

Three Plans—Time for Action

For many years we thought of Birmingham as a quiet, pleasant little city free of major complexities and concerns. We relaxed in our suburban wonderland, expecting everything to run on smoothly forever.

The problems of urbanization were not ours; they were the problems of the mother city and neighboring communities. We felt secure with our excellent municipal government, with its fine municipal services, and our outstanding school system.

We viewed with pride the high standards of living, the rich heritage, the fine cultural advantages that we enjoyed. We were Birmingham, complete unto ourselves, and could go on like this eternally.

BUT THEN A committee of businessmen made a study of the downtown business area and discovered that we did, indeed, have problems—problems that required early solutions lest we slip into a pattern of decay and ruin that could not be stopped.

So, this group of businessmen devised a plan for future development. It was called the Central Business District Development Plan and was presented to the Birmingham City Commission for its implementation. The commission accepted the plan in principle and has started work on some phases of it.

A COUPLE OF years later, another group made a study of the civic center—or "heart"—area of Birmingham and also came up with some plans.

This was the Civic Design Committee, a subcommittee of the Citizens Action Committee. Comprised of local architects, designers and planners, this group just recently presented its "ideas and concepts" to the city commission.

And there is a third plan for the future development of Birmingham. It is the comprehensive plan, prepared by the City's hired planning consultants working under direction of the city plan board. It was prepared after two years of detailed study.

Still another study is under way. The City has hired a traffic consultant to study the traffic patterns and volumes, to project future needs in Birmingham and to offer solutions.

NOW, AFTER all of these years of complacency we realize that we do have problems and that we must act to solve them.

Now, we have three plans (and a possible fourth) to help us prepare for the Birmingham of the future. What's going to happen to these plans? Who is responsible for them? Who will decide which plan or which parts of all three plans are to be implemented? How will they be financed? What's to be done, by whom and when?

All three plans call for general progress over an extended period of time; all have been presented officially to the city commission, so that they are now in the hands of our city government.

THIS CITY has a wonderful opportunity to plan now for the kind of community we wish to have tomorrow. Fortunately, there is no great urgency involved; there is no crying need to make immediate decisions.

Yet, we would caution the city government against any undue delay. The plans should not be allowed to lie fallow. Rather, there should be an orderly progression of various phases of the plans.

The commission has a history of listening to all groups, to all arguments in matters of this sort. But we would remind the commissioners that this could be an endless process, that the responsibility is theirs to make a decision and that they must ultimately do so.

We would urge our city commissioners to make an early—though unhurried and unharassed—determination as to what steps are to be taken and to assure the necessary coordination.

In short, we urge the commission to decide soon what can be done, what is to be done—and then see that it is done.

Don't Blame the Police

The report last week by Chief Norman Dehne of the Bloomfield Township police concerning vandalism was shocking, to say the least.

What's more shocking was that the chief had to admit that it was not necessarily outsiders who were at fault. Apparently, it is not young people from other communities, but our own boys and girls who have abandoned their training and respect for the law and are willfully destroying other peoples' property.

It is not enough to say that the police should crack down on young people.

THE POLICE ARE busy enough trying to protect our homes from professional lawbreakers.

This problem of our young people should be faced in our homes.

The more we pass it off as teen-age pranks, the more we encourage them to flout what is decent and socially acceptable, and eventually end up in serious trouble—trouble that can't be cured by begging the families involved not to prosecute because the offense wasn't grave.

We have a beautiful community here. More of our high school graduates go to college than in most other places in the nation. They are supposedly impressed with the highest of values.

WHY THEN DO THEY go out and drink beer in cars and then throw the empties at parked cars, causing untold damage? And these are not isolated cases; it happens every Friday and Saturday night by the score.

Why are the youngsters lined up at our police stations on Saturday waiting for their parents because those "narrow-minded policemen caught us with a couple of cans of beer in the car"?

The answer is quite plain. Our parents don't know what their children are doing when they leave the house at night. We

are not sure whether it is just not knowing or whether it is not caring to.

VERY LITTLE OF WHAT'S going on would continue if parents knew where their children were going and who they were going with.

And what time their children were expected home.

The other day, at 3 a.m., we checked Woodward and Maple roads and saw nearly a hundred cars full of teen-agers going in every direction.

They certainly all weren't going to work. But what is there to do in this community in a car at that hour except get into trouble?

It is about time that certain parents in this community started living up to their responsibility by better supervision of their children's late hours and getting them into bed where they belong.

