

Off-Street Parking Ordinance Needs Further Study

At the first official public hearing before the Birmingham city commission on the proposed off-street parking ordinance last week, approximately 75 owners and users of local business properties appeared and, unanimously, opposed the contemplated piece of legislation.

Requiring, as it does, the setting aside of up to 50 per cent of a piece of property for parking, it was argued by the property owners that the suggested ordinance was nothing short of outright confiscation of property values.

It has already been pointed out by several attorneys that the confiscatory phase of the ordinance would not stand up in Michigan's courts.

SO, AT LAST WEEK'S HEARING, after two and a half hours of open discussion, the city commission "tabled" it, and soon will meet with the plan commission to confer on the next move toward solving the city's parking problem.

It goes without saying that the present plan commission has given a great deal of time and study to the problem, spanning a period of more than a year. Prior to that, former plan commission and city commissions also have studied the problem.

Perhaps, however, the basic trouble lies in the failure of both city bodies to get down to essential details on the subject. Chief among these details is that of financing the project.

TRUE, IN ONE OF THE ordinance's suggested solutions was one that reads: "By the provision of off-street parking to a parking program approved by the city commission." This, however, leaves the problem wide open to a variety of suggestions, when perhaps there are only two basic, workable, plans that can bring about off-street parking.

One of them is for private business to acquire and utilize land adjacent to their

businesses for off-street parking. This plan is being used by the Wabeek-Jacobson northwest off-street parking quadrant, northwest of N. Woodward and Willets.

To expect smaller and less wealthy business interests to do the same is unquestionably impractical.

THE OTHER BASIC ALTERNATIVE is for the city to provide the leadership in establishing the pattern of creating special assessment districts, each related to a specific off-street parking area it can use.

This special assessment pattern always has been used by the city in paying for other public facilities, such as pavements, sewer mains, etc.

We believe this special assessment method, aided by parking meter funds collected by the city (which the city already has said it is willing to do) ought to provide the finances for acquiring off-street parking areas. The possible issuance of city revenue bonds also is included in the financing solution.

At the public hearing last week, the property owners present also unanimously approved the special assessment method of financing the projects. Indeed, a similar plan was offered in the original Hogan Off-Street Parking Report of several years ago.

THUS, IN SPITE OF the fact that the off-street parking problem is still not solved, we believe that the over-all efforts so far have at least brought all parties to a clearer understanding of what can be done to meet the situation.

To that end, it is hoped the city will provide a more aggressive leadership, and that the local affected business interests also will measure up to their particular responsibilities, so that Birmingham's parking problem may, as much as possible, be solved in the near future.

Color TV on Its Way

A high official in one of the major radio and phonograph manufacturing companies recently predicted color television receivers would be on the market in 1954, perhaps in the early part of that year.

If this forecast is accurate, color sets might be on the market some four to six months earlier than had heretofore been assumed.

The manufacturing official made his prediction on the assumption that the Federal Communications Commission would soon approve the electronic tube color system which several manufacturers have now developed to a high degree of perfection. The FCC commissioners have expressed their

belief that final field tests will be held sometime this year.

IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED that color television sets would initially be priced at well over \$500, perhaps in the neighborhood of \$700 to \$800. This would, of course, limit their sale until prices were brought down to the average consumers capability.

Therefore, while color television sets may be on the market early in 1954, it is highly improbable color television will be in wide use for another year or two. Even so, this is an encouraging note from the television industry.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

The playing of baseball by many local youngsters is a wonderful form of recreation, not only for the kids themselves, but for their parents and boosters. It is quite thrilling to observe the enthusiasm shown by parents as they watch their offspring engage in the friendly rivalry possible in this great American pastime.

For generations the little European principality of Monaco, scene of famous Monte Carlo, has obtained its revenues from a percentage of the gambling done at the Casino. But that luxurious recreation is on the downgrade, so a state loan has been issued to get needed lucre. Nevada probably now leads all units of government in its ability to profit by tolerating gambling.

President Eisenhower has named James A. Farley, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee that elected FDR the first time, as a member of a new commission to study reorganization of the federal government. Farley will serve un-

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So They Say . . .

Kenneth Pohlman, rehabilitation expert: "Rehabilitation is positive social welfare."

Jawaharlal Nebru, Prime Minister of India: "We always look to the bright side of things."

William A. Green, advertising expert: "It is no secret that the day of 'hard sell' has arrived in full force."

Michigan's agricultural crop is reported to be doing very well this year. That is not only good for the farmers, but for the city folks who depend upon the generous bounty of nature for survival.

Signing of a truce between the UN and Red Koreans is welcomed by all normal people, especially those who love and practice freedom. Just what the truce will lead to, insofar as permanent peace is concerned, is highly conjectural. Don't you agree, so long as that bunch of gangsters operate the Kremlin, pursuing their efforts to conquer the whole earth, that the free world will be menaced indefinitely by the outbreak of further hostilities? Until millions of Russians and their satellite peoples are liberated from the despotism of Communist totalitarianism, there seems little hope for an immediate international laying-down of arms.

Here we go again! Designers of women's clothes have come to the conclusion that it's high time woman's knees became a part of the public scene once more. From past experience we're of the opinion that the whole idea is painful for some women.

