





ABSTRACT

THE TRANSITION FROM TOWNSHIP TO CITY GOVERNMENT IN THREE MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS

by John Hooyer

In 1950, the 36 square mile township of Livonia, Michigan incorporated as a home rule city thus changing its governmental organization from a township to a municipal corporation. A few years later, the township of Warren and the major part of Southfield Township also incorporated as home rule cities. During recent years additional Michigan townships have either incorporated as home rule cities or have discussed changing the township form of government to municipal incorporation. Incorporation of entire townships has been uncommon until recently in Michigan. This study was initiated to study the incorporation process and social and political forces affecting the transition from township government to municipal corporation. The townships included in this study include Warren, Southfield and Livonia, all within the Detroit Metropolitan area. This thesis investigates the factors associated with the reorganization of local governmental structures.

The case study approach is used in describing incorporation activities in the three townships. Information was gathered from newspapers, personal interviews and various public documents. The final chapter compares behavior among the three cases.

John Hooyer

Although various people and interest groups have different reasons for supporting and promoting township incorporation, it appears that the initiation of incorporation activities was intended as a method of preserving and protecting the tax base of the township government, which in each case was concentrated in one small area. In all three townships there were attempts and threats from small neighborhoods to incorporate separately which, if successful, would include the most desirable tax base of the township. (Thus, it appears that township incorporation was used as a means to protect the township's tax base and not as a method of establishing a governmental organization for the primary purpose of providing municipal services to the residents within the urban areas.

THE TRANSITION FROM TOWNSHIP TO CITY GOVERNMENT
IN THREE MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

By 1960, there were 212 standard metropolitan statistical areas in the United States.¹

The Census Bureau defines a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area as: "Except in New England, a SMSA is a county or a group of contiguous counties which contains at least one city of 50,000 inhabitants or more, or twin cities with a combined population of at least 50,000. In addition to the county, or counties containing such a city or cities, contiguous counties are included in an SMSA if, according to certain studies, they are essentially metropolitan in character and are socially and economically integrated with the central city."²

Metropolitan areas are characterized by continued population growth, high population density, social and economic interdependence and extensive suburban development. Another characteristic of metropolitan areas is the fractionalization

¹County and City Data Book, Bureau of the Census, 1962.

²United States Census of Population, 1960, Michigan
U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1960.

of government. Within metropolitan areas many types of governmental units exist. These are townships, villages, cities, counties, school districts and special districts. In 1962 there were 18,000 local governmental units in standard metropolitan statistical areas.³ In the Detroit Metropolitan Area in 1960 there were 55 home-rule cities. Approximately 40 of them have come into existence since 1950.

Studies of metropolitan areas often point out that the multiplicity of governments in metropolitan areas hinder the development of a unified program of action to solve many of the problems which are common to the whole area. Many problems, primarily service problems, exist in metropolitan areas yet the residents of many of the suburbs would rather pursue an independent course of action than join with the central city or form a metropolitan government.

Purpose of Study

In Michigan, since 1950, a different pattern of incorporation has come into existence. Entire townships have been incorporated as home-rule cities. In the past, the approach to the creation of new cities has been that urbanized parts of townships have become cities to solve many of the service problems. However, recently entire townships including the urbanized areas, the semi-rural areas, and the rural areas have been changing their form of governments from township to home-rule cities. Since 1950 there have been at least

³International City Manager's Association, the Municipal Yearbook. Edition - Orin F. Nolting and Daniel Arnold, Chicago, 1963.

six cases in which all or most of the township became a home-rule city. This type of governmental change has taken place in several metropolitan areas of Michigan. In the Detroit Metropolitan area the townships of Livonia, Warren, Southfield and Troy have incorporated into home-rule cities. The others are Wyoming in the Grand Rapids and Portage in the Kalamazoo metropolitan areas.

This study will explore the process of township incorporation in the townships of Warren, Southfield and Livonia.⁴ It is the intent of this thesis to make a comparative study of three communities and determine whether there are distinguishable patterns that are common to all three township incorporations. This study may be of value in understanding the political process of governmental reorganization.

Procedures and Methods

The following chapter will familiarize the reader with the physical development pattern of Warren, Southfield and Livonia and their physical relation to the Metropolitan area. The next three chapters will describe the incorporation process in these three communities. The final chapter will compare patterns of incorporation in the three townships.

The data concerning the incorporation process were gathered through the newspapers and interviews with people

⁴The incorporation process of Wyoming Township has been investigated by Kenneth VerBerg. Kenneth VerBerg, A Case Study of Incorporation, Wyoming, Michigan. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Michigan State University, 1960.

who were involved in the incorporation process in the three study areas. The newspapers consulted for this study were the Detroit News, Pontiac Press, South Macomb Record, Livonian, and the Four Corner Press.