Don't blame the police for vandalism. Blame the parents who have failed to engender a sense of responsibility and accountability in their children. By this failure they have also been a factor in delaying the maturing of these youngsters toward the adulthood which will be required for subsequent roles of effective citizenship and parenthood.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

Why does Lodge dodge the hedge-podge game known as "American politics"? Why, you should know, because it's less complicated to be a part of the South Viet Nam mess than to head your political party in a race for the White House. Why is it easier? . . . simply because it appears that Uncle Sam's handling of that Asian affair is being carried on without thought of victory.

Some German scientists are experimenting with ski clothing, the objective being to come up with material and design that will allow skiers to increase their speed. (Why not try splicing them from a sort of catapult?)

Watch Out — School's Out!



PEOPLES COLUMN

League Urges Continuation of Information Policy

To the Editor:

For several years, the League of Women Voters has maintained, as a continuing responsibility of its local programs, support of the extension of the sewer system in West Bloomfield Township.

This position was taken after a county-wide study, and after further study on a local level of

improvement in the common good. He is primarily concerned with the financial details of such a project, especially as he is affected individually.

THE LEAGUE feels that the distribution of information, such as that which was done recently concerning the Walnut Lake Sewer Arm, is well worth the time and expense expended by the township board of trustees, and urges the board to continue to make this kind of distribution of factual information on issues directly affecting the taxpayers of West Bloomfield Township.

MRS JACK KNSROTH, President, League of Women Voters of West Bloomfield Township.

Letters from readers always welcome. But they MUST be signed, although identities will not be divulged if the writer so requests.

The present and future problems affecting sewage disposal in the township.

The property owners in the sewer arm districts, who must bear the financial burden of the construction of the main, and laterals of the sewer, must be fully informed as to the need and advantages of such development.

An informed citizen is an interested and responsive citizen, and one who will support necessary im-

Detroit Likes Nature Column

To the Editor:

I wish to express my appreciation for the column, "Nature Now," written each week by Mrs. Fritsch. I am a science teacher in the Detroit Public Schools and find the information in "Nature Now" both interesting and timely. Congratulations to The Birmingham Eccentric for including this each week.

MRS. CLYDE W. ROSE, 15123 Freeland Ave., Detroit

(See PEOPLES COLUMN LETTERS on 8-B)

Yesteryear Happenings

50 YEARS AGO

June 26, 1914

Roy Webb 12 years of age, was badly burned Tuesday evening in one of the most dangerous fires ever fought in our city, when a 60-gallon tank of gasoline caught on fire in the alley in the rear of C. J. Shin's drug store at 5 o'clock. It is thought premature fireworks was the cause of the fire which damaged the stock room of Shin's, totally demolished the interior of the Standard & Whitehead real estate office in the First National bank building and threatened the offices of The Birmingham Eccentric and Telephone Co.

The brick work on Jas. F. Wood (See HAPPENINGS, 8-B)

PEOPLES COLUMN

Writer Rejects Arguments Of Anti-Apartment Group

To the Editor:

In last week's Eccentric, a Beverly Hills resident wrote about his objections to multiple use of land in Beverly Hills. He cited several reasons why they should be kept out. The reasons were the same that were widely broadcast in Bloomfield Hills during the recent election. In general, the reasons shouted by the anti-apartment group are these:

- 1) Apartments overload the schools.
- 2) Apartments don't pay their share of the school taxes.
- 3) Apartments and apartment dwellers are undesirable, they destroy the surrounding single home areas.
- 4) Apartment developments depreciate property values.

As I am in the real estate business in the Birmingham area I would like to reply to these charges of the anti-group by saying that these charges have not been based on fact. The writers, with special reference to the publications from Bloomfield Hills and last week's letter, have not researched their arguments very well. There are several national surveys available which show that:

- 1) Apartments don't overload schools. With the literal hundreds and hundreds of apartments in the Prince Georges area there were only 242 children per unit; 4% of a child per apartment. That is not overloading!
- 2) That area's City Fathers don't think so.
- 3) Apartments pay more than their share of the tax load. In fact, they leave a surplus in the treasuries as compared to a marked deficit by single residences.
- 4) With particular reference to a survey in Connecticut and one in Prince Georges County (Washington, D.C. area) there was a \$35 surplus per apartment after all costs of government and school were compared between single homes and apartments; and in the second instance, the Washington, D.C. area where there is a preponderance of young families with children, the surplus in the county treasury after all government and school services were pro-rated, the surplus was \$18 per apartment—based on a direct cost to the county.
- 5) Since when do our elder citizens become undesirable because they have outgrown the need for, the energy to maintain, and the fear and loneliness of a single home, when 'last week' under home ownership they were desirable citizens?

