development of future plans for the City of Birmingham.

All those hours have been given eagerly and without cost to the community. Regular meetings, special meetings, committee meetings all designed to come up with some sort of a "road map" by which Birmingham can direct its future, if it so desires.

During January and February of this year the city plan commission revealed to the public the results of its two years' study. The Eccentric, following its policy regarding proposed city projects involving the vast majority of citizens, cooperated with the plan commission and devoted many columns of space in presenting the planning recommendations to the public.

Then the criticism came, not all of it constructive.

SEVERAL NEIGHBORHOODS attacked the plans as they affected a particular area. Individuals, too, resented certain portions of the plans.

But why all the commotion? Certainly not because the plan commission has not done its job. It has very admirably performed it, we believe. For proof, one only has to turn to the press release of the directive handed out by the city commission immediately following its action establishing the new plan commission at its Sept. 27, 1948, meeting. The release was quoted in full in The Eccentric of Sept. 30, 1948.

While fairly general in term, the di-

rective was specific in mentioning the fields in which the plan commission was to concern itself: sanitation, fire and police protection, segregated and guided commercial areas, including off-street parking, maintenance of high quality building standards and careful zoning, park and recreational facilities, street system properly laid out are most of the instructions.

Why all the commotion? BECAUSE THE PLAN commission failed to carry out one reminder from the city commission: "full (public) participation and support is an essential part of the entire program . . ."

And because the city commission itself, until recently, failed to keep itself informed on what the plan commission was working, and if necessary to conform to previous city commission policy, to give direction or re-direction to plans being developed.

A public agency has two methods by which it can obtain public criticism of a plan or project:

- 1) Keep its opinions, discussions, and progress before the public by reports of the meetings with groups touched by any phase of the plan or project; or
- 2) Keep silent, keep the plan "in committee," never give the public an opportunity to consult with the public agency until the plan is ready down to the last detail—then dump the matter into the public's lap suddenly and expect it to know what has gone on in the public-less meetings, and expect nothing but constructive criticism.

BOTH METHODS HAVE their advantages and disadvantages, as far as the committee is concerned.

But we can't figure out why a public spirited group wants to spend two or more years working out a plan in detail, only to discover when it is made public that the citizens don't want it. Why shouldn't the committee find out much sooner by using "progress reports" to the public? If there is too much public resentment, the committee would learn of it so much sooner, be able to revamp or drop the plan and get on to its next order of business.

On the other hand, the city commission which appoints the plan commission can take one of two courses:

- 1) Keep an eye on the progress of the plan commission, help it over rough spots, or change its direction if desirable; or

2) TELL THE COMMITTEE, in a general way, what to do—then forget about it, believing the committee automatically will come up with the right, most publicly-acceptable answers.

The plan commission tried its Method No. 2 with off-street parking. It didn't work. The same method was tried with the current "Master Plan." It hasn't worked.

The city commission has used its Method No. 2 with the plan commission. Now some city commissioners are on the verge of verbally spanking the plan commission for coming up with "such a Plan."

In all fairness, the plan commission should be congratulated for the time it has spent on this master plan, which itself has considerable merit.

Of course, there are some rough spots which finally have to be smoothed out with the oil of cooperation. That shouldn't be too difficult.

WHILE SOME PROBLEMS may take a little longer than others to solve, Birmingham always has found an agreeable answer. We have no reason to believe we won't find one this time.

However, considerable more direction and leadership from the city commission, plus more of an understanding on the part of the plan commission that the public likes to participate in making plans, would do a great deal in keeping our community blood pressure normal.

It's All in the Point of View



Happenings of Long Ago

Bits Of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

50 YEARS AGO April 5, 1901
Willow avenue is the name given an out-southernmost boundary street. No provision was made for a street sign at the corner of Woodward street or four of the more enterprising ladies living there have had signs printed and are placing them in the proper location.

David Hanna is no more pleased than all of his Birmingham friends to shake the friendly hand. Mr. Hanna's present home is in Akron, Mich., and all here are highly pleased to have him return for a visit.

A very pleasant little party was at the home of Mrs. Jennie Smith of Fremont street Friday evening last. Dancing and cards entertained the guests who later partook of the very dainty refreshments.

Monday afternoon during the temporary absence of Mr. Aldrich, someone effected an entrance into the ticket office of the D. C. H. & M. R. Y. station and helped himself to what change there was in the money drawer. Between three and four dollars.

Parents whose children are in the downtown school room are inquiring if nothing is to be done in regard to an addition to the school building. If those parents could see the many hair breadth escapes of these same children from electric cars and runaway teams, they would be still more anxious.

20 YEARS AGO April 9, 1931
Alfred Laddell was named chairman of the new cooperative group formed by local businessmen at a meeting Tuesday evening. The members have formed their organization to get a closer cooperation among the various establishments and provide better service for their customers.

Neal McDonald, 26, suffered only sprains and bruises when an eight foot ditch caved in on him at the Woodward-Oak corner. The man was working with a crew preparing to lay pipe for sewer lines here.

Pump adjustments on the Derby

will are expected to effect a sharp reduction in the amount of power necessary to run the pump. James W. Parry, village manager, said this would mean at least a 25 per cent reduction in power needed for operation.

Frank W. Higby has received the highest honor that the DeMolay can bestow, the Legion of Honor. This is given in recognition of outstanding service to the Order. Higby is a scribe of the local James S. Hassberger chapter.

Police Chief John Hackett will be host today when the members of the Wayne county police chiefs association meet at the Community House. James Parry announced the meeting Tuesday evening.