CHAPTER II

POPULATION GROWTH, INDUSTRIALIZATION, AND DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL PATTERNS

Since the 1920's there has been rapid population growth in the outlying areas of central cities. The increase of urban population, the desire to escape the central city, and the technology that makes such escape possible are probably the main factors in the rapid population growth in the areas outside the corporate limits of the central city. Not only has there been rapid population growth in the suburbs, but industry, in recent years, has also followed a pattern of expansion and decentralization to the suburban areas.

Rapid population growth and industrial decentralization is bound to create additional problems for suburban units of government. The need for more and improved highways, the problem of adequate zoning and subdivision regulation, stricter building codes and stronger enforcement, demands for better police and fire protection and many other problems face local governmental units especially the township form of

government. Township governments usually operating under small budgets, find it difficult to take adequate action on many problems needing solution. Rapid urbanization and its resulting problems should be viewed as setting the stage for some kind of community action. Therefore, before examining incorporation activities in Warren, Southfield and Livonia Townships, it would be advisable to trace the urbanization and physical developments in each unit of government included in this study.

A. Location

The three cities included in this study, Livonia, Southfield and Warren are part of the Detroit Metropolitan Area and are strategically located within the metropolitan area. Each is larger than the usual city in area since each resulted from movements to incorporate whole townships. Only in Southfield was a significant township area omitted from the incorporation.

Livonia:

Livonia, incorporated as a home-rule city in 1950, is located approximately twenty-two miles northwest of the Detroit City Hall in the western part of Wayne County. Several main traffic arteries running east and west, link Livonia with the city of Detroit. Plymouth Road (Mich. 14) passes through the southern part of Livonia and connects Livonia with Detroit to the east and the cities of Plymouth and Ann Arbor in the west. Grand River Avenue (U.S. 16) which links

