

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rendezvous an Outstanding Way To Learn About Michigan History

To the Editor:

Rendezvous at the Straits Powwow: What an outstanding way to learn about early Michigan history and about the people who created it. Visitors were able to witness present native traditions with a powwow and to observe the past with a living history encampment.

It was a perfect opportunity for guests to experience a celebration among the Anishinabee and to discover what it was like to live in Michigan long ago.

The New France Discovery Center in St. Ignace offered a magnificent setting for families to share an unforgettable experience in learning about Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Lynn Marie Johnson
Historical Interpreter
Black Lake

County Residents Are Fortunate To Have Emergency Rescue Agencies

To the Editor:

I will never again take for granted the emergency rescue agencies in our community. The care I received after a serious accident on I-75 last Friday was phenomenal. The people of St. Ignace and Mackinac County are very fortunate to have the best lifesaving crews available to meet every need.

We may live in a small, rural community, but there is nothing small about the services we have available to us.

Gary Davis
Moran

Those Making Zoning Decision Must Know the Facts

To the Editor:

The Mackinaw City Village Council should vote "no" September 4 to the Planning Commission's recommendation to restrictively rezone Shepler's parcels 33 and 37 to marina commercial (MC) status, a zoning status that doesn't even provide for ferry boat transportation services, except by special permit.

I have been fulfilling a succession planning contract for the Shepler family business for the past seven months. I am chairman and CEO of Performance Learning, Inc., the Las Vegas, Nevada-based consulting and executive coaching business that I founded. Prior to that, I served as superintendent of schools for the Saginaw Public Schools, the Toledo Public Schools in Ohio, and the Seattle Public Schools in Washington.

Having attended planning commission and city council meetings regarding the zoning issues under consideration, I offer the following, based on my many years of experience working and consulting in the government and business arenas:

Elected members of the Mackinaw City Council are immersed in the arena of politics, and politics is all about who gets what. Their decisions should follow the correct moral and legal paths, based on the facts, because their collective decisions affect the lives and livelihoods of those who live in their community.

Three guidelines should guide every personal vote and collective decision: Know the facts, do the right thing, and carefully measure the probable negative consequences of failing to do the right thing. We don't have to look very far in Michigan to see the personal and financial costs related to poor judgment.

Mackinaw City government has rights with respect to zoning issues, but individual property owners also have rights, protected by the federal government and backed by case law.

Know the facts.

1. The Shepler family has owned the property and has used it primarily for passenger boat ferries and related operations for 60 years.

2. On October 10, 1977, the Zoning Ordinance Amended to include parcels 33 and 37, the parcels under consideration by the City Council. At that time, zoning for those parcels was B-3, which included motel, retail, etc.

3. In 1942, the Hotel Windermere was located on the property in question, along with a tavern and retail stores.

4. The Arnold and Star Line ferry lines are both zoned B-2, the only zoning that has current and historic primary use for passenger boat ferries. Zoning of the Shepler property is illogical given the fact that B-2 is the only zoning status that has current and historic primary passenger ferry boats as a permitted use. MC zoning status, on the contrary, would require recurring requests by Shepler's for a special use permits.

5. Reasons put forth by the Planning Commission do not appear to comply with federal guidelines and include such factors as view shed, spot zoning, and assumedly, no motel building on that sight. In all my time working with the Shepler's family and business, the complete "succession planning" emphasis has been on continuing to operate the best possible ferry service for the next century. My own observation is that if the Sheplers were not interested in the view shed, nothing has or could prevent them from constructing six 100 x 100 x 38 foot storage sheds. They have not chosen to do so.

6. The zoning map of 1984 showed property zoned as B-3, which included motel, retail, and ferry boats.

7. Zoning is a legislative act. It cannot be accomplished by "a 1988 computer glitch," as alleged by the Planning Commission.

8. According to federal law, zoning cannot be arbitrary or capricious.

9. While zoning can result in the diminution of property value, if it will significantly diminish the value of the Shepler property (and according to Greg Garver, Community Bank president, it will) then this is "confiscatory action" and, as such, requires "just compensation" to the Sheplers.

Do the right thing.

Vote "no" and reject the Planning Commission's recommended zoning of the Shepler properties to MC status, a status inconsistent with the two competitive ferry lines (Arnold and Star Line) and a zoning classification that only allows ferry service by special permit. B-2 zoning is the right and fair thing to do.

Follow the facts and avoid the arbitrary and capricious action the Planning Commission has recommended.

Measure the consequences.

The basic considerations that constitute what a municipality must take into account before restricting the use of the Shepler property include public health, fire protection, traffic, availability of public utilities, and the general welfare of the public. These criteria are set forth in the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act, first prepared by the United States Department of Commerce in 1922. It is the model for practically all state zoning enabling acts, such as the one in Michigan. To our knowledge, not once have any of these factors been raised to bolster and support the Planning Commission's recommendation to the Mackinaw City Council to restrict Sheplers' use of their property.

