



By Philip H. Power
Publisher

OBSERVATION POINT

Failure Of Post-Riot Programs
Led To Pressure For Busing

Late last week, the Sixth Circuit Court issued a stay of Judge Stephen Roth's order to buy buses for a metropolitan cross district busing plan. Most informed observers now believe that the late date for hearing appeals to Judge Roth's rulings means that there will be no busing this year.

Sighs of relief could be heard throughout the suburbs, especially in high-priority districts Livonia and Southfield, since most people here are violently opposed to busing and believe strongly that when court-ordered busing is appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court it will be thrown out.

Prospect for the rest of the summer is for complicated legal arguments, punctuated by rulings of lower and higher courts, resulting in an appeal to the Supreme Court. Almost surely the Court will agree to hear arguments concerning this issue, but when the Court will eventually rule is anyone's guess.

Meanwhile, last Sunday marked the fifth anniversary of the 1967 Detroit riots.

THE TIMING of the Circuit Court's ruling holding up busing and the anniversary of the riot was ironic, noteworthy, and sad.

The days of hope that followed the riot raised the possibility that all forces in the metropolitan area, working together under the aegis of the New Detroit Committee, could actually do something about the forces which spawned the disorders. Brave words were uttered; bold plans were unveiled; promises for financial support were strewn about.

Today, five long and expensive years later, the only regretful verdict that can be given on all the effort that started so hopefully is that it accomplished very, very little.

As Joseph L. Hudson, Jr., the first chairman of New Detroit and probably the most thoughtful, knowledgeable and caring community leader involved in the post-riot reconstruction said over the weekend: "I have become really impressed with the inability to do anything on a local basis...At the start, the thought of the powerlessness was that business and labor could do things, and do them fast. We've been shown that business and labor could not do it..."

"The next five years are probably going to be equally frustrating...I see at least the rest of the decade being spent in wasteful, inefficient expenditure of human resources."

WHAT MAKES the coincidental timing of the stay of busing and the anniversary of the riots so

ironic is that in at least one area - housing - the failure of the post-riot effort led directly to the pressure for busing which is now being so fiercely resisted.

It's no mystery that the pressure to destroy the neighborhood school concept by busing has come in response to the simple fact that housing patterns in the Detroit metropolitan area are segregated. I do not believe that this segregation came about by willful legal intent, but I also believe that the failure of post-riot housing programs increased the pattern of segregated housing rather than lessened it.

The recent HUD housing scandal is fresh in everybody's mind, and it comes on top of the almost total failure of the Metropolitan Detroit Citizens Development Authority, which got \$3 million from New Detroit and constructed only a few hundred housing units.

This occurred while 2,484 building permits were issued for new houses in the period between 1968 and 1971, but over twice as many demolition permits were issued over the same time span. The Detroit building department has indicated that about the same ratio applies for apartment houses.

All of this has happened in a city in which there are an estimated 75,000 substandard housing units, mostly occupied by black people. Not only did new housing not materialize, but also escape to the suburbs was cut off. The Detroit Commission on Community Relations has reported that while 200,000 new housing units have been built in the suburbs during the past 10 years, only around 6,000 were made available to black families.

THE MASSIVE failure of post-riot housing programs left the metropolitan area with deteriorating and increasingly segregated housing in the core city.

It offered no escape for black families to better housing either in the core city or the suburbs.

It concentrated inner city children in schools that had neither the financial backing nor the plant and equipment adequately to educate them.

And it certainly produced a situation in which Judge Roth could find that schooling available in the core city was inherently inferior to schooling in the suburbs. Hence his busing rulings that have so infuriated parents who are worried about the safety of their children.

Against this background, it is not mere coincidence that the chance of events produced a halt in busing orders and the fifth

anniversary of the Detroit riots in the same week. The whirlwind of

the riot and the failure of reconstruction spawned the pressure

for busing in the most direct possible way.

EVERYONE GETS A PIECE OF 'ANNIVERSARY CAKE'...



Small Cities Can Successfully
Fight 'Canned' Shopping Center

(During the summer vacation period, the Observer Newspapers have asked governmental officials to discuss problems of the suburbs in guest editorials. Today's editorial is written by Harold Guenther, Plymouth city commissioner, former mayor and chairman of the city building authority.)

By Harold Guenther
Plymouth

It is entirely possible for the small city to fight successfully the competition of the "canned" shopping center. However, it is doubtful a significant percentage of small cities will do so.