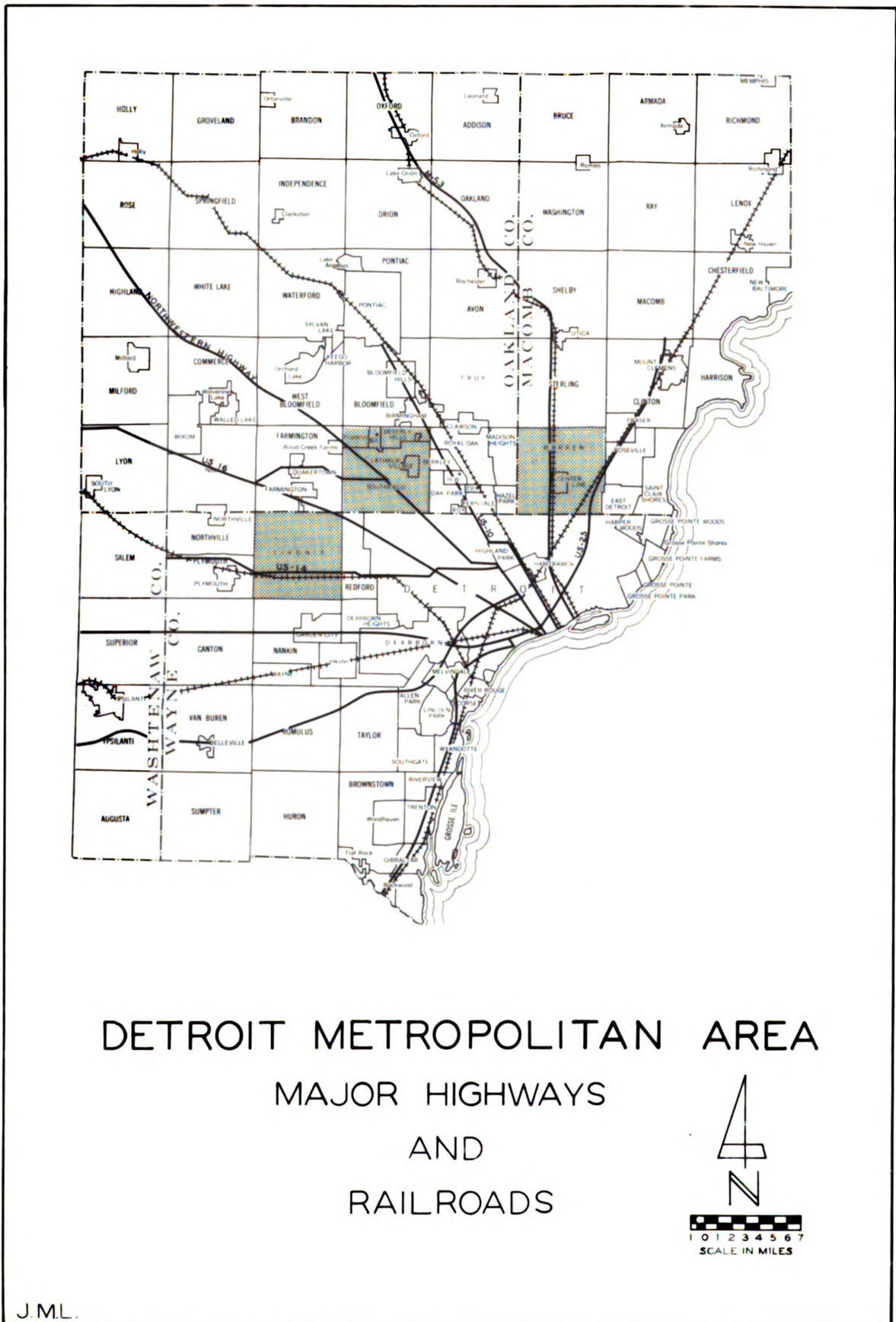


FIGURE I.

Detroit with the cities of Lansing, Grand Rapids and Muskegon, crosses the northeast corner of Livonia. Telegraph Road (U.S. 24), located in Redford Township to the east, provides easy access to cities north and south. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, paralleling Plymouth Road, places Livonia on an important industrial spur leading from Detroit.

Southfield:

The city of Southfield, incorporated as a home-rule city in 1958, is located in southeastern Oakland County and lies just beyond Detroit's northern limits. Bounded roughly by Eight Mile, Inkster, Thirteen and Greenfield Roads, Southfield is ideally located from the commuters' standpoint. Two main traffic arteries, Telegraph Road and the Northwestern Highway, bisect the city. Northwestern, which connects with the James Couzens and John Lodge expressways, puts Southfield within minutes of downtown Detroit's offices and stores. Telegraph Road links Southfield with the city of Pontiac to the north and Toledo, Ohio to the south.

Warren:

Warren, incorporated as a home-rule city in 1956, is the largest city in Macomb County. It is located in the southwestern corner of Macomb County. Its southern boundary borders the northern limits of Detroit; VanDyke Road, connecting with the Gratiot Expressway, gives Warren easy access to downtown Detroit. Groesbeck Highway, cutting across the southeastern corner of the city of Warren, links Warren with Detroit

to the south and Mount Clemens to the north.

As the preceding paragraphs and map shows, all three units of government included in the study are closely related to the central city of Detroit and the rest of the metropolitan area by a number of main highways emanating from Detroit. The strategic importance of these highways relating to the development and urbanization of the four townships will be shown later in the chapter.

B. Population Growth

Since the cities of Livonia, Warren and Southfield are part of the Detroit Metropolitan Area, a brief description of the population growth of the metropolitan area would seem appropriate before tracing the growth in each of the three cities.

The Detroit Metropolitan Area, consisting of Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties, is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the nation. Since 1920, rapid population growth combined with advances in technology has led to the dispersion of people into the rural areas surrounding the central city of Detroit. As shown in Table 1, in 1960 there were 3,762,360 persons living in the Detroit Metropolitan Area, an increase of 24.7 percent over the 3,016,197 reported by the Bureau of Census in 1950.

Table 1 shows rapid population growth in the entire metropolitan area. The growth has been concentrated in those counties surrounding the central city of Detroit. Since 1950 the city of Detroit has been losing population.

TABLE 1
POPULATION GROWTH BY COUNTIES IN THE
DETROIT METROPOLITAN AREA

Counties	1930	1940	1950	1960	Percent Increase Over 1950
Macomb	77,146	107,638	184,966	405,804	119.4
Oakland	211,251	253,956	396,001	690,259	74.3
Wayne	1,888,946	2,015,623	2,435,235	2,666,297	9.5
Detroit	1,569,000	1,623,000	1,849,568	1,670,144	- 9.8
Balance of County	319,946	392,623	535,667	996,144	69.
Detroit S.M.A.	2,177,343	2,377,329	3,016,197	3,762,360	24.7

Source: The 1950 and 1960 Census figures were taken from the United States Census of Population: 1960, Michigan - General Population Characteristics, Table 13.

Of the three counties in the Detroit Metropolitan Area, Macomb leads in the rate of growth with a 119.4 percent population increase between 1950 and 1960. This represents an absolute population increase of approximately 221,000 since 1950. The city of Warren is the largest governmental unit in the county with a population of 89,246 in 1960.

Oakland County is second in the rate of growth between 1950 and 1960. In 1950 the population of Oakland County was 396,001. By 1960 the population had grown to 690,254, an increase of 74.3 percent since 1950. The city of Southfield

is the sixth largest city in Oakland County with a population of 31,501 in 1960.

Since 1940 most of Wayne County's population growth has taken place outside the corporate limits of Detroit. Although the growth of that area of Wayne County excluding Detroit is third in the rate of growth, it had the greatest numerical growth of the three counties. Between 1950 and 1960 the area of Wayne County outside Detroit had a population increase of 410,477. While Wayne County excluding Detroit increased 69 percent between 1950 and 1960, the city of Detroit decreased in population by 9.7 percent during the same period. Within Wayne County the city of Livonia ranks sixth in population size.

