

The Birmingham Eccentric

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'round the towns news Time Is Big Issue In Westwood Vote; Views Presented

By MARY SCHMIDT

WESTWOOD — When Westwood voters go to the polls Monday, the question on the ballot will be to accept or reject the village charter proposed.

But the real question, everyone agrees, is not whether the proposed charter is a good one, but whether this is the right time for Westwood to become a village.

At a series of open meetings to discuss the charter, almost no one opposed it. The consensus is that it is a good charter, and that the charter commissioners are sincere in proposing it.

BUT OPINION DIFFERS on whether Westwood should become a village now or later. Two questions underlie this difference—the voters' feelings about the forthcoming charter election for the proposed city of Southfield, and mixings about the settlement of the village would make with Southfield to divide the \$303,000 worth of capital assets of Southfield township, which includes the Westwood area.

Marvin E. Cline, chairman of the charter commission, puts the case for the pro-charter vote. He thinks it is important for the area to incorporate as a village at this time to protect our boundaries for once and for all.

The most important point, Cline says, is to protect Westwood from being drawn into new proposals for annexation to, or incorporation into, other cities, such as the city of Southfield.

ANOTHER REASON for becoming a village, according to Cline, is so that the residents "will have a say in such things as the location of new highways and other public improvements that would affect the area and its residents."

Cline says, "I think there are advantages for Westwood in incorporating as a village now, although there are always problems in a separation regardless of which side withdraws first."

CLINE LISTS four advantages he sees: "One, the village would start receiving tax refunds from the state which townships are not entitled to.

Two, this is an appropriate time to incorporate as a village in order to establish a tax roll and the village to begin operations at the start of the fiscal year, July 1, 1958.

Three, because we have no assurance as to what the state will do in its charter, it would be ridiculous for Westwood to delay receiving the benefits accruing to a village.

And four, the charter commission attorneys have assured us that the timing of Westwood's incorporation as opposed to the timing of Southfield's incorporation has no bearing on the division of assets."

MRS. FANNIE ADAMS, a Westwood resident who has been involved in Southfield township government for 27 years and is now township clerk, says she thinks it is the wrong time for Westwood to become a village.

Mrs. Adams feels that the Southfield charter will be defeated. Westwood becomes a village, and Southfield does not become a city, says Westwood still being part of the township, will have to pay both township and village taxes, but will not benefit from some of the services the township provides.

Villages, she explains, remain part of the townships, whereas cities do not. The township now provides such services as fire protection and rubbish collection. If Westwood becomes a village, Mrs. Adams says, it will have to pay for these services itself, and also pay for them for the remainder of the township.

MRS. ADAMS worries about the settlement. She feels that becoming a village would put Westwood in an unfavorable position in negotiating the settlement. Involved in the assets to be divided are such township property

as a firehouse, trucks and voting machines. The Southfield township board met last night at the township office to provide such services as fire protection to the proposed village during an interim period before the permanent settlement between the areas was being arranged.

Westwood residents will also choose seven councilmen and a clerk at the election. These will take office only if the charter is approved.

CLINE URGED that voters be careful to vote their opinion on the charter as well as to voice their choice of the candidates. He cited a previous Southfield charter election in which 700 persons failed to mark the charters.

Naming for councilmen are Walter Arbury, John McFall, Dr. Russell Seeburger, David Thompson, Robert Larson, Edward Smith, Chester F. Guilmet, Robert Reed, Marvin Cline, William Cline and Douglas S. Wood and Hugh C. Allerton, Jr. Allerton, Reed, Shurtliff and Cline served on the charter commission.

Only one candidate seeks the clerk's job, the only paid position in the city. The candidate is Mrs. Alice M. Spencer.

Westwood To Face Rewards, Challenges

Westwood citizens will have the opportunity on Monday, Feb. 3, to vote acceptance of a proposed original village charter, elect seven councilmen . . . and thus launch themselves into an incorporated identity as a village.

The election consummates more than two years of civic activity, and evokes a strong opposition to becoming a part of the proposed 32-square-mile city of Southfield.

It is recalled that the original objective of Southfield township leaders was to incorporate the entire area, minus Franklin, Lathrup and Bingham Farms communities, into one city, which the Westwood area, strictly residential, had interests and problems considerably different than the larger southern area of the township, the citizens of Westwood rallied in opposition to the large city plan.

THEY WERE ABLE, TWICE, to lead campaigns to defeat two proposed charters. They were able to elect five members of a nine-member charter commission which body failed to submit another charter within the two-year time limit required by state law.

Thus Southfield reverted to its former township status. This provided the Westwood citizens with the opportunity to vote on their own plan to become a village, which they did. The Feb. 3 vote, if approved, puts them in business.

So far as this newspaper can observe, the proposed charter offers a reasonable beginning for Westwood Village to get started. Perhaps, later, if its citizens demand more and more public services, it may be necessary to revise the tax limitations upward.

However, Westwood already has revealed its citizen ability to respond to an emergency situation.

