

OBSERVATION POINT

Redford Goal: Keep Youth Busy And Help Ease Their Problems

City Gets A Lesson Hard Way

By LEONARD POGER

The Westland City Council recently took a sock at regionalism but was caught with its conflicts showing. At the annual budget action to approve the spending for the upcoming fiscal year, the city council chopped out a \$3,500 expenditure for membership in the Southeast Council of Governments, a voluntary organization of governmental units in the Detroit metropolitan region.

THE SAME night the council approved the new budget—sans the SEMCOG membership dues—it approved an additional \$600 for the Livonia—Westland Community Commission on Drug Abuse.

The commission is made up of four governmental units to fight a problem which crosses city and school district boundaries. The city has already pledged about \$24,000 to the commission and some people think that the figure is less than what is really needed.

Another segment of the new city budget calls for \$768,000 in funds for the Central Wayne Sanitation Authority, of which Westland is one of five neighboring cities joining in a common effort to provide a public service which would be too expensive for just one city to handle financially.

Another \$117,203 is budgeted for the Peoples Community Hospital Authority, in which Westland and 22 other communities joined many years ago to provide health care at a reasonable cost.

SEVERAL YEARS ago, the city council joined with Dearborn Heights to have the Michigan Humane Society construct an animal shelter for the two cities—something which would have been too expensive for just one community to handle.

A new development which makes it more advantageous for Westland to join SEMCOG is the federal requirement that the council of governments review all applications within its region for federal funds.

Since the city is about to ask the federal government for about \$2 million in funds for a senior citizens' housing project, it would be nice if the community helped support the organization for the services performed for it.

THE SEMCOG people were polite in telling Westland that it would cost the city \$100 for the service to non-members.

With Westland and other suburbs getting more involved in environmental quality and other regional programs, it's about time that city officials working outside of SEMCOG realize that they should get together on a lot of things besides uniting to oppose cross-district busing.



BILL J. ROBBINS

By BILL ROBBINS
Redford Twp. Supervisor

I selected one of our newest programs in Redford Township—Our Youth Commission—to write about:

It all started with the question of "what are the needs of the youth in Redford Township, and how can these needs be served?"

The Township Board and I believed that to answer this question a whole new program and concept must be developed to serve those interests of our young people.

I believe it was Edmund Burke, who said "there is nothing so irresistible as an idea whose time has come." I do not completely agree with this because many good ideas have been shelved because of lack of interest and enthusiasm.

Fortunately, I had a Township Board that shared my enthusiasm so that both the Youth Commission concept and the needed enthusiasm coincided in point of time. It was the belief of myself and other Redford Township officials that a great many young people in Redford Township did not play organized sports. Thus, the Redford Township Youth Commission was created in July of 1971.

WE WERE MOST fortunate in the timing of the Federal unemployment money. This became available in August of 1971, and we were able to hire a fulltime Youth Commission director to conduct the activities of this commission. A nine man non-paying commission was formed and things got under way.

The objective and goal of the Youth Commission is twofold. It is:

No. 1. to strive to organize and implement their own programs.

No. 2. to work within the framework of existing clubs and organizations in the Township to help assimilate some of our youth into these programs.

Further, the Youth Commission is inviting various organizations to have ex-officio members in advisory non-voting capacities. This will lend many different and worthwhile views to many matters that will affect the youth of the Township.

ONE OF THE FIRST things that was achieved by the commission was to help find jobs for the young people of the Township. As of this writing our

director informs me that they have filled 26 per cent of all applicants. This is a most outstanding record in this time of high unemployment for everyone.

There has also been a road rally which was recently completed. This was a moderate success, and it is hoped that it will be more of a success the next time it is held.

Also, the director has obtained permission to open three of the Junior High Schools to conduct a summer activity night program. This will allow the young people of the Township to do something with their summer evenings. The real catalyst and impetus that will enable this summer program to work, is the involvement of almost 300 Redford parents as chaperons.

Some of the problems that have arisen and that have had to be resolved are a possible overlapping between the Youth Commission activities and those of our Parks and Recreation department.

The commission does not want to impinge on any area that is presently being covered by the Parks and Recreation department. There are areas, that while recreational and athletic in nature are not covered necessarily by the P-R department. These activities are what the commission is striving to provide.

The Senior Citizens have their commission and we are very happy that it meets their particular needs; the youth of

the Township now have their own commission and we can hope that we are meeting their needs also.

It is hoped in the future that the Youth Commission will extend into some cultural programs that will have a lasting effect on the youth of the Township.

WE WANT TO BE ABLE to foster and perpetrate long term projects and programs where the young people can think back and say they were first enlightened about a certain aspect of life by the Redford Township Youth Commission.

I feel the commission will alert the young people and make them want to participate in whatever is available. It will hopefully destroy the resistance some of our young people have against organized programs.