TABLE 2
POPULATION GROWTH OF LIVONIA,
WARREN AND SOUTHFIELD

	1920	1930	1940	% Inc. Over 1930	1950	% Inc. Over 1940	1960	% Inc. Over 1950
Livonia	1608	3,192	8,728	173%	17,534	100%	66,702	280%
Southfield	1319	3,174	8,486	167%	18,499	118%	31,501	*
Warren	3564	14,269	22,126	55%	42,653	93%	89,246	110%

*Southfield incorporated in 1958. City of Southfield included only parts of township. 1950 Census was based for entire township area.

Livonia:

Livonia's early growth was greatly influenced by two main highways, Grand River Avenue (U.S. 16) and Plymouth Road. As people began to move outward from Detroit in the early 1920's they followed the main highways leading from the city. As the population followed Grand River Avenue a number of them settled in the northeast corner of Livonia. Similarly, those that followed Plymouth Road from Detroit found a home in southern Livonia. Thus, in the 1920's the movement of population from Detroit was becoming apparent in Livonia Township. However, the migration from Detroit was slow and by 1940 there were only 8,728 inhabitants in the township. However, by 1945 the population had grown to 14,000. The rapid population growth between 1940 and 1945 was due to the influence of people moving to Detroit to work in the defense plants during the war. The majority of the new people during this period settled in the southeast corner where they were near transportation routes into Detroit. In 1950, the year Livonia Township incorporated into a home-rule city, the population had grown to 17,354.¹

¹Technically Livonia was illegally incorporated. Michigan law, governing incorporation, requires at least 500 people per square mile to become a home-rule city. Livonia was slightly short of this population requirement. The petitioners for township incorporation used population figures from the Detroit Edison Company which indicated the population to be 19,220, just a little over 500 persons per square mile. Although the opposition to incorporation argued that Livonia did not meet the population requirement, the Wayne County Board of Supervisors, the Wayne County Circuit Court and the Michigan Supreme Court held the figures given by Detroit Edison Company were adequate. For a more detailed account of this issue, turn to Chapter 4.

Since 1950 the city of Livonia has witnessed a phenomenal increase in population. In 1960 the population of this thirty-six square mile city was 66,702 and it is estimated that by 1970 the population will be 100,000, and by 1980, 160,000.²

The population of Livonia is concentrated in the south and eastern part of the city. The western and northern sections are predominantly rural in character but are fast being subdivided to meet the needs of Livonia's fast growing population.

Southfield:

The population growth in Southfield paralleled the growth in Livonia. Just as Grand River Avenue influenced the early growth in Livonia, the same is true in Southfield Township. As the population of Detroit moved northwest on Grand River Avenue, the southwestern corner of the township was subdivided and settled. In the late 1920's the Northwestern Highway was constructed and influenced the growth of southeastern Southfield. During the twenty year period between 1920 and 1940 the population of Southfield Township grew from 1,300 to 8,486. In 1950, the Census Bureau reported there were 18,499 people living in Southfield. In 1958, the year Southfield Township incorporated as a home-rule city there were an estimated 40,000 inhabitants in Southfield with a population density of 1,000 persons per square mile.³ The

²City Planning Commission of Livonia, Economic Base Study of Livonia - A Master Plan, Livonia, Mich., 1957.

³Promotion and Research Department of the Detroit News, Population Housing, and Economic Characteristics of the Detroit Standard Metropolitan Area, Detroit, Mich., Jan. 1959.

city of Southfield expects to have an ultimate population of about 88,000 if development continues at the same relative density.⁴

Warren:

Warren Township has outstripped the other three townships in population growth. The reason for Warren Township's rapid growth can be attributed to the development of the inter-urban and early industrialization of the township.

In 1920 an interurban line was extended from Detroit into Warren Township. The interurban followed VanDyke Road as far as the Village of Center Line. This means of transportation had a great effect on the population growth of southern Warren Township. It provided rapid low-cost transit to Detroit's shopping centers and industries. It was therefore possible to move out of Detroit and still have close contact with the city. In a ten-year period from 1920 to 1930, the population of Warren Township increased from 3,564 to 14,269, almost a 400 percent increase. During the next decade population continued to increase rapidly due to the influence of industry moving out of Detroit into Warren Township. In 1940 the population of Warren had reached 22,000 and by 1950 Warren's population numbered 42,653. By the time Warren incorporated in 1956, its population had reached 58,360 with a population density of approximately 2,000 persons per square mile.

⁴Planning Commission of the City of Southfield, Traffic, Transportation and Parking Study - A Master Plan, Southfield, Jan. 1959, p. 5.