Because zoning is a relatively recent concept in regulating land use, the conflicting interests of government's right to limit uses of real estate and the individual owner's right to have unrestricted use of his property has resulted in considerable litigation. In this situation, the City Council must consider the original and expected purpose for which the Shepler property use was intended. The decision to restrict the use of the Shepler property to MC status is confiscatory, and as such, is highly likely to require that substantial damages are paid to the Sheplers from the Mackinaw City coffers.

The bottom line is pretty simple: Does the village council opt to follow the facts and the legally and morally correct course of action, or does it blindly follow the Pied Piper, also known as the Planning Commission, into the abyss of million dollar litigation?

Don Steele
Las Vegas, Nevada

Tribe Prevails in Casino Lawsuit

Tribe: *From page 1*

the contiguous parcel was a reservation before that date. Over a period of three years, the tribe attempted to convince the Department of the Interior and the National Indian Gaming Commission that the 1983 parcel is a reservation within the meaning of IGRA. The Department of the Interior and the gaming commission disagreed, resulting in the tribe's suit against those two agencies, filed on November 9, 2006.

In ruling against the United States, the Department of the Interior, and the gaming commission, Judge Edgar found that the Department of the Interior has been inconsistent in its interpretation of the word "reservation." He concluded that the 1983 parcel is a reservation, and therefore, gaming may take place at the casino partially located on the contiguous 2000 parcel.

St. Ignace News Policies

Letters:

All responsible letters will be considered for publication and may be edited. They must be signed and a telephone number must be included for verification. Personal thank-you notes, personal attacks against other people, form letters, and letters promoting political candidates are not accepted, although letters for or against ballot proposals are welcome.

Obituaries:

The St. Ignace News maintains a policy of not charging for obituaries and we do often add information or rewrite them for clarity and reader interest. Obituaries that the family wants published exactly as submitted can be placed in the newspaper for \$75. Photographs are welcome at no charge.

Weddings:

Weddings with photographs are published without charge within 45 days of the ceremony. After 45 days, a photograph can be included for \$35.00.

Internet:

The complete edition of The St. Ignace News is available online at stignacenews.com.

Contact:

The St. Ignace News
359 Reagon Street
PO Box 277
Saint Ignace, MI 49781
(906) 643-9150 (phone)
(906) 643-9122 (fax)
e-mail: news@stignacenews.com

Michigan Politics

By
George Weeks



Michiganians on Prez Slates Are Few and Failed

Barack Obama and John McCain each had politicians with Michigan ties, one extremely slight, on their widely trumpeted running mate "short list," which often amounts to little more than a stroke list. Both ended up last week as also-rans.

Michigan native Mitt Romney, former governor of Massachusetts and son of ex-Governor George Romney (a failed 1968 presidential hopeful), beat McCain in the 2008 Michigan Republican presidential primary and clearly would have helped McCain here in November.

(Governor Jennifer Granholm, in a CNN interview from last week's Democratic National Convention, snipped of Mitt: "The son is not the father, I can tell you that.")

Democrat Obama's touted short list included Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius, daughter of early 1970s Ohio Governor John Gilligan, who had a vacation pad in Leelanau County, where Sebelius spoke to Democrats earlier this month.

Michigan looms as major battleground state. Granholm correctly says, "There is no path to the White House that doesn't go through Michigan."

But Michigan has had scant, and failed, ties to presidential tickets:

- Former territorial Governor Lewis Cass was the Democratic presidential nominee in 1848. He lost to Whig Zachary Taylor, who won when Cass and ex-President Martin Van Buren, running on the Free Soil ticket, split the Democratic vote.

- Owosso-born Thomas E. Dewey was the unsuccessful 1944 GOP nominee against President Franklin D. Roosevelt and against President Harry Truman in 1948.

- Republican Grand Rapids Congressman Gerald Ford was picked in 1973 by President Richard Nixon to replace disgraced Vice-President Spiro T. Agnew, and then in 1974 he became president when the disgraced Nixon resigned. Jimmy Carter narrowly defeated Ford in 1976.

Ford was the only president never elected to either the presidency or the vice presidency.

In the late 1950s, there was talk of Democratic Governor G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams as a presidential prospect, but that such talk faded in the wake of Michigan's cash crisis and payless paydays for state workers.

In 1996, Republican Governor John Engler, in advance of the Republican National Convention in San Diego, was reported to be on nominee-in-waiting Bob Dole's short list for the running mate selection that went to Jack Kemp.

As for last week's Obama/McCain selections:

It was no surprise when Sebelius and others said to be finalists lost out to highly credentialed Delaware Senator Joe Biden as Obama's choice.