5 YEARS AGO April 11, 1946
Plans have been announced for a hospital and health center in Bloomfield Hills. The present idea is to erect a 125 bed hospital at a probable cost of one and one half million dollars. The plan is sponsored by residents of the area.

The Exchange club is planning to sponsor a model aircraft meet for Birmingham youths, as a part of the metropolitan event in Detroit May 24-26. R. W. Brandt, local chairman, will be assisted by William Cobb, former air corps officer.

Milton F. Mallerer has been elected mayor of Birmingham for the coming year. He was re-elected at the city election April 1, and selected as city head by members of that body at their first meeting.

Ernest R. Baldwin, 592 Lakeside, has accepted the office of treasurer of the Sigler committee, according to E. D. Benton of Royal Oak. Baldwin, who moved to Birmingham a short time ago, has served five terms as mayor of Berkley.

The Birmingham Retail Merchants association will have a dinner meeting at the Community House April 24. The affair will include a testimonial for Charles J. Shain who has just completed 40 years operation of Shain's drug store.

Mail Messenger Bids Are Sought

Sealed proposals for carrying the mail, including parcel post, on Mail Messenger route 237072, to and from the Birmingham post office and the Grand Truck station are due April 10 according to Acting Postmaster Bernard E. Fowler.

He said the service was not let

for any definite period and no written contract with bond is required. The service is subject to all postal laws and regulations applicable to it with wage deductions for failure to properly perform the service. Fines are also imposed for some delinquencies.

BIDDERS MUST be over 16 and suitable to be entrusted with the care and custody of the mails. The accepted bidder will be expected to provide for the performance of service at the stated compensation until such time as his service is terminated by proper order from the post office. He will also be required to take the oath prescribed by law for the position. Persons wishing to bid should receive information regarding the amount and character of the work. Fowler pointed out that the accepted bidder will be expected to perform the now-designated trips, plus any additional ones.

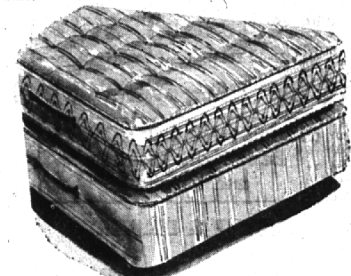
Why keep accumulating unwanted household items? Convert them into cash by selling them thru an Eccentric Classified Ad.

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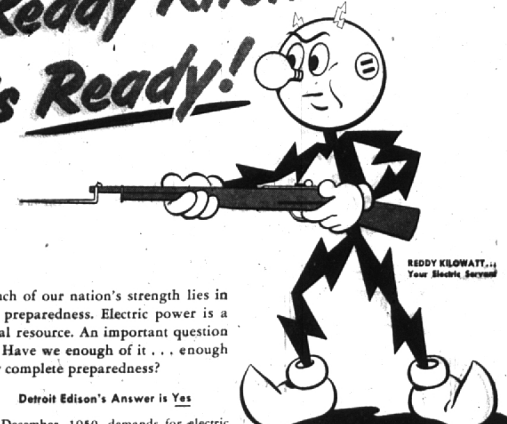
837 coil springs are individually pocketed in muslin, work independently, eliminate uncomfortable sags and hollows. Patented prebuilt border gives you mid-mattress comfort clear to the edge.

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In December, 1950, demands for electric power by our customers were greater than ever before... five times during that month new records were established... and we had power to meet these demands. Yes, Detroit Edison is ready today and is building ahead to be ready tomorrow.

- More Power to Keep Us a Stronger Nation
- Our company's construction program will continue to keep us ahead. Since 1940, new equipment has increased our electric power capacity by 50%.
 - Two 75,000 kilowatt turbine-generators added at our Delray Power Plant.
 - Two 75,000 kilowatt turbine-generators added at our Marysville Power Plant.
 - Two 100,000 kilowatt turbine-generators added at our Trenton Power Plant.

With new construction our 1940 capacity will be doubled:

- Two 100,000 kilowatt turbine-generators are being added at our Connors Creek Power Plant.
- Three 125,000 kilowatt turbine-generators are being added at our new St. Clair Power Plant, now under construction.

Construction of transmission lines, substations and distribution circuits is keeping pace. Similar effective programs are going forward in all of America's electric companies under the able management of men who know that a strong America is a free America.

DETROIT EDISON

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ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

Very seldom in Birmingham elections has propaganda of an extremely doubtful nature been circulated. On Thursday, four days before our annual election, many local householders received a 5x8 card which urged a "No" vote on the \$99,000 bond issue for widening and relocation of W. Maple between Chestnut and Linden.

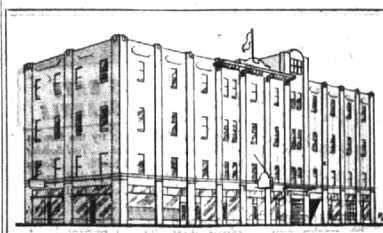
THAT IMPRESSION undoubtedly the card sender wanted to create, thus possibly getting the recipient to vote "no" on the bond issue.

THE SCHOOL, COUNTY AND CITY TAXES paid in 1950 were \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The exact figures are: city—\$13.70, school—\$22, and county—\$63.75.

Why should it? It was unsigned. That fact alone would make the average voter extremely suspicious of it. After all, no opinion is worth much if it gives the impression that it is not willing to stand up before the public and defend that opinion, if necessary.

A University of Michigan economics professor, Z. Clark Hinkle, says household budgeting should be kept "simple."

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