C. Industrialization

Industry, like the population of the Detroit area, has followed a pattern of decentralization since the 1930's. In the period from 1937 to 1949, a total of 143 manufacturing plants moved to the suburbs of Detroit. While the total number of manufacturing plants in the city of Detroit increased 47 percent from 1937 to 1949, those in the rest of the metropolitan area grew 222 percent.⁵

According to a recent survey by the Detroit Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, 168 manufacturing plants moved from Detroit to the suburbs from 1950 to 1957 and accounted for an employment of 14,611.⁶

Industrial decentralization has tended to develop along main rail lines leading out of Detroit. As shown on the map, page 7, there are three major industrial corridors following the rail lines from the city of Detroit.

Oldest of the industrial corridors leading from the Detroit centered core is the "down-river" complex. This industrial corridor follows the Detroit River southward. Parallel-
ing several rail lines it passes through the cities of River Rouge, Ecorse and Wyandotte. It is this area that was known as the "arsenal of defense" during the Second World War.

⁵Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission, Annual Report, 1950, Detroit, Michigan, 1950, p. 9.

⁶Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission, Manufacturing in the Detroit Region, 1950-1956, Detroit, Michigan, 1956.

Second, with the greatest number of large plants, is the "Golden Mile" corridor following the New York Central Railroad between VanDyke and Mound Roads in south Macomb County. Stretching northward from the city of Detroit it forms a mile wide strip through the cities of Warren and Center Line and extends up into Sterling and Shelby Townships. This corridor played an important part in the urbanization of Warren Township.

The third and most recently developed industrial spur leading from Detroit is the "Plymouth Corridor." Running westward from Detroit along the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and Plymouth Road it passes through Redford Township and the city of Livonia. In a period of 15 years, from 1940 to 1955, the number of manufacturing establishments along the "Plymouth Corridor" increased from 26 to 63. Total manufacturing employment in the same period increased nearly ten times--from 1,500 to 15,000.⁷

Livonia:

Livonia, bypassed by the industrial expansion during the war, was fast becoming a "bedroom suburb." However, in 1948, the General Motors Corporation, in its expansion program, selected a site in the southeastern part of Livonia Township for the erection of a huge hydromatic plant. Since 1948, 25 additional industrial plants have located within Livonia. Four of these plants, the Ford Central Parts Depot, Ford Transmission

⁷City Planning Commission of Livonia, Economic Base Study of Livonia - A Master Plan, Livonia, Mich., 1957, p. 9.

Plant, the General Motors Chevrolet Springs and Bumper Plant, and the General Motors Fisher Body Plant together employ over 10,000 people.⁸

Industry is located along the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and Plymouth Road. The "Plymouth Corridor" as it passes through Livonia is a mile wide strip of land running westward across the entire city. Industry has greatly aided the development of the city of Livonia, by furnishing over 60 percent of the city's tax revenue.

Southfield:

Southfield has been handicapped in its industrial growth mainly because it is not located on any industrial spur leading out of Detroit. What industry there is, consists mainly of small shops scattered along Eight Mile Road. There are also a number of small plants located along Telegraph Road in the southern part of the city. In 1956, Southfield had a total of 85 manufacturing plants but these 85 plants together employed only 3,000 people.⁹

Although Southfield does not have rich industrial developments, it does have a Twenty Million Dollar shopping center. Northland, the world's largest shopping center, (Southfield's biggest tax asset) is located in the southeast corner of the city. Completed in 1954, it covers 161 acres and does a multi-million dollars of business a year.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission, Manufacturing Growth in the Detroit Region - 1950-1956, Detroit, Mich., April, 1958.

Although Southfield is not industrialized as greatly as the other three units of government, yet industry combined with business comprises 42 percent of Southfield's assessed valuation.

Warren:

During the early 1950's, Warren Township was known as the largest, most heavily populated and wealthiest township in the United States. The main factor contributing to Warren's phenomenal population growth and great wealth was the heavy industrialization of the township. Extending north through the city of Warren, along the New York Central Railroad and between VanDyke and Mound Roads, is the "Golden Mile" industrial corridor. In the past few years, another industrial corridor has been developing in the southeast corner of the city of Warren along Groesbeck Highway.

Industrial development of Warren Township began in 1935 when Rotary Electric Steel and the Carboloy plants moved across the boundary of Detroit and settled in southern Warren Township. After these two plants, the lid was off, industry both large and small began to move into the township. By 1956 industry was assessed at over two million dollars and was paying 70 percent of the township revenue. By 1956, 311 manufacturing plants in Warren were employing approximately 42,000 people.¹⁰ Some of the larger industries include Chrysler Corporation, General Motors Chevrolet Engineering,

¹⁰Ibid.