From the sociological and psychological point of view these elder citizens, the mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles should have the opportunity to continue to live in the areas where they have spent their lives. They have something to contribute to the community, if no more than a diversity of citizenship, staying a "ghetto-like" atmosphere of sameness of citizenry.

Show me one case where a home next to a newly constructed apartment building has had its valuation reduced.

The Prince Georges committee of City Fathers and area leaders concluded — "Business expansion is essential to provide real estate and other taxes needed to relieve the residential community from an otherwise back breaking tax load for mounting costs of education and other services, the services continually demanded by those same residents who are always most vocal in argument against a rise in real estate taxes and continually oppose proposed zoning for new businesses and apartments."

J. J. WATTLES, 750 S. Woodward, Birmingham.

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



Once upon a time there was a beautiful watering hole in the jungle.

A village of animals grew up around this body of water and it became one of the prime centers of activity in all the jungle.

As it grew its beauty was diminished because there was no overall plan and some animals built mud huts and others built palaces of the finest straw.

Also, as it grew and more animals started to use it as a meeting and shopping area, it became congested and became less and less attractive until it almost reached the point of being so unattractive that the animals started going to small streams nearby.

ENOUGH ANIMALS REALIZED what was happening and formed a group to preserve and improve the village. They came up with a master plan which they called the Central Jungle Development Plan (CJDDP).

The official planning council of the village endorsed the plan but the village fathers did little but talk about it. And the village went down and down, because there were too many elephants fighting with lions and tigers for parking spaces.

A new group of animals then took up the fight. They called themselves the Jungle Action Committee (JAC). They got a group of architects together and they formed the Jungle Design Committee (JDC). They also got a group of public spirited public relations animals and formed another committee called the Jungle Relations Committee (JRC).

AT THE SAME TIME as all this activity was taking place, there was another group of animals that kind of liked the way the village was going. Apparently they felt if the village was less attractive there would be fewer commercial activities and it would be a nicer place to live. And they formed the Jungle Status Quo Committee (JSQC).

What they apparently didn't realize was that as part of the village went down, the rest went with it.

And while these people could find fault with everything that the animal planning groups came up with, they offered no constructive alternatives to solve the problem.

Finally, the situation got to the point that someone went out and found a new watering hole. It was beautiful and with the new trails that had been cut through the jungle it really wasn't that far away from civilization.

Slowly but surely, everyone started moving to the new spot.

Eventually, the old watering hole was deserted. The road to hell is paved with reckless criticism and good intentions.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER

Do you know when to salute the flag of the United States of America? Do you know how?

A member of the Charles Edwards Post 14 of the American Legion became concerned at the lack of respect displayed the flag during Birmingham's recent centennial observance.

With Independence Day coming up, he wished to remind citizens of what they should do when the flag goes by.

So, he offered this information from the American Legion's manual:

"During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in a review, all persons present should face the flag, stand at attention and salute."

"Those present in uniform should render the right hand salute. When not in uniform, men should remove the head-dress with the right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart."

"Women should salute by placing the right hand over the heart. The salute to the flag in the moving column is rendered at the moment the flag passes."

WHAT SHOULD YOU do when "The Star-Spangled Banner" is played? The Legion manual says:

"When the national anthem is played and the flag is not displayed, all present should stand and face toward the music. Those in uniform should salute at the first note of the anthem, retaining this position until the last note."

"All others should stand at attention, men removing the head-dress. When the flag is displayed, the regular 'Salute to the Flag' should be given."

Here are some questions and answers from the manual on flag etiquette:

Should you stand and salute when a reproduction of the flag is flashed on a motion picture or TV screen?

"No, it is not necessary to salute reproductions or photographs of the flag."

SHOULD A PERSON stand and salute when the national anthem is sung?

"If the national anthem is sung by the entire audience, or a soloist, those persons present should stand but not salute."

What about when the anthem is played?

"When the national anthem is played and the flag is not displayed, all present should stand and face toward the music. Those in uniform should salute at the first note of the anthem, retaining this position until the last note. All others should stand at attention, men removing the head-dress."

What should you do when you hear "The Star-Spangled Banner" as you're walking along the street?

"If the music is outdoors, near and quite audible, all persons should stop, uncover and stand at attention."

(See CITY BEAT, 8-B)

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