

New HCMA boss knows his parks

By TIM RICHARD

In his 53 years, Charles R. Shaler, the Southfield banker who is the newest board member of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, has lived in several parts of the region and learned their parks patterns. Shaler is ready to put in plenty of time on the policy-making group that operates 10 parks ranging from Metropolitan Beach on Lake St. Clair to Stony Creek, Keeshion and Lower Huron.

Appointed by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, Shaler steps into an agency that has been the subject of a lot of political pulling and hauling in the last three or four years. Different parts of the five-county area have different problems and demands.

"I WAS BORN in Detroit. When I married, our first home was in Allen Park," Shaler said in an interview as he awaited the commissioners' action on his appointment.

"Then when we needed more room, we moved to the Roseville Park section of Detroit. When the bank I'm with was organized, it seemed best that I live in Southfield."

Putting sanitary sewers under the county executive (through the DPW) puts sewers in one area and drains in another, the drain commissioners' Pennell said. The Democratic plan-voted a month ago by Murphy—would shift the DPW to the office of the drain commissioner, who then would become a public works commissioner and face the electorate.

Drain Commissioner George W. Kuhn, a Republican, favors that plan.

So does Commissioner Henry Hoot (R-Troy), who crossed party lines Thursday to vote for the Democratic amendments to Murphy's proposed changes in the law.

DEMOCRATS WERE cheered last week by a Michigan Supreme Court opinion that allows the drain commissioner, operating under a different act, to issue sewer and water bonds.

Majority floor leader Larry Pennell (D-Southfield) said commissioners will explore still another option to handling public works—giving the county road commission power to act as a board of public works. Wayne County's road commission has that power.

Pennell said commissioners will meet with the road commission to see how they would do it. If that route is followed, Oakland would have two public works agencies—the drain commissioner and a DPW under the road commission.

MURPHY IS SEEKING legislative amendments to give his office binding authority. On what was nearly a party line vote, commissioners Thursday passed a resolution opposing his view, seeking instead to give that authority only to an elected public works commissioner.

Murphy told the Observer & Eccentric he will veto the resolution of the Democratic-dominated board. That doesn't solve his problem, however, because the Michigan Legislature has an even bigger majority of Democrats running it.

An angry Republican commissioner, William Moffitt of Bloomfield Township charged Democrats with "political harassment" for the last two months.

Mr. Moffitt said Democrats were attempting to frustrate the will of the electorate, which favored unified county administration when it voted to adopt the executive plan.

BUT CHAIRMAN Alexander C. Pennell (D-Southfield) said Murphy and the Republicans were really the opponents of streamlining county administration.

County board continues road appointments

Oakland County's three-member road commission will continue to be appointed by the county board of commissioners. The county board Thursday voted overwhelmingly against allowing the road commissioners to be elected independently.

Head Commission Chairman Fred Harris had initiated the discussion of making his group elective. The proposal was part of a package he offered March 18. The package included asking voters for additional millage in November to improve and rebuild county roads considered by many in public life to be Oakland's biggest single problem.

The county board has yet to decide whether to put the millage on the ballot. The county board, by voice vote, gave partisan support to the recommendation of the general government committee chaired by Robert A. Burton (D-Royal Oak), that no action be taken to make the road commission appointive.



CHARLES R. SHALER
Shaler is president of Michigan National Bank—Oakland, which has 10 branch offices in Southfield and two in Waterford Township.
The family home is in a section of the city that is part of Birmingham School District, and the family enjoys the outdoors.

"WE GO TO Kensington Park a lot. I've been to Stony Creek several times. When we lived downriver, I went to Lower Huron a lot."

"And we still go to Belle Isle three or four times a year. It's a wonderful place to go for a drive in fall and winter."

Whether HCMA should take over operation of Belle Isle, a City of Detroit facility for the better part of a century, is a matter of some debate.

The issue is unlikely to go away. Shaler and the other six members of the HCMA board will continue to face pressure.

LOCALLY, SHALER has served on Southfield's board of review (1966-70) and planning commission (1970-73).

In January 1975, he was appointed to the Oakland County Building Authority. He holds a membership at Plum Hollow golf course and serves on its board.

Born in Detroit's east side April 23, 1923, Shaler graduated from Northern High School and earned a graduate certificate from the American Institute of Banking.

He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and the Korean War.

SERVING ON BANK boards, Shaler has come to know Alexander C. Pennell (D-Southfield), current chairman of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Also named me: "You better have the time. I'm president of the bank, and when you're boss, you can control your own time," said Shaler.

Although he professes no political leanings or abilities, the Shaler-Clarkson battle was seen in politics as usual, and when it was all over, everyone shook hands.

But privately, Republican commissioner professed no qualms about Shaler's political leanings or abilities. The Shaler-Clarkson battle was seen in politics as usual, and when it was all over, everyone shook hands.

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