General Motors Fisher Body, and General Motors Technical Center. In 1964, the city of Warren's ratio of industry to residential land is 55 to 45.¹¹

TABLE 3
MANUFACTURING PLANTS AND EMPLOYMENT
1950, 1953, 1956

	Plants			Employment		
	1950	1953	1956	1950	1953	1956
Livonia	22	24	34	579	12,491	13,838
Southfield	54	87	85	937	2,662	2,967
Warren	159	307	311	16,608	38,286	47,686

Source: Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission, Manufacturing Growth in the Detroit Region - 1950-1956, Detroit, Michigan, 1958.

Thus, of the three units of government, Livonia and Warren have extensive industrial development. Although Southfield has a large number of manufacturing plants, they are not of the same type as those found in the other three governmental units. While Southfield has small, shop-type, industry, Livonia and Warren have a large concentration of heavy-industry. The reason for the heavy industrial buildup in Warren and Livonia is due to their location on main industrial corridors leading from Detroit.

D. Patterns of Physical Development

This section will be concerned with showing the patterns

¹¹Detroit Free Press, News Item, Feb. 3, 1964, pp. 8-12.

of physical development in the three townships prior to incorporation proceedings. One pattern of development found in each of the three townships is the existence of small communities within the boundaries of each township.

The term community is difficult to define and there has been much written on what is a "community."¹²

One author, in discussing the definition of a community realizes a community consists of something more than a collection of people, ". . . but how much more is difficult to say. Clearly the ingredients of time, space, economic activities, social structures, personal and group values go into the building of a community."¹³

However, for the purposes of this study, community is defined as a collection of people in a given area. Thus, the term community will be used for descriptive purposes in order to identify certain neighborhoods or residential patterns in the township.¹⁴

Livonia:

Livonia, Michigan's second largest city in land area,

¹²George A. Hillery, Jr., "Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement," Rural Sociology (June, 1955). After studying the problem, Hillery states that a "community consists of persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more additional ties."

¹³Robert C. Wood, Suburbia, Its People and Their Politics, (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), p. 98.

¹⁴The location of the communities discussed in this Section are shown on the maps found in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. For specific page numbers see Table of Contents.

is a semi-rural metropolis of subdivisions, shopping centers, and industrial plants welded together by a dozen main traffic arteries.

Up until 1950, when Livonia became a home-rule city, Livonia was a quiet, rural community. When Livonia incorporated in 1950 there were 117 farms within the city limits. At the time of the legal formation of the new city of Livonia, the area consisted of a race track, one large industry, several small industries, scattered small business establishments, and several residential areas. Most of the residential developments were located in the southern and northeastern sections of the township. The rest of the land was farm land and scattered modern ranch-type homes along the mile roads.

Located in the northeastern part of the township is an area composed of older homes built during the early population expansion outward from Detroit in the 1920's. Known as "Clarenceville," the residents identify themselves with the Clarenceville School District and with the city of Farmington to the north. The identification with the city of Farmington was based on the use of Farmington's post office, telephone exchange, shopping centers and banks. The newspaper which had the greatest circulation in the area was the Township News, a paper published in Redford Township. Although the area is part of the city of Livonia, the people living in the area do not have a sense of belonging to the city. A common complaint voiced in the area is that they are being ignored by the city officials and do not receive the same consideration as the rest

of the city.¹⁵

The northern and western sections of the township consist mainly of farms. The northern area tends to fall within the orbit of the city of Farmington while the western section of the township looked to the city of Northville for its business and social activities. Both the cities of Farmington and Northville serve as trading centers for the agricultural interest of the region.

In the southwestern corner of Livonia there is a little community called Newburg. The people in this community identify with the city of Plymouth a few miles to the west. Most of the people living in Newburg work and shop in Plymouth. Although Newburg is part of the city of Livonia, it maintains its identity. Some of the latest Michigan road maps still label this area as Newburg as if it is separate from the city of Livonia.

Situated in the southeastern corner of Livonia are the subdivisions of Rosedale Gardens and New Detroit. Rosedale Gardens, constructed by the Sheldon Land Company in 1920, was built as a model community with its own water system, and police and fire protection. The homes in Rosedale Gardens are practically all two-story colonial structures of better than average caliber. The residents of Rosedale Gardens are mainly business and professional people who work in Detroit.

¹⁵Oscar Paul Bosbolt, Jr., The Livonia Controversy: How a City Adopts Its Zoning Ordinance, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Wayne University, Detroit, Mich., 1956.

New Detroit, located in the southeastern corner of Livonia, was developed between 1935 and 1950. The early growth of New Detroit was influenced by people moving out of Detroit in the 1930's. Later many people who moved toward Detroit to work in the war industries settled in New Detroit. After the war many veterans moved into the area. The majority of people living in New Detroit work in one of the many industrial plants found in the area.

Both Rosedale Gardens and New Detroit played important roles in the incorporation issue in Livonia. The part that these communities played in the incorporation issue is discussed in Chapter IV.

