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Dallas parents criticize board's stand on survey

Parents of Dallas School District students leveled criticism at the Feb. 9 school board meeting. The latest controversy deals primarily with the opposition the school district's food committee is receiving from the directors in the committee's attempt to distribute a food survey questionnaire dealing with the school's food service, Custom Management, Inc.

Members of the food committee are volunteers and a number of them are parents of elementary students. They want only to circulate the survey to all students in order to receive first hand evaluation from those served by the food service. The committee's plan was turned down by the board members who said it would serve no purpose.

However, the numerous comments made by parents at the meeting did not support the board's theory.

Mrs. Shirley Gingo, a food committee member, explained that her group volunteered their time preparing the survey. She told board members that there is a problem with the food service as there are a lot of irate parents and uneasy students. She complained that her group is being ignored by the board and she requested a meeting with the entire school board.

Director Harry Lefko stated that this was the first time the committee had asked to meet with the board. Mrs. Gingo reminded the large crowd at the meeting that the food problem has the interest of the entire district.

Mrs. Joan Ogurkis, PTO president, speaking on her own behalf said she was annoyed, that her problems were not so much with the cafeteria as with the board's decision to set the survey aside. She said she wants the survey for her young child.

Board members claimed the decision banning the survey distribution was not arbitrary, that it was reached after consulting with student committees and others who believe things are improved.

Mrs. Ogurkis commended the

food service for sending the menu home with elementary students as she can hardly ever find it in papers anymore. She concluded parents have the right to know and accused the board members of closing a door on the committee.

A letter from Margaret Janosik also urged the board to conduct the food survey as the students are not happy.

A nutritionist, member of the committee, said the committee was set up as a workable unit, not one to be pacified. She agreed that things are now calm in the aftermath of the boycott but that they may not remain so. Therefore, she urged the board to view the survey as a measure to prevent another large 'scab' boycott. The senior high school food strike cost the district \$2,900 in food revenue when students refused to eat cafeteria lunches for five days.

The board's rebuttal was that any parent may eat a sample lunch. Director Gloria Brennan said that children do not like all meals prepared for them at home either.

Chuck Garnett of Custom Management said that 1700 of the 3600 enrollment generally buy daily. A father of an elementary student was not impressed by these figures noting "just because you don't have a riot on your hands now doesn't mean all is well." He began to question the prices the food service pays to its suppliers and the public's availability of invoices. Garnett said Custom pays less for its supplies than a lot of other food services. Fred Croop, business manager, said invoices are available upon request.

Mrs. Cindy Addison took the floor and said "Since I'm moving I'll say I get the distinct impression you (the board) don't want to talk about food. You're not the one packing four lunches every day because the kids will not eat at school!"

Brennan told the large group present "Maybe we'll all brown bag it". No other comment on the elimination of the cafeteria program followed her remark.

Another parent challenged the board "Why is it so difficult to let us know what is happening when one

plus one do not add up to two?"

Newly-appointed Clarke Bittner, who through his experience as an employee of Bevaco, Inc. a food supply firm, could have been in a position to answer some of the questions, was silenced by two of the board members. Bittner said he was willing to try to explain the situation but was strongly urged to keep quiet by Lefko who told him "You need the figures at hand", and by Brennan, who while facing the press area, warned Bittner "Look who's encouraging you to do this," Bittner then declined.

Director Mahmoud Fahmy reiterated his position that the parents should be included in the decision-making as "That's why we have these advisory boards."

A food committee member and spouse concluded the discussion with the comment "Someone along the line somewhere isn't looking hard enough".

Business manager Fred Croop confirmed that he had resigned his position with the district effective in June. Croop will accept a teaching position at Wilkes College. Director Ernest Ashbridge said he was sorry to lose Croop as were the other board members.

Director Pat Gregory informed the board that she will not attend another closed session but rather will spend that time with her newly-established Sunshine Committee. The group will be comprised of Gregory, four teachers, six students and anyone else interested. It will deal with the issues open and above board, she said. The board members may attend meetings of her group as may members of the administration, if they desire.

One of the first projects on the new group's agenda is the state's food and nutrition for public schools. This committee will be called the "Kitchen cabinet".

Gregory said she has reached the age at which she must be herself while still being an effective school director. She believes she can offer more working outside of closed sessions and in the framework of the Sunshine Committee which will tackle the issues as they emerge.



LANDMARK—Schooley's red barn is a landmark in and old in the area as it keeps silent watch over the Kingston Township. The barn is a familiar sight to young countryside. (Paul Strasser Photo)

Lots of action in Mayor's race

The May primaries will see a lot of action in the mayor's race in Dallas Borough.

Dallas Borough's Mayor James Davies will not seek reelection to another four year term as mayor, he stated over the weekend. Davies said his legal and actual residence, in Dallas Township, would prohibit a candidacy. Davies said he would not resort to using a parent's borough address or a business in order to hold the position which he noted he'll miss.

