



"WELCOME! CONGRATULATIONS!" - Livia Mayor Harvey Moelke (left) congratulates the new chairman of SEMCOG, Mel Ravitz, former vice chairman and also president of the Detroit Common Council. At the same time Ravitz welcomed Moelke to the organization. Livia joined last December as SEMCOG completed its first two years of operations.

(Observer photo)

Observerland's Voting Strength Outweighs Size

Ten voting delegates, several alternates and several interested citizens from Observerland took part in the third annual meeting of the six-county Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments Saturday.

The voting delegates helped elect Detroit Common Council President Mel Ravitz to chairmanship of SEMCOG, adopted a new SEMCOG delegate rule and defeated a proposal to officially oppose parochial legislation.

The six Observerland communities have a total population of about 373,000 or 14 1/2% of the region's total. But their 10 delegates had 15% of the votes that showed up for the meeting.

Thus, Observerland had nearly double the voting strength one might have expected. It was because 1) a high proportion of local governments have joined and 2) they got out to the meeting.

LIVONIA'S MAYOR Harvey Moelke, attending his first session of the six-county voluntary agency of local governments, took an active part.

His suggestion that the "blue vote" be linked on a six-point education reform advisory motion, was instrumental in its eventually being stripped of its more controversial parts.

He refrained from directly opposing either parochial or any of its other specific points, however.

Ironically, the advisory recommendations had come out of SEMCOG's blue education thrust delegates for which former Livonia Schools Supt. Benton Yates is the staff director.

Moelke told Observerland newspapers he invoked the blue vote primarily as a test of an organizational weakness he had suspected when SEMCOG was first organized, that a single blue might be able to control actions due to its overriding numbers.

His cities and villages blue provided the killing votes, this time, with dissident Mrs. Alice Schoenholtz of Royal Oak providing the pivotal leadership.

MOELKE'S ROLE was most noticeable but Plymouth Schools Supt. James Reissman played an important role, also. He was one of the education blue members who circulated

At SEMCOG Helm Ravitz Wins; Suburbs Help

By DENNIS PAJOT

Suburban delegates threw their support behind Detroit Common Council President Mel Ravitz in his successful bid for chairmanship of the six-county Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments.

Only six dissenting votes were cast. Observerland had more delegates voting than that.

Ravitz polled 59 ballots to move up from the vice chairmanship that he has held in SEMCOG during its first two years.

Mrs. Merle Solomon, supervisor of Grosse Ile Township, was the only other nominee. She won five votes. A single write-in vote was cast for Robert W. Page of Birmingham.

RAVITZ SUCCEEDS two-year chairman William L. Mainland, Oakland County supervisor from Milford Township.

Also in the annual SEMCOG election meeting at Cobo Hall Saturday, Herbert W. Stillman of the Oakland County Intermediate School District won the vice chairmanship in a close, 33-32, runoff against

Homer Case of Bloomfield Township.

Ardon T. Westover of the Monroe County Board of Supervisors, became second vice chairman (a new position) with 49 votes to 16 cast for Neil Mast, Washtenaw County supervisor.

Mrs. Jane Moehle, chairman of the Schoolcraft Community College Board of Trustees and its delegate, was a member of the SEMCOG nominating committee that put forth Ravitz and Mrs. Solomon.

She told Observerland newspapers, "He's shown that he's certainly in favor of regionalism."

"Richard Blodgett, Plymouth city manager, said, 'I don't think we have to worry about domination by the central city.'"

RAVITZ PLEDGED himself to "cooperative regionalism" and said he didn't agree with suggestions that SEMCOG become a regional government with a popularly elected chairman and taxing powers.

"So far as I am concerned, this is not the direction to go," he told the delegates prior to the balloting. He said he favored

a "voluntary organization trying to protect the autonomy of large and small communities alike."

Contending the SEMCOG delegates alone could switch its focus to a "super government," Ravitz said SEMCOG "is about ready to get on to some things to justify payments of dues."

"I think we are largely past the organization stage," he amplified before the delegates and guests at the keynote luncheon.

"The second stage has to be delivery of services. The year 1970 will test this Council of Governments approach to regionalism."

"I BELIEVE WE can make our voluntary organization an effective instrument of regional progress. Denomination is neither my intention, nor Detroit's. We've long since passed that... What is good for the entire region is good for all of its parts."

"Detroit has many valuable assets that can and should be used for common development of the entire region. In-

creasingly we are interrelated by the complexity and commonness of problems.

"If we can't do the job, some higher level of government will seek to do it for us."

He said the organization also had a stake in seeing that "Detroit is revitalized" and called for increased participation by business, labor and interested citizens.

This can be done, he said, "without jeopardizing autonomy. It's time to drop provincialism."

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