Since the incorporation of Livonia in 1950, rapid residential development has taken place in the central and eastern sections of the city.

Southfield:

Southfield is a city of contrasts. It has the world's largest and most modern shopping center, but a few miles away on a dirt road is the city hall built in 1882 where the business of running a city valued at over 100 million dollars is carried on. There is a new Institute of Technology, an Army Nike Base, but there also are rolling wooded hills, dusty country roads, tall old-fashioned farm houses and huge white rural mailboxes line the streets.

The urbanization of Southfield also followed a pattern of contrasts. In the south, roughly following a mile and a half wide strip across the city, one finds a variety of land

uses. Older homes built by people moving from Detroit in the 1920's stand alongside of low-cost veteran housing built after the Second World War. Residences, trailer-camps, motels, small shops and businesses dot the landscape in this area. In contrast, a mile wide strip running across the northern end of the township, consists of large, beautifully designed subdivisions with homes ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Before 1950 the central part of the township was rural, but since 1950 the area is fast being subdivided with single family, middle and high cost housing. Incorporated in 1958, Southfield had a population of approximately 27,000 and a density of 1,000 persons per square mile. In 1958 the median home value was \$10,000 and the average family income was \$11,300.¹⁶

Early settlers in Southfield Township located in the northwest corner of the township. The first school and church were built in this area. This small community, located in the hills in the northwestern corner of Southfield became known as Franklin. People living in this community have a large degree of community identification.¹⁷

The main value held by the residents of Franklin is to maintain a rural atmosphere. Coming into the village, one

¹⁶Promotion and Research Department of the Detroit News, Population Housing and Economic Characteristics of the Detroit Metropolitan Area - 1958.

¹⁷This feeling of community identification is strong even with the teen-age population. The Village Clerk maintained that although the children go to the schools in the city of Birmingham, they stick together. The parents never worry where their children are at night, for they know they are somewhere in the village. Interview with the Village Clerk, Franklin, Mich., September 22, 1959.

is greeted by signs reading, "Franklin, the Village that Time Forgot." This value is also evident in the preamble to the village charter. The preamble reads, "We, the residents of Franklin . . . wishing to preserve our simple rural way of life and the identity of historic Franklin, do hereby ordain and establish this village of Franklin."¹⁸

The feeling of community identification and spirit was so strong that instead of joining the proposed city of Southfield, the residents of Franklin incorporated as a home-rule village in 1954.

To the east of Franklin Village, a subdivision known as Bingham Farms, was constructed in the early 1950's. Residents of Bingham Farms subdivision consist mainly of executives from Detroit and Pontiac. In 1958, the median home value was \$20,000 and the average family income was \$14,000. Fear of being included in the proposed city of Southfield caused the residents of the Bingham Farm Area to incorporate as a village in 1956.

To the east of Bingham Farms and located in the northeast corner of Southfield Township, the subdivisions of Beverly Hills and Greenfield were developed in the early 1950's. It was from this area that the main opposition to the incorporation of Southfield Township developed. The residents of this area felt that incorporation of Southfield would disturb the quiet

¹⁸Preamble of the Charter for the Village of Franklin, Mich., June, 1954.

suburban atmosphere of the community.¹⁹

Instead of forming the new city of Southfield the two subdivisions joined together and incorporated as the village of Westwood in 1958.

One reason why the people of the northern part of the township did not want to be a part of the new proposed city of Southfield could probably be explained in terms of their relationship to the city of Birmingham to the north. People living in the northern part of Southfield Township were socially and economically allied with the city of Birmingham. The residents of Franklin, Bingham Farms, and Westwood carried their shopping and banking to Birmingham. They belonged to the Birmingham social clubs and subscribed to the Birmingham newspaper. The alliance with the city of Birmingham was further strengthened in 1945 when the northern part of Southfield Township joined with the Birmingham School District.

In the east-central part of Southfield Township a new community was started in the early 1920's. George Kelly and his wife, Louise Lathrup Kelly, bought approximately one square mile of land with ". . . a dedicated purpose to construct to

¹⁹In a brochure entitled "Vote NO December 12 on Proposed City Charter," published by the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association (no date). There are many references made that incorporation would affect the "quiet, suburban atmosphere of our community," the "ideal residential community," "our 31 square miles of beautiful suburban land," "our community of Southfield would forever lose its treasured individuality," "all of our homes and neighborhoods would become COLORLESS SEGMENTS OF COLORLESS CITY."

colonize, to protect, and to be part of a unique, independent town."²⁰ The new community was named Lathrup Townsite by the owners and was completely developed by private capital. The Kellys financed approximately five million dollars in order to develop streets, build drains and to bring water from Detroit. This area, also developed into high cost housing units. In 1958 the median home value was \$18,000 and the average family income was a little over \$13,000. Lathrup Townsite opposed township incorporation and incorporated as a home-rule city in 1951 and thus carried out the early plans of the developers, to build a "unique and independent town."