Friends and supporters of Davies will be glad to learn he is not closing the chapter on borough politics. He said when he is able to relocate in the borough, then he will determine the best role in which he can again serve the people, perhaps on council or as mayor!

For now, his residency requirements are satisfactory until the close of the term on Jan. 1, 1982.

Two others are reportedly vying for the mayor's post. Lou Katchko, 90 Main St., owner of the Town

House Restaurant, has confirmed he will begin circulating petitions Tuesday, Feb. 17. Katchko, who has owned the restaurant for three and one half years, will run on the Republican ticket.

Prominently mentioned by residents, a council member, and long time borough politician as a candidate is Delmar Besecker, Republican who sought the office of mayor once before about six years ago. Efforts to reach him were unsuccessful.

The Post also contacted Walter Mohr, Machell Avenue, who is with WVIA-TV, Channel 44, upon learning of his possible interest. Mohr said he was "kind of" interested but would not run against Besecker, a friend. If Besecker does not run, Mohr will reconsider, he said.

Christine Mascali was also among those mentioned as a possible contender. There are three council seats to be filled in the May primaries and to date the only ones intending to run are incumbents Nancy Eckert, Bill Berti and Willard Newberry.

Main St. Bridge county's problem, says Kunkle

A frustrated Kingston Township manager, Mark Kunkle, has fixed the responsibility for Wednesday's flash flooding of Main Street in Shavertown with county commissioners past and present.

On Wednesday, Feb. 11 between the hours of dawn and 8:30 a.m., the swollen Tobys Creek spilled water onto Main Street in back of Cook's, Back Mountain Lumber and Wyoming National Bank. Also affected were the homes of two persons who had to be evacuated along with many who again suffered through water-filled basements.

Kunkle believes these people cannot and should not have to withstand the anguish of flooding. He said it is caused by the county-owned Main Street Bridge which if repaired or replaced would have a larger and more accommodating water flow underneath. Certain correspondence from the county dated May 1, 1980 says "we are working diligently towards completion during 1980."

Kunkle said the commissioners

have ignored the township's pleas and lack understanding of the situation. Asked if a Back Mountain individual sitting on the board of commissioners is the answer Kunkle said "It's not a matter of where a person is from but his understanding for others."

Kunkle who is a degreed city planner, traces the problem with the county to October of 1976 when a heavy rainfall hampered the water flow under the bridge and former manager Mike Stanley asked for assistance. In Feb. of 1977 Stanley and then Rep. Frank O'Connell contacted the bridge department to consider reconstruction of the span.

On July 10, 1978 Stanley and O'Connell asked county engineer John Churnetski for a time schedule for the project as some businesses and property owners wanted to make improvements. Churnetski then said a time table could not be provided as federal funding is involved. He said in his July, 1978 letter to Stanley that all state and federal agencies must be satisfied prior to any movement.

The county engineer was again asked of the status of the bridge Feb. 27, 1979 and chief draftsman Castellino told the township "earliest is next spring." Then it was in the final design stage which Kunkle said is the last step before construction.

O'Connell and Kunkle corresponded regularly with the county commissioners and on Nov. 9, 1979 found out the federal "off-systems bridge program" funding "all of a sudden went to somewhere else in the county," according to Kunkle. Kunkle had been told by a county official it was headed for Kingston Township. It never arrived, but went elsewhere, noted Kunkle.

Then the county did small repairs on its Main Street bridge, repairing a small wall and installing a snow fence.

Kunkle asked the commissioners to put the reconstruction fee in their 1980 budget as improvement to Main Street is essential for DER grants. Also, he pointed out the traffic survey may cause added

traffic on the small bridge. Crossin and Churnetski replied on Nov. 26, 1979 federal funding ran out but road and bridge department will "try to cause the bridge to be replaced." Also, the two said they will try to establish a high priority for the project, a substantial undertaking.

Nothing materialized and in what Kunkle called the "clinger," Churnetski said on May 1, 1980 "Thank you for your letter we are working diligently toward completion during 1980." This was in response to Kunkle's request for specific plans on April 10, 1980.

Again, 1980 turned into 1981 and the bridge remains as before. UDAG funds are unavailable due to the low income levels in the area of the problem.

Kunkle wrote to Frank Trinisiewski in late 1980 urging him to do something as the longer it is put off the more expensive it becomes. Churnetski, Kunkle told the commissioner, is not to blame as he did get a railing for the structure. Kunkle is annoyed the county says "in the spring." He poses the question to the commissioners "What Spring?"

Trinisiewski never responded to that letter, nor to another of Jan. 20, 1981 where Kunkle points out "Shavertown people and township officials have been jerked around for five years now" and warned of the consequences of another overflow. Again, no response from Commissioner Trinisiewski.

Kunkle then tried Commissioner Ed Brominski for assistance, again to no avail. Two days after Kunkle asked Brominski for support for funding the bridge replacement, Brominski on Jan. 22, 1981 promptly replied "I received your letter, any further questions you have regarding the bridge are to be directed to Luzerne County engineer John Churnetski."

