

In Our Opinion . . .

Romney Seeks State Cure For Local Boundary Chaos

The people of Farmington, facing a crisis in the next couple of years over the organization of local government, ought to take a careful and sympathetic look at a pair of Gov. Romney's proposals that could affect this area profoundly.

The Romney proposals, made in legislative messages and campaign speeches in 1965 and 1967, concern the thorny problems of municipal boundaries and the state's services to local government.

All local units — counties, cities, townships, villages, school districts, community college districts — are created by the state. The state can also abolish them. The state is responsible for the overall performance of local government. Romney contends — and few disagree — that the state hasn't performed at all well.

CALLING FOR a state Boundary Commission, the governor sounded as if he were looking directly at Farmington when he told the Legislature last year:

"Mounting urban problems . . . have been compounded by increasing governmental fragmentation at the local level. . . . Many new incorporations have been made in defense against annexation by larger, adjoining units of government. As a result, boundaries are often arbitrary and illogical, and the frustration of a maze of governmental increases."

"We have general agreement that Boundary Commission legislation is the best available solution to the annexation puzzle," he said. He made that speech nearly a year ago, and in September he renewed the promise.

Just what would be changed under his proposal? The present state law, under which past City of Farmington annexations were proposed and the current incorporation of part of the township was begun, covers only legal procedure. You have to have so many petition signatures; you have to file the petitions at such-and-such; the petition must contain a legal description; an election must be called — and so on.

What the law fails miserably to do is to provide economic, sociological, population density and engineering standards for annexation and incorporation. The law assumes the people will do this themselves; but, things don't always happen that way.

For proof, read the full statement of the township group proposing to incorporate the city of "Farmington Hills." The group is basically concerned with the political problem of blocking a real or imagined city annexation attempt. They are pushing for a "yes" vote on incorporation in order to buy time to study their governmental future thor-

oughly. They honestly feel they have no other choice; we don't intend to say they're wrong at this point.

But that's a heck of an atmosphere in which to discuss formation of a new city. There ought to be a state law.

The law ought to set up a Boundary Commission in the state government. The Boundary Commission wouldn't tell people to vote "yes" or "no" on annexation or incorporation questions. But it would control the type of questions that go on the ballot.

Before allowing a proposal on the ballot, the Boundary Commission could ask such tough but important questions as: Does this area need a city services? Is the population dense enough? Is an area being left out of the proposed city that ought to be included? Is there an existing city nearby? Can it expand? Should it expand? What financial resources are available?

The Boundary Commission hopefully would be composed of people with knowledge of the social sciences and physical sciences. They must be more than mere counters of signatures on petitions. They must be immune to the fog of local personality problems.

At present, some local civic leaders are engaged in consulting Michigan State University for guidance in a study of possible governmental consolidation. That's good. But it's not enough. A Boundary Commission is needed with power to make certain that only a sensible proposal is placed on the ballot.

THE OTHER Romney proposal is for an Office of Local Government.

At present, many different departments have contacts with the local units "on common problems ranging from education to economic expansion, and from health to highways," the governor said.

What is needed, he said in 1966 and again this year, is a staff agency in the Executive Office to be primarily concerned with local government — what services are available, how they can get regional data, how they can cooperate to solve a common problem, how they can get state and federal monetary aid.

In his four years as governor, Romney has been concerned with local problems. But he has had to spend most of his energy on pressing problems of economic expansion, state aid to schools, labor problems, the new constitution, tax reform or income.

As a result, the state's responsibility for the organizational health of local government has taken a back seat. We hope that the governor this year will have time to concentrate on local government and push for his reforms — hard.

'Y' — Where The Action Is



THIS ATTRACTIVE home from Farmington's past which is located at 31500 Grand River (near Drake Rd.) now houses the great variety of activities which are sponsored by the Farmington District YMCA.



MEMBERS OF FAYAC, YMCA organization for teens, enjoyed a coffee house atmosphere last Saturday evening. Parent-waiter Jack Quay serves cookies to Gall Little and Jim Benya. This teen group is a very active part of the Farmington Y program.

As "Y" week is celebrated across the land, a look at the Farmington YMCA program indicates that one of its fastest growing facets is the Guys and Dolls group. They are a group of young adults who are mentally retarded some of whom are also involved in the new-to-Farmington New Horizons workshop.

