

Zoning Protects the Many, It Doesn't Serve the Few

Number four on the list of Birmingham controversial discussion subjects—following politics, religion and taxes—probably could be zoning, its evils and its benefits.

Some people have adopted the attitude that once a piece of property is zoned, that's it—now and forevermore. Given a moment's notice, they will attack and attempt to defeat any suggestion that the status quo be changed or slightly altered.

Other persons don't think a zoning ordinance is worth the paper it's written on. These people claim such an ordinance is subject only to the whims and fancies of local officials who can do with it what they please.

We're somewhere in the middle between these two extremes.

WE BELIEVE THAT as a general rule, local municipal officials do not play with their zoning ordinances as they would a toy, and change their minds about zoning as some women do about the arrangement of the household furniture.

We do not believe that once a zoning ordinance has been adopted, it never should be changed. We have yet to find anyone or anything which could effectively halt progress.

The main objective, it seems to us, is to try as best we can to orderly and properly steer this "progress" in the direction we believe best for all concerned.

Thus we endorse last week's action by the Birmingham city commission in denying a rezoning petition which would have made possible a business development in what has previously been and still is a residential area—at the northwest corner of Maple and Coolidge roads.

We believe any smart business man would only establish a new store or inaugurate a new service in an area which carries a reasonable assurance that his new venture will be successful.

IF HIS NEW BUSINESS is in an established commercial area, he will be able to measure his success only by the amount of customers he attracts and the money he rings up in his till.

Should he decide his new business would be more successful if he put it in an area where no other business presently exists, and would require his property to be rezoned before he can start construction, he will find his proposal will 1) bring strong protest from nearby residents, or 2) no one seems to care.

The Pembroke area, in the case we are discussing here, did care. It doesn't want any commercial development. Pembroke residents say they wouldn't patronize any shops, if it did develop, preferring to buy at the already existing central business facilities.

WE BELIEVE REZONING should be considered in the light of what it will do to an existing neighborhood, as well as to the city in general. If it has at least one more benefit than that advantage, why should we permit it?

Freedom of speech does not permit one to tell "fire" in a crowded theater, nor to drive his automobile on the sidewalk because he doesn't want to use the street.

Nor, do we believe, should a property owner be permitted to use his property in a manner which a majority of citizens in a community feel is objectionable.

No Promises from Airlines Yet

Michigan's State Board of Aeronautics has turned down, for the moment, Detroit's desire to build a municipal airport in nearby Warren township, about six miles east of Birmingham.

Since only four of the 8-man board voted, two of them being absent and two not voting, the decision later may be changed. Under the present rules, Detroit will not receive any Federal matching funds to aid in this proposed airport construction.

While we sympathize with people who live adjacent to the Warren site, we also believe strongly in the future of air travel. It must be recognized that Detroit must become more air-minded, too, and must meet, if not anticipate, this growing transportation method.

HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE the city of Detroit and those officials who are pushing for construction of this proposed Warren airport haven't told the complete story. Or if they have, they haven't emphasized two details we in the northern suburban area feel are important.

1) The proposed Warren site at present would be merely a replacement, but on a much larger plan, of the present City of Detroit Municipal Airport facilities on

Connor avenue.

2) There is no assurance that the major airlines will use the new airport if it is constructed. At the present time, they are in the process of signing new 10-year leases at Willow Run.

IN OTHER WORDS, today there is no certainty that a Birmingham resident, going by air to New York or San Francisco, would be able to leave from the Warren airport instead of traveling all the way to Willow Run, as now is required.

The airlines may move to Warren, they may not. They may split their flight schedules, or they may not.

However, if you have your own private plane, or use your corporation's plane, then you could keep it at the new airport instead of at the Detroit City Airport, where it now is.

Until someone in authority gives the Eccentric further assurances, we will consider the proposed Warren site as merely a greatly expanded Detroit City Airport.

In the meantime, we earnestly hope Detroit can solve its airport expansion problems with as little inconvenience as possible to these suburban communities which would be affected by any new airport, be it ultimately located in Warren township or elsewhere.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

Perhaps you are among those who criticize the malarkey of various political candidates. During the recent election you read or listened to promises made by them to do this and that for you. That they often exaggerated is not questioned. That they will not be able to deliver pre-election promises altogether is quite true. So what? Are they not like the promises made by many of our manufacturers of various things who, mostly via radio and TV these days, play upon your vanity, ignorance of the subjects, fears, etc., etc.?

It is reported that Queen Elizabeth has doubled the number of clock watchers and winders in Buckingham Palace, on account

of the fact that she was given so many timepieces for wedding presents. If enough of them have alarms on them, her Majesty certainly ought never to be late for appointments.

Funny thing about Margaret Truman. She's an attractive young lady, with a good mind of her own, some musical talent, an appreciation of the good in life, and by now she ought to have saved up considerable personal wealth. Yet she isn't reported to be courted. . . maybe she's merely waiting until her Old Man moves back to Independence so she can plan a nice little white house of her own.

What an experience that Pennsylvania truck driver had when two broken high tension wires convulsed about and around his car, spitting out 33,000 volts of electrical energy! Rubber matting and insulated cushions saved his life, as he sat frozen for 45 minutes. That chap showed real courage.

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"Success" Story



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
December 5, 1902
After about a hundred members of the Troy and Birmingham Presbyterian congregations had gathered at the church Friday last, they sent word that the minister Rev. Maxwell and Mrs. Maxwell were wanted there at once. Imagine the surprise of the good people when they arrived to find themselves being honored by such a gathering. They gave the couple \$22.50 to purchase a new sewing machine.