Kunkle, who said he is thoroughly fed up with the run-around, last week penned a letter to Trinisiewski noting he doubts if he realizes the magnitudes of the problem as

people go through this every time there is a heavy rain. Kunkle cited a lack of understanding on the part of Trinisiewski and the others which is not in the best interests of the people said Kunkle in the communique written following last week's predicted flooding.

K. Twp. announces recreation program

Kingston Township board of supervisors announced the summer recreation program will be held for six weeks from June 21 to July 31 but not at the new Center Street facility.

According to the recreation commission report, the Westmoreland playground will provide the nucleus of the summer program with Center Street more suitable for races, tennis and baseball.

Applications for the summer recreation program will be received in mid-April. Applicants must be 18 years or older and be certified in first aid.

The supervisors voted to send a letter of thanks to the Kingston Borough officials who provided sand bags for the Wednesday flash flooding on Main Street in the area behind Cook's Drug Store and Back Mountain Lumber and Hardware. Mark Kunkle, township manager, said the flooding was caused by the county-owned Main Street bridge. A larger span with an increased water flow capacity is needed, said Kunkle.

In related action, the township supervisors approved the purchase of flood insurance on the municipal building. For a premium of \$320 for three years, the building is insured for \$50,000 and \$15,000 on its contents. The building runs parallel to Toby's Creek and in places is only about eight feet away, said Kunkle. It was reported that there will be a delay in the installation of the advanced left hand turn signal at the

intersection of Route 309 and Center Street as the supplier said the weather will interfere in the underground work involved in the project.

A street light may be installed on Pine Drive in Carverton Heights after study and an answer will be given to the many residents who attended the meeting, promised the supervisors.

Those requesting the light were Michelle Cassatori, Barry Pizano, Mrs. Santarelli and Tom Welles.

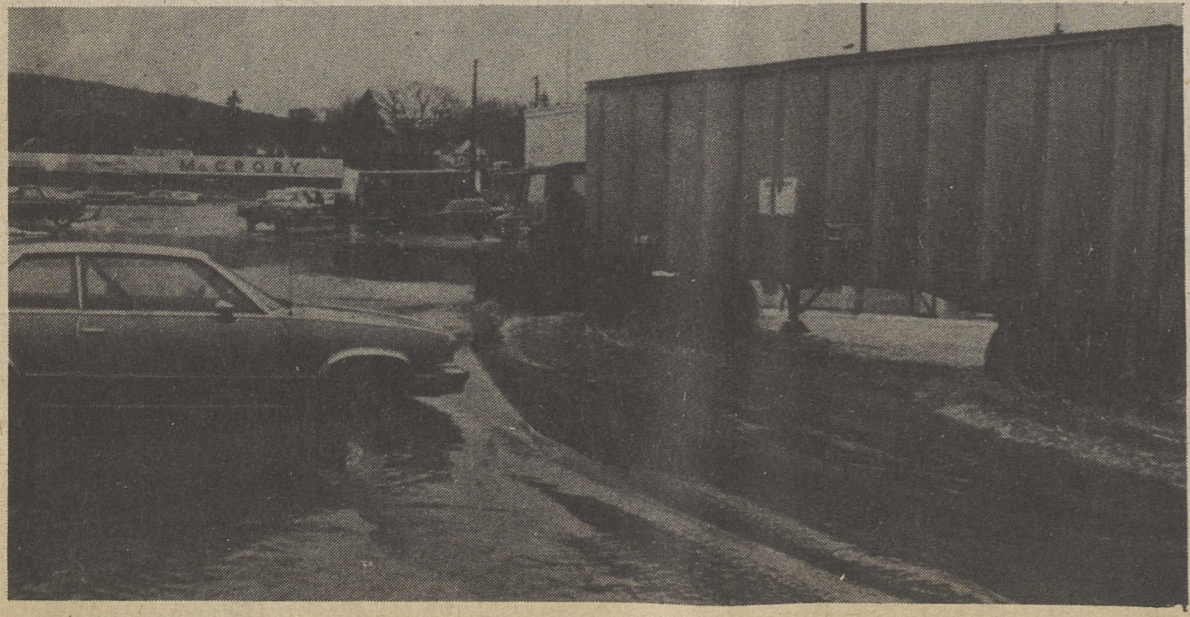
The township will advertise an ordinance to take over Armstrong and Village Drives in Rose Village. A light will be placed at the entrance to Sunrise Estates.

The township will file an application with the Resource Conservation and Development Council for a soil erosion and flood prevention project on Holcomb's Creek.

A special meeting to discuss the use of revenue-sharing funds will be held March 3.

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MAIN STREET FLOOD—Waters from Toby's Creek and Back Mountain Lumber and Hardware. Residents in the area had to be evacuated from their homes. (Mark Moran Photo)