

Is Public Access To Facts Expanding?

Two attorneys in Southfield of Appeals upheld a Genesee County Circuit Court injunction requiring the Flint Council to hold public meetings whenever it discusses any public matter.

The debate started when residents objected to the Franklin Planning Commission convening an "executive session" (secret meeting from which the public is barred) in the middle of a public meeting.

Main participants in the discussion include Commission Chairman Raymond P. Franks and Councilman David Klein, both attorneys with offices in Southfield.

The draft wording which is quite "liberal" in allowing secret meetings.

Municipal attorneys are now waiting for a final ruling from the Michigan Supreme Court on the Flint injunction before rendering final opinions on legality of secret meetings.

IN FRANKLIN, the issue arose during a scheduled public hearing on a rezoning which wasn't held because the real estate man wasn't present.

The president of the Southfield Board of Education has suggested "open study sessions," but action hasn't been taken.

The issue came up in Farmington Township while the charter commission was writing a draft charter for a cityhood vote.

The commission included in

When commissioners opted to discuss the issues behind closed doors, several residents objected to the practice of holding private sessions and challenged the commission's right to deny the public an audience by debating on business questions in private.

The matter now threatens to become an issue in March elections when three council seats will be filled.

Frank comments: "We are unable, under obligation and by law, to conduct official business while we are in private session. That is the only control as far as I'm concerned."

"I believe that unless we are restricted by ordinance, court order, or statute from having such a thing as executive sessions, I think when we have them and if we have them is the commission's prerogative. I think it is up to us, unless we have an ordinance, statute, or court order that says we cannot do it at all."

He adds: "I cannot operate the commission based on someone's isolated criticism, or many people's criticism. I think we are doing what we are in the very best interest of the village."

COMMISSIONER Pete Klein adds that he intends to press for open meetings of all village official bodies, regardless of legal requirements.

The appellate court, in the Genesee case, held that the home rule act requires all sessions of a city's legislative body to be public.

The court noted that another statute "arguably requires that only meetings at which voting occurs need be public."

However, the court ruled, the home rule act is a specific act and takes precedence over the statute which is general in nature.

Under the injunction, the Flint Council cannot hold a meeting privately "at which

personal or property rights, privileges, immunities, duties or obligations of any person or group of persons."

The proposal exempts "any meeting, the publication of the facts concerning which would disclose the content of advice from village legal counsel concerning any legal action pending or proposed, or any information relating to personnel matters, the disclosure of which could be injurious to the employe or employes involved."

Basically, the proposed ordinance defines public interest as being all governmental functions except those which involve discussions of a lawsuit before litigation starts, or discussion of certain personnel matters.

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THE QUESTION of legality of secret meetings assumed meaning in November 1972 when the Michigan Court



THOMAS R. RICKETTS has been elected president and chief administrative officer of Standard Federal Savings and Loan Assn. Ricketts, 41, former executive vice-president, has been with the firm 16 years. He is a trustee of Olivet College.



ROBERT J. HUTTON has been elected board chairman and managing officer of Standard Federal Savings and Loan Assn. Hutton, 64, president since 1962, has been with the firm for his entire business career of 44 years. He has been a councilman of Grosse Pointe Park since 1965.

Ice Show Auditions Announced

SOUTHFIELD Audition times for Ice - O - Rama 1973 to be held in the Southfield ice rink, April 27, 28, 29, have been announced by James Cape, figure skating instructor and show producer.

The times are: Friday, Jan. 26, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Monday, Jan. 29, 4-5:30 p.m.; Tuesday, Jan. 30, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Both young persons 12 and older and men and women are needed.

Cape says those trying out for the chorus should be good all around strong skaters. "We aren't looking for spins and jumps, but rather good stroking."

Auditions also are for those interested in doing solo parts. Younger children will be chosen from the Southfield ice skating classes.

Those wishing to audition should bring their own skates and come to the auditions as early as possible. Each will be asked to list sizes and measurements on the audition card. These include height, weight, dress or suit size, waist and bust measurement and, for the men, inseam.

The first ice show in April 1972 was performed three times to sell - not crowds. Cape plans to extend number of performances to at least five and maybe six this year.

He has chosen the theme "Wondrous Worlds On Ice" for the show. It will include costumed portrayals of a world of romance, a world of sugar and spice, an oriental fantasy, world of Mother Goose, and a Caribbean festival.

Southfield residents will be given priority in the auditions. Cape also will welcome non-skating volunteers to help with set painting, and to work backstage in props or make-up.

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GED Test Is Feb. 13-14

A high school equivalency examination will be administered on Feb. 13 and 14 on the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College for persons who haven't earned a diploma but who they have acquired basic high school skills.

Registrations for the General Educational Development (GED) test can be made by contacting the community relations office of OCC, 2480 Opydye, Bloomfield Hills.

Dearborn Club Plans Exhibit

DEARBORN The Dearborn Stamp Club will hold its 40th annual stamp exhibition and course in the Dearborn Youth Center, Michigan and Greenfield, on Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 27 and 28. The hours will be 12 noon to 9 p.m., Saturday, and 12 to 5 p.m., Sunday. There is no admission charge and parking is free.

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