

Residents Express Desire To Preserve Shain Park

To the Editor: There has been a great deal of talk recently about the proposed leaving of Shain park—our civic park between the city hall and the library—and converting it into a parking lot. This entails moving the park a block south of its present site.

I do not concede the necessity of additional parking areas, for several reasons. In the first place, our present public parking lots—some at Merrill and Pierce, a block from Shain park and the other at Hamilton, a block east of Woodward.

Thirdly, the Birmingham merchants are complaining about loss of business to Northland Shopping center. This has taken cars out of Birmingham.

Another shopping center of 25 stores is being erected this summer at Woodward near 13-Mile.

AND ANOTHER large shopping center has just been announced for Telegraph Road and Square Lake Road—with a parking lot for 5,000 cars, which will take more retail trade from Birmingham and reduce the need for more parking area here.

However, let's disregard all the above and say that we do need more parking area for cars. What can be accomplished by making a lot out of Shain park that cannot be done by leaving Shain park where it is and putting the parking lot a block south?

CITY MANAGER Donald Egbert says that putting the lot where Shain park is would help decrease traffic congestion. This could be easily accomplished by putting the parking lot a block south of Shain park.

He says that Shain park a block south of its present location would act as a buffer area and tend to contain the business development within the presently zoned business property.

All that needs to be done to contain the presently zoned business property is to maintain the present zoning restrictions.

HE SAYS that the acquisition of the additional property will add to the size and openness of the civic center. This proposed openness could be increased much more by acquiring several blocks and making them all into parking lots. There is nothing more open than a parking lot. It doesn't have much charm but it is certainly open.

He says that the new Shain park (a block south of the present one) would give permanency to the plans for the civic center. If the proposed new park can be dedicated as a park for all time to come, why cannot the present park be so dedicated?

AS TO the convenience of Shain park as a parking lot compared to having the parking lot a block farther south, I have walked each block twice at less than my normal walking pace, and either block can be walked easily in 45 seconds. I know we live in a fast age but certainly there are few times in anyone's life when 45 seconds make any difference in getting to or from a store or from a parking lot.

Furthermore, it would certainly be much less costly to simply acquire the block south of Shain park and turn it into a parking lot, than to make that into a park and then tear out Shain park and make it into a parking lot. Why tear up two blocks?

WHERE IS all the pressure coming from to move Shain park? What's behind it?

If the city commission really thinks it such a good idea why, according to Mayor Renfrew's public admission before the League of Women Voters last Monday, has

the commission failed even to submit the idea to the city plan commission?

In recent issues of The Birmingham Eccentric there have been full-page advertisements placed by The Citizens Committee for Civic Improvement, urging the relocation of Shain park. Who is on this committee?

WHEN a group of citizens was organized to protest the relocation of the park, it was a public meeting, held at the Community House. A front-page story about it appeared the next day in The Eccentric and names of the leaders of the group were published.

When was the Citizens Committee for Civic Improvement formed? Where was the meeting held? Who attended? Who are its leaders? Who is paying for those expensive advertisements? What is their motive? Why the secrecy about them?

There is something about all this that I don't like and I hope there are enough Birmingham citizens who feel as I do to know under any idea of moving Shain park by voting on April 4.

BROOKS WHIPPLE
1655 Lincoln Court
Bham.

(Editor's Note: Upon receipt of Whipple's letter, we contacted representative of the committee, but did not receive authorization to include one or more of Whipple's names in the advertisement referred to.)



GLENN M. EMERY JAMES R. BUCHANAN
BRENT H. NETTIE, DR. A. E. IVERSON
Nettie is reviewed for "Christian" award.

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RO Scout Vies For Faith Award

Brent H. Nettie of Royal Oak, was one of several boy scouts reviewed last Saturday for the Protestant religious award, "God and Country Award," during a retreat for scout leaders of the Protestant Faith in the Fernside Methodist Church.