The short girls have one consolation: if they don't mind being a little "out of style" they can always leave hemming alone, and since a shortening job is generally in order, they can keep their knees to themselves!

Funny how we take things for granted. A "home saver" tip in a recent issue has been the subject of the method for doing onions. It's been done like that at home as long as we can remember. The only thing is no one ever thought to send it to a magazine and get the \$5!

A case of ultra-ultra home vacationing was brought to our attention the other day. A Birmingham resident on a trip through



Happenings of Long Ago

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

50 YEARS AGO July 31, 1903 Missionary Felt and his wife, who returns to India in September, spoke at the M. E. Church in Royal Oak, Sunday night. Several from here were present. Mrs. Felt is a daughter of Rev. Clark.

Our former Professor E. F. Wald's lines seem to have fallen among very pleasant people. At a Business Men's banquet held at Aunt Mary's last week was and enjoyed by a host of the elite.

Postmaster Hanna made a flying trip the other day with John Purdy the stock man. Guess our postmaster is looking out for a farm for Foster and Mark as they are at Aunt Mary's learning how to farm.

The Gleason, "I'll hold their regular meeting Aug. 12 in Mrs. Elliott's home. Dinner and ice cream and lemonade at noon. Gleasons are requested to remember the date and their lunch basket. Come one and all.

Next week's big feature at the Avenue Theater, Detroit, will be Dan McVoy, the Great Broadway, N. Y., comedian, in a side splitting monologue. This is a splendid opportunity to remember the date and their lunch basket. Come one and all.

30 YEARS AGO August 3, 1923 But two applications, both by local young women graduates of the Baldwin high school, have been made this summer for financial assistance from the student loan fund, according to information made known by W. M. Pratt, president of the fund, this week.

According to the administrative committee of the House benefit which was given last Thursday at the home of George T. Hendrie, Bloomfield Hills, was a decided success in every phase.

At the last meeting of the board of education the \$97,500 in Baldwin high school addition bonds au-

HORSE SENSE AND NONSENSE BY ALICE E. MORGAN

Can't help wondering if Mrs. Eisenhower doesn't get tired of looking "herd" everywhere she goes. The "Mamie bangs" on Mamie are fine, but we've seen a lot of women sporting this style of hair-do who do nothing at all to flatter the lady laid by following her. Her hair is lucky with his "high forehead" and tightly clipped hair he has no special following!

Too bad, if city officials are really serious in their plans for a larger and better fire department, that they couldn't have scheduled a special election for last week Wednesday. There were hundreds of potentially favorable votes around the scene of the St. James church fire during those early morning hours!

By-slanders agreed the fire department was doing as good a job as anyone could on that type of fire, but at the same time wondered what would happen if another major blaze started in some other part of the city. Food for thought.

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ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

Persons close to the local business scene expect the new walls Hudson development—Northland Center—in southeast Southfield township to have no parking up to vantage over Birmingham when it comes to customer parking.

Company to downtown Detroit, the Northland development certainly will be much better from the parking standpoint.

"But if the local housewife expects that the huge parking lot will permit her to park right up to the store she wants to shop at, she'll be due for a big surprise," said one local businessman.

HE POINTED OUT that she'll probably find herself many hundreds of feet from where she wants to shop, and will have to walk past line after line of parked cars plus perhaps many of the development's shops to get to where she wants to shop.

"I'll wager she'd find a parking space closer to the downtown Birmingham shopping center and walk to it in less time than at Northland," he predicted.

As for the construction progress of Northland, the building has just released the following information: General excavation has been completed for all tenant buildings, except one, and for the utility group. The fifth tenant building will be excavated next spring.

ROUGH GRADING has been completed for all parking areas and slag surfaces have been put on two of the parking areas. Sub-sol drain lines for all parking areas have been installed.

Temporary drainage ditches have been cut surrounding the property and the permanent storm drainage ditch to Nine Mile road is completed except for planting on the slopes. The permanent storm and sanitary sewer connections to the Royal Oak McClinton drain have been made. Some temporary roads have been built in the locations of permanent roads and slag surfaces put on them.

Final grading in nearly all landscaped areas has been completed and these areas have been seeded. Fall planting of trees and shrubs has begun.

ACTUAL BUILDING work includes completion of concrete work for the two retaining walls along

side the lower level parking lot. Brick veneer facing on these walls is 90% complete. Concrete work for the storm and sanitary pump houses is 90% complete.

All footings have been poured for the Hudson store and one tenant building. Footings have been started for one tenant building. Basement floor slab for the Hudson building is 75% complete, and the Terrace Mall concrete work at first floor level is 75% complete. Formwork is proceeding for first floor construction of the Hudson building, with pouring to begin next week.

All substructure concrete work is completed for the service building and the primary switch house.

Underground mechanical work for the Hudson building is 75% in place and this work is proceeding for one tenant building. Sanitary sewer mains, fire lines, and domestic water lines beneath the truck passage are 75% complete.

Underground mechanical work for the service building and the primary switch house is complete. Excavation is starting for the steam and chilled water distribution mains from the power house to the store buildings.

Underground electrical work for the Hudson building, the service building, and the primary switch house is complete. Primary electrical distribution conduit from the switch house to the store buildings is 75% in place.

If a person really wants to do something, it won't take him long to find a good reason for it. On the other hand, it takes less time to think of a better reason for NOT doing it.

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