

CANDIDATES' COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 4 Part 3)

Served on DRR commission, 1943-47, and was president in 1947; War labor board, 1942-46; War Manpower commission, 1942-45; civilian aide, Army Air Forces, 1942; industrial adviser, University of Michigan and Wayne university, 1941 to present.

DECREASED CITY COSTS: Unnecessary or extravagant operations could be determined only by careful study which is difficult or impossible for an outsider to make. However, it seems to me that it is extravagant to resort to repaving streets which takes a smaller toll per year but in the aggregate is a very large sum. Suggest Eccentric publish figures to show what 10 years of "saving money" in such ways actually amounts to. If we spend \$40,000 a year (as we plan to do this year) the costs in a decade approach \$400,000 million and we still do not have permanent improvements.

CITY-PLAN COOPERATION: Yes, I would suggest joint meetings at intervals, open to the public, and a system of reporting in full, regularly, to the taxpayers.

STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: I favor a broad and systematic program of adequate new surfacing, maintenance and repair—but I believe that thorough programming of required underground development of sewers, drainage, water, etc., should precede any extensive paving plans.

PART VS. TOTAL PLANS: I believe that the people of Birmingham are relatively uninformed and poorly advised and that the fault is the city commission or the city manager's, or both. A thorough-going program of "reporting to the people" and keeping them informed would do much to create unity and understanding.

The commission is the "board of directors" and the mayor and city manager are the "president" and "general manager" of the town and should report in full from time to time on matters of process or planned, and current and future problems of the corporation.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT CHANGE: No, I believe that the "special assessment" idea has

been overdone, and should be discouraged. Unfair burdens have been put on some; others have escaped their proper share of some of our improvements.

Rarely, if ever, are the improvements in the neighborhood of benefit solely to that neighborhood, and the city as a whole shares its responsibility. I would favor an increase in the required city share on a sliding scale which might be used to let the city put all the cost on a neighborhood which has benefited.

MAPLE BOND ISSUE: Yes—the bridge is built and we should use it. If we do not, it will be a tragic evidence of confusion and frustration. Granted that the whole project was mis-managed and poorly shepherded, we still should finish the project to a conclusion.

H. Ben Ruhl

H. Ben Ruhl, 963 Puritan, did not reply to The Eccentric's questionnaire. When contacted Saturday regarding it, he replied:

"I am not going to campaign at all for election to the city commission. In fact, I am very awkward about it, and hope to goodness I'm not elected.

"My family is going to be away a fair share of the time because of their desire and experience, I feel there are other candidates who should be elected.

"Of course, if the long shot does come through and I'm elected, I will do my best as a city commissioner."

RUHL EXPLAINED THAT currently, and for the next two months, he is very busy working on the University of Michigan Memorial-Phoenix Project.

He also pointed out that if elected, he would be absent 8 to 12 times a year because of family vacation plans.

"I want to be perfectly honest about all this, and I want you to tell the voters this, too," Ruhl concluded.

Harold G. Webster

42, married, four children, lives at 763 Bates, resident since 1931. Attended Northwestern high school, Detroit, George Williams

college, Chicago, 4 years. University of Chicago, two years.

Children's consultant, Children's Fund of Michigan; director, social relations, Michigan Consumer Credit association; executive director, Michigan Society for Mental Hygiene since 1938.

Has been Scoutmaster and troop committeeman; former member Birmingham Rotary club; present member Detroit Rotary; former member Birmingham Community Home association; served on Birmingham YMCA board; trustee, Marion J. Fitzsimons fund.

DECREASED CITY COSTS: The cost of operating our Birmingham city government and services is approximately \$960,000 per year.

After careful examination of the proposed budget, it is my belief that with the wholehearted cooperation of the city manager, together with the genuine cooperation of the city commission, there can be at least a five percent reduction in the cost of government without depleting basic services to the citizens and taxpayers.

The funds so saved should be held in reserve for projects to be properly initiated after our national crisis is over.

CITY-PLAN COOPERATION: I believe in, and will support, the principle of municipal planning. I believe that two members of the city commission should be appointed ex-officio members of any major special committee duly appointed by the city commission.

It is necessary for any appointed special commission to work with the commission elected by the voters, as well as complying with the provisions of the city statute.

Members of the present city plan commission have given much time and energy to their task; the results of their efforts should be discussed during interim periods of activity. Ideally, the recommendations should be the collective responsibility of the planning commission and the city commission.

STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: It is quite desirable for our community to have hard surfaced streets and concrete gutters. Neighborhood taxpayers are interested in such improvements.

Here again I believe in the principle of permitting the residents and taxpayers of local districts to express their desires in terms of what they afford to pay rather

than having the commission make arbitrary decisions.

Our main arterial streets should be properly hard surfaced, and maintained.