Tom Brice, now in Nome, Alaska, has written his father telling him of life in that untamed country. His letter left on the Nov. 1 boat, the last which will be seen there until sometime in April or May.

The thief who stole a harness from William Pirie last August and who was bound over to the circuit court by Justice Dory, has secured a year's sentence at fona.

In casting about for Christmas presents for the children, why not bunch the money and buy a gramophone or victrol talking machine. It will bring countless hours of joy not only to the children but to father, mother and visitors as well.

The Detroit Daily Journal next Tuesday will come out at least 32 pages. It will be particularly devoted to our export business. One penny buys it.

30 YEARS AGO
December 1, 1922
Highways were slippery and dangerous here about last week's severe snowfall and resulted in numerous persons being injured in the Birmingham area. With driving conditions so hazardous, one can only feel fortunate no one was killed.

Mrs. H. W. Booth was honored by her 33 children and grand children Nov. 25, when she celebrated her 83rd birthday. The evening was spent in singing old hymns, blessing out hymns and eating some day cake and receiving messages from far off friends and family.

George Cook and James W. McKnight, Birmingham high school

HORSE SENSE AND NONSENSE

BY ALICE E. MORGAN

Uncle Abner is reading Christmas letters. He's reading them to the point that he "borrowed" one which never did get in the paper with the rest of them. It's the third grade. The letter, from John David Mangle, hit a soft spot in Uncle Abner's heart and he's keeping it on his desk to show to everyone. John wrote, "Mother read me about the soldiers in Korea in the November 10 LIFE Magazine on page 139. I only want some switch trim and the savor part of the blood or then to let me put some in saving stamps. . . . If I was a soldier I'd like a pillow, some tea and cheese, pencil and paper and some nice warm soup. Please send them before November 15." Every time Uncle Abner reads that letter, he blows his nose real hard, wipes his eyes and mutters something about these "durned winter colds." He thinks that letter is really special. He's apt to mutter something about "that's a boy with a heart on his shoulders and kindness in his best."

THE BEST OF the letters which local boys and girls are sending to Santa Claus are causing Uncle Abner to chuckle in his beard and to wipe his eyes, too. "By Grammies! The faith and trust these bairns have is wonderful! Bless their little hearts, I envy every one of them. . . . Now take this lad here. He wants a rifle and he probably couldn't blame him he won't get it. He puts it first on his list, then asks for a bike and puppy. . . . Now he's got to keep on wanting that rifle and if his folks think it's first choice, he just may get it. But! He's got three things he

ONE THING OR ANOTHER

By George Wm. Averill

The new Canadian interests, which recently bought out the majority investors who made the original purchase of that 300-acre Mercier farm, are reported to be interested in the development of that farm primarily from an investment standpoint.

That may be the main purpose behind the plan for the commercial development of about 32 acres of the property at the northeast corner of Cranbrook and Lincoln roads.

Residents who would become neighbors of any commercial construction there have protested the proposal strongly enough that it now has been taken "under further study."

Reports now say the entire development plan may be dropped for several years because of the opposition which has arisen.

If the Birmingham Rotary club had contracted for the designing and construction of its peace memorial, presented to the city in special Armistice Day ceremonies, it would have cost the club about \$2,500. This \$2,500 was raised by contributions from club members.

When its aircraft takes off from a military base, the U. S. Air Force likes them to land at the same base or a similar installation. But emergencies do develop and must be handled accordingly.

Such was the Nov. 15 landing of a Seiffride Field F-84 Thunderjet at nearby Berg Airport. It couldn't be flown out, had to be dismantled into two sections.

The front half of the plane was loaded onto one long trailer, the tail section on another trailer.

Accompanied by sheriff's deputies and state police, the Seiffride Field air police began the careful job, cautious return to Mt. Clemens.

Work started Tuesday on the erection of four new stores at N. Woodward and Harmon by Charles Shinn, local druggist. Shinn said each store would be 10 by 60 feet and further announced that none would be taken over by his firm.

15 YEARS AGO
December 9, 1937
Ray Bechtold, Baldwin high school principal, told Rotarians Monday that young people must be trained to find their own talent and use it. He stressed that following the occupation of parents in the field of a young man or woman should select.

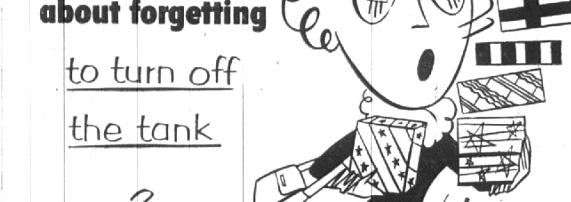
The spirit of Christmas is spreading through Birmingham schools as several groups begin rehearsing the Christmas carols which they will sing during the Yule season. Several public programs are being planned by some of the school groups.

Birmingham League of Women Voters will sponsor a talk by R. E. Foley at the Community House Monday. The state director of the Federal Housing Administration will discuss the work and progress of that governmental branch.

Boy Scouts report a flood of toys have been received from area residents in response to their recent request. No matter what the toy, Scouts will repair and refurbish it for distribution to unfortunate youngsters before the Christmas holidays.

Emerson Brown, local tree surgeon, has been elected president of the Birmingham Lions club for the coming year. Brown is owned by R. D. A. Green, proprietor of a local paint and wallpaper business.

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