

Plan Commission Needs Best Legal Advice

What do you suppose is the most important single activity now going on within Birmingham's municipal government? Do you think it is the City Commission's weekly activities of approving bills, closing alleys, cutting down trees, paving streets, extending sewers, etc., etc.?

Important as these various items are, in our opinion they are transcended, currently, by another project outside the direct control of the City Commission.

We refer to the development of a Master Plan for Birmingham, being carried on by the City Plan Commission of nine members, itself appointed by the City Commission.

UNDER STATE LAW, as we understand it, the Plan Commission has practically complete jurisdiction of its activities. What it does within a Master Plan can affect, for profit or loss, many properties within Birmingham, owned by private citizens.

Annually, the Plan Commission is given a budget by the City Commission, to be spent as needed in the development of the Master Plan.

That budget, this year, is \$6,000, plus a \$4,241.12 budget surplus carried over from the previous year, or a total of \$10,241.12 that can be spent this year.

Since July 1, 1950, that total amount has been decreased by \$2,250 which went to Charles W. Barr, who developed the Master Plan. Another \$4,236.55 has been spent (as of April 20, 1951), an engineering services. Miscellaneous expenditures so far this year have totaled \$1,604.57. Still unspent is \$2,150.

Yet, for information of a legal nature, so necessary to bulwark the legality of the many phases of community control and development that result from the Master Plan, little, if any, of the Plan Commission's budget went for legal services.

From Our Point of View

You know that any family that lives beyond its income is bound to go broke. Any unit of government that lives beyond its income must depend upon a larger tax levy next year to make up the deficit, otherwise it, too, would go broke.

That is why the federal government is in serious financial trouble—because the Truman administration, aided by a co-operative majority in Congress, annually spends (for non-war needs) more than it expects to take in. Do you like ever-increasing taxation? You can help to stop it . . . if you let your U.S. Senator and Congressman know how you feel about it.

So They Say . . .

Robert Schuman, French Foreign Minister: "Without a free Europe, there is no assurance of liberty for any other country."

John McCormack, Member of Congress from Massachusetts: "This is a civil government, not a military government."

Matthew B. Ridgway, Lieut-General, U. S. Army: "The danger for our people, above every other people, is impotence."

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IN A VERY DEFINITE WAY, then, the Plan Commission has put to sea without either a chart for its course or a rudder to steer by. That is unfair to the Plan Commission itself, and to the citizens of Birmingham whose interests are at stake from the impact of a Master Plan.

To date, the Plan Commission has publicly admitted, except for a few brief legal opinions from city attorney Forbes S. Hasall, the remainder of its legal advice has come from voluntary opinions by local attorney-citizens. Mr. Barr, himself no lawyer as we are told, also has offered "legal advice" on the subject.

Members of the Plan Commission, in the spirit of loyalty to their community, are spending many hours trying to develop a Master Plan, without personal compensation. They are entitled to the community's thanks and appreciation for what they are endeavoring to do.

THEY REALIZE, OF COURSE, that they have and will get more criticism than commendation from the public as they seek to shape ideas into a final plan. But this, in a democracy, is to be expected.

So, on behalf of not only the citizens of Birmingham but for the Plan Commission itself, we urge that the latter group request suitable funds from the City to engage the best informed legal services possible to guide them in the future.

In the long run, to paraphrase an old axiom, "an ounce of preventive legal advice is worth a pound of curative litigation."

Senator Blair Moody Is Well Prepared

Very few new United States Senators have donned the cloak of the nation's Upper House as well prepared as Blair Moody, appointed last week by Gov. Williams to succeed Arthur H. Vandenberg.

Senator Moody, for the past 18 years a Washington correspondent of the Detroit News, is well acquainted with the procedures of Congress, and also is well informed on the domestic and international problems that perplex this country and the rest of the world.

Insofar as bylaw to his own political party is concerned, we take off our editorial hat to Gov. Williams for having the courage to select Moody, hounded as he was by various Michigan Democrats for candidates deemed more desirable by them.

MOODY KNOWS MORE, in five minutes, about the problems he will encounter as a United States Senator, than all the other advertised possible selections (with the exception of Prentiss M. Brown) do in a week.

But whether or not Moody, known to be an admirer of both FDR and Harry S. Truman, will "come up with the right answers" remains to be seen.

Of one thing we are certain: Senator Moody, long a reporter "looking on from the outside", will soon learn that the art of practical politics does not allow one to express the complete honesty one may possess that straight reporting does.

Moody, no longer completely free to observe and express himself (if he wants to be re-elected next year) as the Junior Senator from Michigan may chafe under the ropes of partisan politics, as he is constrained and restrained from saying what his conscience suggests.