IT ALSO HAS REVEALED another common evidence of citizen behavior toward government: only about half of its eligible voters have registered for the Feb. 3 election.



Smoke billows from Franklin's historic Community hall, 51-year-old landmark which was gutted by fire Monday with a loss estimated at \$12,000. Nine pieces of fire equipment from four departments fought the blaze, shown here

Community Building Burns

ELSEWHERE IN THE ECCENTRIC Sketches of Proposed Catholic Schools 1-A Ann Landers to Speak at Lathrup Hills Teachers Take Science Seriously 4-B Sen Sarazen Wins Seniors' Title 6-E

S'field Plans Charter Vote For April 21

SOUTHFIELD — After scheduling the steps the Southfield charter must go through and setting April 21 for the election, the charter commissioners heard Monday that they will have to face out the whole schedule if they don't meet their own deadline.

Monday's meeting ended in a 4 to 4 tie vote on a proposed 8-mill tax limit. One member, Philip Maloney was absent, ill with flu. Some members favored a 5 mill limit, which others felt was too low to operate the city effectively.

IMPORTANT dates in the commission schedule are: April 21—election to adopt or reject charter and choose officials; April 22—Publication of proposed charter.

April 29—Public meeting in cafeteria of high school to answer questions and explain charter. Another meeting will be scheduled if necessary.

SPECIAL registrations times have been set for voters. Premits 12, 16, 1 and 11 may register at the Northbrook school Tuesday from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Premits 6, 4, 8 and 12 may register Wednesday from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

THE TOWN HALL will be open for registration each week day until March 24. The hours are Monday, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Tuesday thru Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to Noon.

Shaw Is Speaker

FRANKLIN — The Franklin Garden club will meet Feb. 6 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Fisher on Wellington road in Guest speaker for the evening will be Paul Shaw of Greening Nursery.

Lathrup Asks Expert Panel About Sewers

LATHRUP—Armed with stacks of information and backed by a panel of experts, Lathrup's council members presented the proposed sewer plans at the first of three public meetings Tuesday evening at Lathrup school to an essentially friendly audience of 50.

On hand to assist the council and city administrator and answer questions were R. J. Alexander, deputy director of the Oakland County DPW, Stuart Bogue and Carleton Miller of the engineering firm of Pate and Hirm, Raymond Smith representing Ayrault, Lawrence and May, Donald Pierce and W. J. Bezio of the State Health Department.

With a combined storm and sewer system dating back 30 years, Lathrup faces a pollution suit. The city council recommends separating sewage and building sewers to carry storm water unpolluted to the Evans ditch. The city faces a tax increase of \$8.25 per thousand of assessed valuation to pay for these sewers.

ALEXANDER SAID at the meeting that he expected the Evergreen interceptor to be finished in about 12 months. If Lathrup's utility is completed at the end of Feb. 18 election Lathrup sewers can be completed in about 9 months, the experts said.

Following presentation of the plan by council members, the meeting was opened for questions. Ex-mayor John Campbell asked the council if separate systems for sewer and storm water were chosen contrary to the recommendation of engineers Pate and Hirm. Stated Hirm that his firm had endorsed the combined system through utility department. Engineers could not be put in the Evergreen interceptor. Donald Pierce of the state health department said that cities with combined systems are now finding they must separate the systems and build costly sewage treatment plants.

ANOTHER QUESTION asked was, "What can we do about downspout water?" A number of suggestions were suggested. Engineers suggested that if the grade is sufficient, water can be run in splash basins and onto lawns without harm. Or, they said, it can be run through a drain tile to ditch. An elaborate system was required to drain tile around the house pick-up water from a number of downspouts and carrying it to a gravel pit under the lawn. Such a system might cost as much as \$100 to install, whereas the simple catch or splash basin would cost only \$30, the engineers said.

Residents were assured that driveways torn up to correct drainage slope would be replaced by the city without charge.

The next public meeting on Lathrup sewers will be Feb. 6.

WXYZ Campaign Nears Final Battle

SOUTHFIELD—TV station WXYZ won one battle last week, but now faces its last engagement.

The final skirmish in the station's campaign to locate in Southfield township will take place Thursday at 8:30 p.m. in the township hall, when the township board votes on the zoning board's recommendation that the zoning laws be changed to allow the station. WXYZ would be the third major Detroit station in Southfield.

The zoning board voted 4 to 3 last Thursday to allow the \$12 million dollar station after a noisy meeting that threatened to get out of control.

CONTRASTING with the crowd of 200 who appeared at the zoning board's Jan. 9 meeting, about 80 residents with equally divided opinions attended the meeting last Thursday. Expecting the township board to act Tuesday, about 20 persons attended the township board's meeting to discuss the station.

The board, however, voted to continue its meeting Thursday because two members were absent Tuesday with flu. Asked whether they would decide even if Clarence and Philip Maloney were still sick Thursday, the township board said yes.

Robert Wuerfel, chairman of the zoning board said last Thursday that board hearing on the project had been closed. But the board nevertheless granted each side 15 minutes to state their position. The board's timer enforced a three-minute limit on each speaker so "nearly that several speakers were stopped in mid-sentence before they were able to indicate whether they stood for or against the station."