It is hoped the commission can more than fill the leisure time void. There is nothing quite so discouraging as to have a whole free summer and to not have had anything to do.

In its short duration the success of the Youth Commission has been phenomenal. A concept has been translated into meaningful programs that meet the needs of our youth. To counterphrase George Bernard Shaw "Youth is such a wonderful time of life that it is imperative that all of us make it as meaningful as possible."

It is the belief of the Township Board and myself that youth, what ever age you consider that to be, will have been served

well by their public officials in the decade of the 70's.

How many of us remember the movie "Marty" with Marty standing on the corner with his buddy asking the never answered question "what are we going to do tonight?" This is a question I hope the Youth Commission will continue to answer for the young people of Redford Township.

YOUTH COMMISSIONS ARE PART OF THE ANSWER



Tim Richard writes

Snob Zoning Strengthens Roth's Case

It's one thing to call Federal Judge Stephen Roth's school busing order illogical, absurd, asinine, ridiculous or shocking, as many of us have done.

The consensus seems to be that busing is at best a poor way to end segregation in Detroit and the suburbs. Even the most liberal folk in these parts qualify their acquiescence by saying: "Well, if busing is the only way we can desegregate, then we'll have to do it."

Fortunately, there are indeed other and better ways to desegregate. If you are one who frankly doesn't want black people anywhere around, stop right here. But if you honestly oppose segregation, there are alternatives to Roth's buses.

ROTH HIMSELF found that

"residential segregation throughout the larger metropolitan area is substantial, pervasive and of long standing," and that "governmental actions and inaction at all levels, federal, state and local, have combined with those of private organizations, such as loaning institutions and real estate associations and brokerage firms, to establish and to maintain the pattern..."

There's the irony of it: School children are to be hauled around for desegregation purposes because of governmental and business actions on housing.

The most blatant example is the snob zoning enforced in our suburbs. Our planning commission members aren't even subtle about it; they frankly

say they want high-priced housing to be built.

Every time one of our planning commissions accepts a plat for that kind of housing without providing for lower-priced housing, it is strengthening Roth's argument.

FEDERAL POLICIES call for distributing public housing on a quota basis throughout metropolitan regions. Joseph Kraft pointed this out in "The Coming Apart of Fortress Suburbia" which was reprinted here April 5.

Kraft noted that this kind of arrangement can be worked out "by agreement between the central city and the surrounding counties." To the extent that our good ol' home town officials work out these

agreements, we can desegregate without busing. And in the unlikely event Roth's order is upheld by higher courts, it will reduce the amount of busing required.

Kraft also pointed to four federal district and Supreme Court decisions that forbade the misuse of local zoning in an attempt to segregate. The sooner similar suits are filed here, the better our chances of avoiding Roth-type decisions.

Roth's busing order would mix kids in a classroom a few hours a day, but it would do virtually nothing to truly integrate us with our fellow Americans in this region.

To be flippant: "Bus planning commissions and realtors—not kids."

R. T. Thompson writes

Drive Safely On Holiday And 'Bring All Back Alive'

There isn't any time like right now to stress the need for safe driving over the coming July 4 holiday. This year's celebration could extend from Friday through the holiday on Tuesday and probably will for a great many in Observerland.

That means thousands of cars on the highways beginning late Friday afternoon and thousands jamming all of the roads from the resort areas beginning in the early evening on Tuesday.

It would be well for all drivers to heed the advice of the AAA to drive carefully and "bring 'em back alive."

The average death toll on Michigan highways for the past five years has been 30 fatalities for the July 4 holiday. Last year the big weekend claimed 29 lives. The Memorial Day weekend had a total of 20.

From Col. John R. Plants, director of the Michigan State Police, comes a plea for all motorists to give full attention to safety rules. He cautions drivers that the increasing traffic at this time...more cars, more miles driven...raises the potential for accidents.

HE MENTIONS several suggestions for drivers to

strengthen their safety potential: drive at reasonable speeds; do not follow other cars too closely, in other words don't tail-gate; give proper signals in advance of turns or stops; pass only when assured it is safe to do so; and refrain from driving after any immoderate drinking.

Always remember the life you save by careful driving can be your own.

The State Police will have special patrols on all major highways to try and keep accidents to a minimum.

The patrols will focus special attention on high risk road areas and heavy travel periods.

The patrols, including aircraft in daylight hours, will provide maximum coverage from 3 p.m. to at least 9 p.m. daily beginning at noon Friday and extending throughout midnight Tuesday.

STATE POLICE vehicle inspection personnel and other officers will join in the patrols. Pass days of most officers have been canceled to add extra manpower for the patrols.

If these officers are skipping leave days to make the roads safer, then it appears that all drivers should do their bit and follow all safety rules.

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