THAT IS THE PENALTY exacted of a public official when he needs votes to hold his job.

But perhaps Moody, like the man whose shoes he partly fills, may rise above the limitations of the average—even the exceptional—public office in the higher echelons of government. We hope so.

In the meantime, of course, other Michigan Democrats may contest him in next year's primary election. If Moody wins, then he still has to beat some Michigan Republican in the general election. (And, certainly, he will not get much help from the rubble of the Truman administration.)

THE CHARGE has been made—and not denied—that the U.S. has thus hamstringed U.S. military strength at the insistence of No. 10 Downing street, which threatens to blow up the Atlantic Pact unless it is prevented from continuing its lucrative trade with the Chinese. . . .

THE GARDEN'S all spaded and the wide paths with pride to a few dozens of asters, tomatoes,



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 May 3, 1901 Listen to this, someone, someone, someone. Alex Park's buggy and has not yet returned it. Please hurry it home for Alec wants a Sunday drive.

And now our local fishermen are making daily excursions to the nearby lakes and the anxious public may expect to hear of some huge fish that in some manner always get away.

I. B. Peabody deserves the thanks of everyone for the improvement he has made by taking down the fence near his store. Everyone says how much better it looks now.

The first question discussed at the meeting of the Village Improvement Society was in regard to having the street spruced up. As that depends on the water supply won't be a committee on the water works please take up the problem? Everyone is anxious.

On Saturday afternoon last a frame dwelling house belonging to Mr. Tarbox of Troy was destroyed by fire. Most of the contents were saved. Just how it caught fire is not known, but it is supposed that a burning brush pile near the house was the cause. The damage was about \$800 and the building was insured with Oakland county Mutual company which will be glad to serve you.

20 YEARS AGO May 7, 1931 With total receipts of just under \$13,000, the Community House Roll Call has closed, \$5,000 short of its goal. Officials said that in view of the existing financial conditions, they feel the workers have done very well indeed. They expressed their sincere thanks to all who have contributed in the campaign.

Birmingham's check thief is still active. Eleven of the 27 blank checks stolen from Louis Hascall have been cashed for a total of \$825, police said. Other local firms have reported the theft of blank checks from their offices.

Wide-spread raids by prohibition agents netted thousands of bottles of home brew, mash, wine and bootleg liquor over the weekend, giving the law enforcement officers and judges a heavy schedule. The raids were spread through the entire southern part of the county.

Bloomfield Hills property owners have petitioned the village commission for street improvements this summer. The most sought improvement is that of Lone Pine road from Cranbrook to Orchard lake, a distance of about 2,000 feet. Concrete paving is asked.

Mrs. Margaret Strigham, Mrs. Raymond Riley and Miss Eliza Beth Penny have been chosen to direct five plays on the May 15-16 annual public program of the Village Players. Ticket sales are being handled by Mrs. Herbert Zeche.

5 YEARS AGO May 9, 1946 To seriousness of the coal strike will be seen here tonight as nearly all store windows go dark in an effort to conserve the precious Brownout. Ordinarily will tend to lessen the demands on electrical energy.

At a special meeting of the St. James society Thursday night it was voted to accept the gift of a land site from Mr. and Mrs. Irving Babcock. The new church site is on West Main, bounded by Highland, Devon, Bryn Mawr and Cranbrook and contains three and one half acres.

American Legion and VFW members are joining forces as they plan their annual Memorial Day celebration for Birmingham, Saturday, May 12, at the city hall. The program for the various ceremonies and the concluding program at the city hall are planned.

Safety patrol honors for the area were won this year by the boys from Holy Name school. They topped 72 other contestants for judging as officials of the Michigan branch, AAA, examined the cars. The boys will receive a free boat trip to Niagara Falls.

Three new teachers, Mrs. Gertrude Rbe, Miss Phyllis Gardner and Mrs. Marion Phelan, will be added to the school staff for fall. Dr. Dwight B. Ireland has announced.

People's Column. The Eccentric welcomes letters for this column. All letters should be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential. Birmingham Parents Planning to Attend Michigan State Event. Exhibits, football, baseball and speeches will feature the May 12-13 high school seniors' parents day at Michigan State College.

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Most Modern WATER HEATER you can buy... because it's ELECTRIC. Modern Modern Modern Modern. In Operation. Everything about it is automatic. It's so easy! You just install and forget it. If it weren't for the wonderful service it gives you'd always be worried.

ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill BACK WHERE WE STARTED? On the morning of April 19, 1775, on the village green at Lexington, Mass., a small body of minutemen stood ready to fend off 800 British troops sent to arrest Dr. Hancock and Samuel Adams, two of the foremost American patriots determined to obtain independence for 13 colonies.