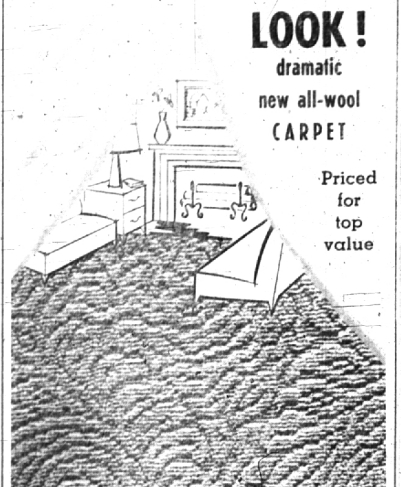
Nettie is a member of the Sunday School of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Birmingham.

Dr. A. E. Iverson, chairman of Protestant relations at the national boy scout office in New York, was guest speaker and Detroit Area Scout Commissioner Nathan Sweeten was chairman of the program.

AMOS R. SHIELDS, scout executive of the Detroit Area Council

of the Boy Scouts of America, remarked at the dinner that the retreat was a "dream come true." "The idea of a retreat for Protestant men in the Council had long been in the minds of scout leaders. It seems now assured that this will be an annual event in the scouting calendar for this council," Shields added.

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BLOOMFIELD HILLS

SECONDLY, I understand there are two other public parking lots already beyond the planning stage—one at Merrill and Pierce, a block from Shain park and the other at Hamilton, a block east of Woodward.

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To the Editor: We all know that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever!" We also know that a lot of green and trees and a chance to look up and see the sky, in a busy community center, is of incalculable constant value. It offers peace to our souls for at least a few minutes.

Shain Park is now in that center, and thousands see every day. But to move it one block south destroys the symmetry of the plan and reduces the number of people who may enjoy it and benefit by its quietude.

Our city commissioners and citizens who worked for the present design were far-seeing in their vision of the importance of parks easily accessible to all the citizens.

WHY MUST it be moved when we have so many unoccupied parking spaces north of Maple and elsewhere? If another parking lot south of West Maple is absolutely essential, practically all of its potential patrons could walk the short block south of the present Park.

I, for one of many, feel that the present pattern of the civic center must be retained not only to mark our appreciation to all of the men and women who have been devoted to our city in the past, but as a gift of beauty and serenity to be treasured by our newcomers.

GERTRUDE CARSON,
979 Chesterfield
Bham.

To the Editor: The problems facing our city commission are indeed many, and I am sure they are anxious to solve them in the way best for the community as a whole.

In regard to the problem of parking, is not the city planning commission the group best fitted to view the problem objectively, with an overall plan for the city in mind?

The attractiveness of the city seems to me as important in keeping "cool" as any other matter, and to move Shain park certainly would not increase the beauty of the civic center. I hope that Shain park will be left in its present location.

MRS. ANGUS McLAY
615 Winstleton
Bham.

To the Editor: It seems evident to us all that the proposal to make an existing park into a parking lot is a plan suggested by the newer non-resident merchants of Birmingham, and not by the home owners.

Yet the parking lots already in existence are far from full, even on busy Saturday mornings.

Shain Park is a well-planned, properly located public park in the heart of our Civic Center with planting that has been growing for 25 years.

IT IS utterly unrealistic to think that once a barren parking lot has been achieved in its place, that an entire block of homes will be torn down, a park laid out and planting done.

Perhaps instead of uprooting trees and shrubs, more parking area could be acquired by tearing down some of the ugly business establishments.

Why do YOU live in Birmingham—because it has so many fine parking lots for out-of-town shoppers and is the shopping center for Southern Oakland County, or because it is a town of residences?

The homeowners may not be well enough organized to be able to afford a full page ad in the paper telling their wishes, but certainly at the polls their voices will be heard.

MRS. A. T. LOUGE
324 Greenwood
Bham.

To the Editor: I urge voters not to let our park be shoved farther from the shopping street. It seems to many of us as if hollowed ground which should not be thus deserted.

I think of the loss to all those who bend their way to the city hall, the telephone building, the library and the post office.

Esthetic value means more than the commercial value and traffic hazard of a parking lot.

ELIZABETH D. PALMER
720 E. Maple
Birmingham.

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