But it was a huge surprise – a shocker – when McCain picked relatively unknown Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, a former small town mayor who was elected governor in 2006 and has an aggressive style that spurred opponents to pick up on the "Sarah Barracuda" nickname she earned in earlier days on the basketball court.

Seventeen U.S. governors have become president. At least one governor has been a major party candidate for president or vice-president in all but seven of the national campaigns since 1788.

But David Gergen, former adviser to presidents of both parties and well-respected commentator on politics, nailed it in calling McCain's tapping of the Alaska governor to be a heartbeat away from "a very large gamble."

Michigan Preview

McCain, in congratulating Obama for his nomination last week, was among those who noted that it was accepted on the 45th anniversary of The Reverend Martin Luther King's famous "I Have A Dream" speech in Washington, D.C.

King first gave that speech two months earlier in Detroit (June 23, 1963). The event was called the Great March on Detroit, organized by the Detroit Council on Human Rights.

George Weeks retired in 2006 after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.

Sewer Increases Eyed at Clark Twp.

Sewer: *From page 1*

meet debt retirement obligations, and provide for the sustainability of the sewer system.

To correct the amortization error, special assessment fees will increase from \$197.31 to \$251.21 for 100 feet of property frontage. This increase will appear on December bills. Each following year, the cost will decrease until 2030, when the special assessment is paid off.

The amortization formula the township was using contradicts state law and the township's bond resolution. The special assessment required 40 equal payments of the principal amount each year. The interest was to be added on. The township, however, has been charging 40 equal payments of both principal and interest.

The payment amortization mistake was realized during the rate review, Mr. Traciak said to resident Ken Drenth of Cedarville, who questioned how the error could have gone on for so many years undiscovered.

Each consultant, including auditors and bond attorneys, said Mr. Traciak, looks at items from a different perspective, and looks at specific areas.

To meet operating and maintenance needs, capital improvements, and to build up the cash in the sewer fund, Mr. Traciak advised the township to bump up the current rate of \$46 per REU (residential equivalency unit) per quarter, to \$72 per REU

for all customers.

The proposed increase, along with annual inflation hikes, will help build up funds over a five-year period.

"We're not trying to do this overnight," he said of the suggested hike. "We don't want to overburden the customer."

Marti Harness of Cedarville said she lives on a fixed income and will have to find something to cut in her personal budget to pay for this increase. She asked board members if they were doing anything to cut costs.

In response, Township Supervisor Linda Hudson said, the two Department of Public Works (DPW) two full-time employees have been trained to perform some maintenance of the system to save costs.

Sewer Advisory Board member Steve Autore said the township had also offered to hire out the skills of the DPW to other communities.

Looking at the sewer operation fund, which Mr. Traciak called "woefully inadequate," he recommended the township keep a cash balance of a minimum of \$125,000 in the fund. Currently, the cash balance is about \$15,000.

Over the next five years, the cash balance in the sewer operation fund would be about \$175,668.

He recommends that communities the size of Clark Township have a cash balance equivalent to cover 12 months of operations. A cash

Turn to page 8: Sewer

The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

359 Reagon Street, PO Box 277, Saint Ignace, MI 49781

Telephone (906) 643-9150 • Facsimile (906) 643-9122

www.SaintIgnaceNews.com

USPS Periodical Publication Number - 462-380

ESTABLISHED 1878

Published each Thursday at Saint Ignace, Mackinac County, Michigan

Entered in Saint Ignace, Michigan Post Office as Periodical Mail Matter, Act of March 3, 1879

Periodical Postage Paid at Saint Ignace, MI • Additional Postage Paid at Gaylord, MI

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to St. Ignace News, PO Box 277, St. Ignace, MI 49781

Volume 129, Number 22 Thursday, September 4, 2008

Publisher/Editor

Wesley H. Maurer, Jr.

Associate Publisher

Mary R. Maurer

Publisher 1975-1995

Wesley H. Maurer, Sr. (1897-1995)

Editor

Ellen Paquin, news@saintignacenews.com

Staff Writers

Ryan Schlehber, ryan@saintignacenews.com

Karen Gould, karen@saintignacenews.com

Paul Gingras, paul@saintignacenews.com

Advertising Department

Tammy Matson, David Movalson

ads@saintignacenews.com

Print Shop Manager

Sherry Cece

Circulation Manager

Wendy Colegrove



Subscriptions:

\$42 in Mackinac, Chippewa, Emmet, Luce, and Cheboygan counties.

\$52 elsewhere in the United States and military post offices.

\$35 for the Web edition at www.saintignacenews.com

We take Visa, MasterCard, and Discover

The quotation under the flag of *The St. Ignace News* on Page 1 is from the 10 triads written by Dr. Fred Newton Scott, creator and teacher of the first continuous course in journalism in the United States at the University of Michigan in 1890. The 10 triads are chiseled on the parapet of the Detroit News Building at 615 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit. They were headed "Ideals of the Press" or "The Newspaper in a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.