Successful competition does not necessarily mean copying or even relating to the customary shopping center format. There are many other economic avenues that provide satisfactory activity and tax base. The typical shopping center by its very composition and reason for being is physically cold and impersonal.

The small city invariably by virtue of its age and years of personality influence has physical amenities that are expressive of life styles and values that are appealing and non-changing to many people.

THE SMALL CITY usually has a number of handicaps readily discernible to the developer and investor but not to local government and citizenry even when pointed out to them.

The developer's attraction to large tracts of land, properly zoned and adjacent to heavy traffic road patterns, is readily understandable. The developer's avoidance where possible of small minded, inhibited small city politicians is also understandable.

The small city must diagnose



HAROLD GUENTHER

government lay policy personnel must develop intelligent attitudes and learn some of the language and basics of the business world.

Mr. Local Citizen's loyalty and close association with his own local business community must be developed and nurtured by that local business community on the basis of competitive prices, imaginative merchandising and sincere personal service. Mr. Local Citizen is here and ready to purchase his needs, but he has an automobile and will go elsewhere if not treated properly at home.

Local government, business and lay leaders must learn that which "universally fulfills and satisfies people." Does it involve the beauty of trees, shrubbery and flowers downtown, parades and band concerts, festivals, and nurturing and perpetuation of local character and tradition?

Whatever it may in total be provides the setting, the atmosphere for unique economic activity. The combination of that which fulfills the soul and provides creature services and wants cannot be provided by the "canned" shopping center. Here lies the small city's opportunity.

Do not look to the outside developer to provide our answers. Do not look to the outside planner to plan our course except along the cold and severe guide lines of the customary shopping center. These we must have, but remember we are a small city. Our advantages must be enhanced and used to offset our disadvantages.

If we do not believe enough in our own city to contribute our time and talent, invest our money, all in an effort to equalize with our outside competition we can hardly expect outside involvement.

Local government has many powerful and applicable tools, none of which involve serious risk or equity involvement. Local

Support
County
Millage

On Aug. 8, voters of Wayne County will be asked to approve County Proposition B which would continue for five years (from 1974-79) a one-mill property tax renewal to pay for the general operations of the county.

The one mill (\$1 per \$1,000 equalized valuation) is not a tax increase but a continuation of the levy approved by voters in 1964 and 1968.

The one mill represents about 75 cents a month for the average homeowner, but will produce \$13 million revenue for Wayne County because it will be collected from 2.6 million county residents.

IT'S NOT as if the county were wasting money.

Some 650 county jobs are vacant today, and hiring has been frozen because of a lack of funds. There is a danger of space being closed at Wayne County General Hospital. The prosecuting attorney has warned he may stop prosecuting certain crimes because he is understaffed.

Because Eloise Hospital is closing, minimal house cleaning chores once performed by patients are now being done by county employees who must neglect some of the work they were hired for. Many of the 650 workers laid off need to be re-employed because county services have already been curtailed.

County services provided are used by an benefit residents in all local communities in Wayne County. The one mill is a modest levy and it would be foolish to deny the tax and lose all the services it pays for.

APPROVAL OF County Proposition B is essential to maintain public services in the fields of law enforcement, control of drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, the courts, hospital care, public health, child care, mental health, libraries and parks.

Defeat could force closing of one or more wards at Wayne County General Hospital which presently handles about 140,000 emergency and out-patient cases annually.

The health department now has but one public health nurse per 75,000 residents compared to the one nurse per 5,000 persons recommended by the American Public Health Assn. Preventable deaths are occurring in Wayne County right now and more will occur if County Proposition B fails.

The Wayne County Board of Commissioners established in 1970 the Detroit-Wayne County Metropolitan Squad to combat crime and narcotics. The loss of one mill could force its curtailment. That service helps protect suburbanites.

PRESENTLY, the average jury case in Wayne County takes three years to come to trial in circuit court. An operating millage defeat would delay justice further.

Failure of County Proposition B could also close the Wayne County Child Development Center, which serves retarded children, and curtail operations of the Foster Home Program for neglected children and orphans.

The county's 4,400 acres of parks could become unpatrolled, unsafe, and overgrown trash dumps if already short park funds are cut more. The county's library services for the blind and book services for hospital patients would also be cutback.

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS believes the funds from the one-mill are clearly needed and without this income the county and all its residents (us) would be in dire straits.

We strongly urge a "YES" vote on County Proposition B on the Aug. 8 primary ballot. To do otherwise would not be a tax revolt - it would be revolting.

-OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, INC.

Editorial & Opinion

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