OWNERS OF station WXYZ plan to buy \$5 acres in Greenview and 18 in another. The land not used for the station will be subdivided and developed for residential use. The station plans to build studios, a 1000-foot television tower, a radio tower and a radio tower on the land which is now known as the Nelson farm. It is located across from the Lawrence Institute of Technology on 10 Mile road just west of Northwestern.

The station owners said they intend to maintain the rolling contour of the land and save the trees wherever possible.

When the board met on Jan. 9, they were unable to reach a decision because the vote was tied three to three. Roy E. Grunwell, an eight year member of the board, resigned. He was hospitalized because of an eye operation. Grunwell explained to the board and station owners that he had prepared a written statement in order to avoid any excitement or strain. He was hospitalized because he had changed his opinion on the tower after station owners had re-located the tallest tower and met other requests.

THE ALLING Grunwell also told of a number of threatening telephone calls he had received. The anonymous callers said they would

\$12,000 Fire Hits Historic Village Hall

Nine Trucks Fight Flames At Landmark in Franklin

By NITA HARD

FRANKLIN—A windless day and co-operative neighbors saved the "heart of Franklin" and limited damage to the community hall to \$12,000 Monday. Fire broke out just before noon on the roof of the historic old landmark, threatening the surrounding frame buildings and village records.

Nine fire trucks from Bloomfield, West Bloomfield and Southfield townships converged minutes after the alarm was broadcast by the Franklin Volunteer Fire department's dispatcher, Mrs. Wanda Fraser.

Damage to the two-story frame building built for \$1,800 in 1906 by the Franklin Cemetery association and now owned by the Franklin Community association could not be finally determined until the rear room of the Franklin Village Drug store on Franklin road, with hours 8 to 10 a.m. daily.

Some village office equipment will be stored in the Franklin Community church basement on desks, records and important papers will be housed in the new quarters.

Registrations for the March 10 election will be taken just after closing. Evening hours for registration have been set for 7:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Jan. 31, Feb. 7 and 14. Registrations will be held from 10 a.m. till noon Feb. 8.

Just 45 minutes before the fire broke out a furnace repairman had been at the hall because the furnace was not working properly. Properties and staging equipment stored on the second floor by the Franklin village players was considered a total loss. The new building which was used for community parties and meetings suffered extensive water damage.

BERT FRIXEN, partner in a gas station first saw smoke coming from the roof. He started on the fire siren which is between the gas station and the community hall. Walter W. Rodgers, village assessor and building department clerk, was in the village office at the time.

Rodgers said, "I could smell something went over to feel the chimney wall, but it didn't feel hot when I used, so I went back and called the fire department. Harker, village clerk, who was in the Frederic Graef real estate office across the street, and Mr. Graef came running in to tell me the building was burning."

MRS. HARK said she and Graef had gone to the window of their office to see what was going on. The fire trucks were headed after they heard the siren and discovered it was in the village office.

They ran to alert Rodgers and grabbed the village registration books, the street book of resolutions and other records and carried them to safety.

Only a few of Franklin's volunteer firemen were on hand at the time. Passers-by, and a handful of villagers, were notified about their out of the fire hall and started to fight the fire, which had burst into flames on the wood shingled roof.

FRANKLIN'S fire commissioner, William Albee, phoned at his office in downtown Detroit, got to the fire in 19 minutes. Vernon Converse III, a fire commissioner heard Mrs. Fraser's call on a radio in his car while he was in Detroit. He was in the house. Dismayed, Councilmen Robert Mitchell, Jack Roberts and Homer Hyde were on hand to assist the firemen.

Women from the Franklin Community church served sandwiches and coffee and hot drinks. Coffee and doughnuts were also taken to the scene by the Franklin firemen.

Clusters of Franklin village players watched helplessly as firemen sooted charred sections of plaster. Spectators, mostly housewives and small children, expressed mixed emotions as firemen worked. Some said the building should be allowed to burn to the ground. Some said it had been considered unsafe for years. Others openly wept to see fire ravaging a historic landmark and site of many good times held in the community.

SCHOOL CHILDREN arrived in the village as the firemen were pulling up the hoses. Firemen covered their faces as they got off buses in front of the smoldering building with its blistered front and broken windows.

Fund Drive Ends

WOODCREEK FARMS — The annual Wood Creek Fund Drive ended this week in Woodcreek Farms with the returns well ahead of last year's figure. Mrs. Robert Swift, area captain, reports that her nine volunteer workers had completed their mission by Jan. 27. No amount was given, pending final tabulation.

My Neighbors

THE ECENTRIC makes these statements only to remind Westwood residents that their new village will not become a success without plenty of volunteer effort from its residents. No organization operates automatically, through neglect.

Assuming, then, that Westwood will become an incorporated village Feb. 3, we offer our congratulations and salutations.

May you enjoy your new-found civic environment. May it provide you with suitable rewards as and when you meet the challenges it inexorably will offer.