PART VS. TOTAL PLANS: Unit projects should be prepared and presented forthrightly to the voters. They should be approved by their privileged approval or disapproval. Voters should be given the right to decide whether they are considering a vote on any municipal project calling for bonded indebtedness.

It is then the responsibility of the city commission to expedite the representation of the voters without delay.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT CHANGE: Yes, I favor the proposed special assessment project for developing city charter amendment seems to be 15 or 20 years late, yet I wholeheartedly endorse it.

MAPLE BOND ISSUE: Yes, I favor the proposed \$39,000 bond issue, but I believe that if it were better to make a total decision several years ago.

For 1-Year Term

Richard Patterson

35, 1622 Bates, resident of the city for five years; A. B. Segregan Kenyon college; currently with Goodbody and company, Detroit.

Former president of Chamber of Commerce; former resident, Birmingham Veterans organization; former member society for appeals; member of city commission by appointment to full unexpired term created by resignation of John O'Gorman.

DECREASED CITY COSTS: With federal debt rising, it seems only logical that local expenditures be reduced to the minimum.

This difficult task is not without corresponding cut in services.

Our city budget is now under pressure from the commission and, in the past, in my brief time in office, I shall stand against unnecessary or extravagant outlays of money.

CITY-PLAN COOPERATION: Yes, I believe in city planning. Better "working connections" between the city commission and the city manager can be achieved by the appointment of two seasoned members of the former body to the planning commission.

This would promote more understanding of the policies and convictions of each by the other body. The final authority for planning should rest with the elected officials in conformity with our democratic form of government.

STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: Hard surfaced streets are desirable as a means of cutting down maintenance costs. Neighborhoods are fast becoming more interested in the permanent improvements of their streets.

However, this type of improvement should be introduced by the neighborhoods rather than by a set commission program.

PART VS. TOTAL PLANS: In the absence of a better understanding or misinterpretation of a city project could be avoided by the presentation of the entire plan by the commission. If the project is to be completed in one or more steps, this should be clearly stated to the people through the newspapers.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT CHANGE: Yes. On a semi-annual improvement of the city portion of special assessments should be 15 to 25 per cent. In the case of unimproved subdivisions the city should have no share in the assessments.

MAPLE BOND ISSUE: Yes. Despite misunderstandings as to the reputation of West Maple avenue between Chester and Linden streets, too much money has been spent to abandon the project.

The safety factor must also be considered. The present street and bridge are more than 30 years old and were designed for traffic of that day. Any repairs made would be at best only temporary.

Should this bond issue fail, it might necessitate the use of funds allocated for street resurfacing to complete the improvements.

Vincent B. Watkins

587 Henly drive; 47; resident of Birmingham six years; married and has two daughters; B.A. degree from Knox college, Galesburg, Ill.

Principal owner and co-operator of Grand laundry, Detroit, for seven years; in laundry business ten years.

Member First Presbyterian church; Rotary of Detroit; Detroit alumni club, Phi Delta Theta; director Michigan Laundry association; director and vice-president Detroit institute of laundering; two years on board of education in Hawthorn, N. J.

DECREASED CITY COSTS: Basically I feel that it should be the duty of the city commission to choose capable, efficient administrators in its respective departments and through them insist on the elimination of any unnecessary expenses.

It is my understanding that the public services afforded Birmingham residents have been made available at a tax per dollar of assessed revaluation lower than in many comparable communities.

Consequently, I am forced to conclude that there has not been inordinate waste.

CITY-PLAN COOPERATION: I understand that the city plan commission acts as a committee of the city commission. Consequently it should be mandatory that the two commissions work together—one as a study group, the other as a coordinating and legislative body.

STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: Birmingham's roads are incompatible with the intrinsic quality of the community. I should strongly urge that a program be devised whereby all roads would ultimately have a hard surface.

The hard surfacing of roads would reduce maintenance expense but not eliminate it. All types of roads require repairs. However, drainage sewers efficiency should be improved and mainly road improvements should be a result of the hard surfacing of roads.

We should not look at the road improvement problem from the standpoint of tax savings alone because the investment would be disproportionate to any possible economies. We must look at the needed road improvements from the standpoint of safe driving and community pride.

PART VS. TOTAL PLANS: If I were a member of the city commission I should strongly oppose the presentation of any program or plan to the voters unless it were comprehensive. My opposition would be even greater if an integral part of any project were in itself unusable.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT CHANGE: I favor any proposition which will give an able group of commissioners the latitude necessary to conduct the affairs of Birmingham on a business-like basis. Therefore, I believe the proposition to change the city charter so the city may participate from zero to 25 per cent in special assessment projects should be supported.

MAPLE BOND ISSUE: I favor the completion of the Maple bridge project despite whatever mistakes may have been made to date, because:

(a) The present road in that section creates a traffic hazard.

(b) A substantial investment has already been made without any benefit. It seems only sensible that the project be completed.

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