During the past year, many social projects were carried out by these young people with the help of their parents and the folks at the Y. Bowling was enjoyed on Monday evenings, and there were campouts, square dancing, swimming, polluck suppers, picnics, parties, football games and a wide variety of events to make their year a particularly successful one. This unique group has grown from four to 28 families, and from 12 people to 65.

In so many other areas, too, the Y can look back over the year with satisfaction and forward to another rewarding session throughout 1967.

The Vikings, a club group for boys from 12 to 15 years of age concentrate on camping and adventure. Under the excellent leadership of advisor Larry Sveen, the boys meet weekly and plan their activities. Last year they cycled from Mackinac Bridge to just south of Bay City. This year they hope that the summer will see them on a trip to Alaska. Some of their special events have included hunting trips, rifle safety training,

hockey and ball games and overnight camping parties. Fate is a major program of the Y aimed at the teenage group. Its board is composed of representatives from the Farmington high schools. Their highly popular teen dances on the tennis courts were a feature of last summer's Farmington scene, and one of their service projects was undertaking the roles of victims in Botsford Hospital's "Project Disaster."

Indian Guides for fathers and their sons from six to nine years of age are another very active segment of Y activity. Bi-weekly meetings take place in the homes of tribal members. Their slogan is "Pals Forever," and a father must participate for his son to be a member. Campouts, of course, are a high spot in their yearly schedule.

Other program offerings include classes in creative living, backyard swimming instruction, day camps, summer trips, sex education classes, instruction in sewing, in fact almost anything in which enough Farmington residents express an interest.

Few groups exist which are so much at the service of their community, and during "Y" week, Farmington's citizens take time out to say a hearty "Thank you," and "Let's keep up the good work," to Rose Berberian, Dave Comfort and all others concerned.



LARRY SVEEN, volunteer leader of the Vikings, YMCA's group for boys of junior high age, inspects the bedroll of Dave Farth before the gang leaves for a camp outing last weekend. Looking on is Charles Anderson one of the dads enlisted to drive the boys to their camping destination.



Girls 'Capped' At College

Three Farmington girls were among 66 taking part in the recent "capping" program of Mercy College. They were Bonnie Eberly, 2000 Farmington Road; Corazon Romero, 2402 Springbrook; and Sharon J. Saja, 28369 Westerleigh Road.



LOIS CAREY (at left) of Old Homestead checks with YMCA sewing instructor Irene MacKinnon on some pattern details. They are at a sewing class for beginners and intermediates which meets on Tuesday mornings.

Public Letterbox

To The Editor:

When we chatted at the Board of Commerce dinner recently, I said that I felt the Farmington Township Citizens' Council for Community Development had "wasted 500 bucks" if the intent of the group is to form a new city resulting in breaking the community up into several separate smaller units of government.

If, however, the intent is to protect the boundaries of the entire 36 square mile area from "outside" annexation and to stall for time while a study for possible unification could be accomplished, then the \$500 may be the best investment in total community planning this area has ever seen.

Unification may of course not be the solution to all our problems, but there is a deep feeling on the part of a vast number of the citizens (as evidenced at the meeting Jan. 19) that its possibilities should be explored and the facts known before fractionalization takes place and we get further apart in our differences.

Again, let me reiterate that these opinions expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the study committee as a whole.

John H. Richardson, D.V.M.

To The Enterprise:

In rebuttal to the column "In Our Opinion . . . The Community . . . How Big? Who's In? Who's Out?" consider the following:

Webster's Dictionary defines "community" thusly . . . "a body of people having common organization or interest, or living in the same place under the same laws or living under similar condition."

You will recall that when incorporation of Farmington Township was last considered in the common interest of all in the township, certain people in Sec. 1, Quakerown Village and Wood Creek Farms vigorously opposed incorporation. It follows then that in order to prevent surrounding communities from annexing more of the choice areas of our township, as evidenced by

the City of Farmington, we must incorporate the remainder of the township as a home rule city. We would hope that when this is done that these sections mentioned above will join with us.

A vote "yes" for incorporation means that the people would have a chance to determine whether to incorporate as a home rule city, to remain a township or to consolidate without the constant danger of annexation by other governmental units.

Farmington Township Citizens Council for Community Development

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