In the southeastern part of the township, there is an area which is commonly referred to as "Magnolia." Magnolia subdivision, built in the 1940's has a strongly supported subdivision association which takes a very active part in the affairs of Southfield.

The area in the southwestern part of Southfield is known as the "cotton-stocking" area. This area was built during the 1920's, and its inhabitants are closely allied socially and economically to the city of Farmington.

Southfield has a heavy concentration of people in the southern part. Much of the central portion of the city is in the process of being subdivided to take care of the growing population of Southfield. Growth in Southfield is not as rapid as in the other three areas of study. One of the reasons for Southfield's slower rate of growth is due to the lack of water

²⁰Brochure titled "Lathrup Townsite." No date publication.

in the undeveloped portions of Southfield.

Warren:

Warren is the third largest city in Michigan in land area. The city of Warren incorporated from thirty-three square miles of township territory in 1956.

According to the 1950 Census, the only part of Warren Township which was considered urbanized in 1950 was the southern half of the township and the village of Warren.

The rapid population growth in the southern half of the township paralleled the industrial growth in Warren. As people moved from Detroit to work in one of the many industries in Warren they settled predominantly in the southern half of the township. By the time Warren incorporated in 1956, population density had reached 1,980 persons per square mile. According to the Research Department of the Detroit News, Warren's economic characteristics were the lowest of the three township areas under study. When Warren incorporated in 1956, the median home value was \$6,773 and the average family income was \$6,500.²¹

The first settlement in Warren Township was located in the northwest corner. The settlement known first as "Beebee Corners" and later as Warren Village was the first stop for people traveling north from Detroit on Mound Road in the early

²¹The Detroit News, op. cit.

1800's.²²

"Beebee Corners" became the social and political center of Warren Township. However, in 1850, VanDyke Road was built a few miles to the east and replaced Mound Road as the main road leading north from Detroit through Warren Township. On VanDyke Road a new settlement was formed between Ten and Eleven Mile Roads. Gradually, the center of power, government, and social life was transferred from the village of Warren to this new fast growing settlement.

Thus, by 1920, there were two urban settlements located in Warren Township. In 1910, the community of Warren incorporated as the village of Warren. Prior to incorporation of the township, many of the township officials came from this area. Although Warren Village became an official community in 1910, it gave up village status and joined the new city of Warren in 1956. The urban settlement on VanDyke Road between Ten and Eleven Mile Roads incorporated as the city of Center Line in 1925. When Warren Township incorporated in 1956, Center Line became an enclave with the boundaries of Warren.

There are four other areas within Warren which have strong community identification. All four of these areas are located in the southern part of Warren.

First, there is an area referred to as the "Fitzgerald" community. The Fitzgerald area is coterminous with the

²²The information concerning the early history of Warren Township was taken from an unpublished paper written by Gerald Neil, an employee of the city of Warren, 1956.

Fitzgerald School District and consists of approximately four square miles in the southwestern corner of Warren. The Fitzgerald area attempted to incorporate as a home-rule city in 1945 and 1947, but both times it was defeated by the voters within the area.

In the south-central part of Warren, there are two small communities, Base Line and Van Dyke.

Base Line is a small community approximately one-half square miles bordering on the northern limits of Detroit. The area strongly identifies with the city of Detroit. Before Warren Township incorporated, Base Line had a Detroit mailing address and belonged to a Detroit school district. In 1942, Base Line attempted to annex to the city of Detroit but it was voted down by the Detroit voters.

Just below the city of Center Line and to the east of VanDyke Road is the area known as Van Dyke. After Center Line incorporated in 1925 the township offices relocated in this area and Van Dyke became the seat of township government. The people living in Van Dyke have developed a strong sense of community identification. Often, letters sent to residents of this area would be addressed to a Van Dyke number and more than once mailmen would wander into the township offices asking for a non-existent Van Dyke post office.²³ Van Dyke is also listed as a community on most of the official road maps of Michigan.

²³Interview with Gerald Neil, City Employee, September 13, 1959.

In the southeastern corner of Warren is the "McKinley" area. The McKinley area closely associated itself with the city of East Detroit, just to the east of Warren Township. The close ties with East Detroit was due to a common school district and post office. The McKinley area is somewhat physically cut off from the rest of the township by Groesbeck Highway and the Grand Trunk Railroad, which cuts diagonally across the southeastern corner of Warren. The residents of McKinley identified itself so closely with the city of East Detroit that in 1945 the residents attempted to annex to East Detroit. Although annexation was approved by the residents in the McKinley area, the issue was rejected by the voters of East Detroit.

Summary

In describing the physical development patterns in Livonia, Southfield and Warren, an attempt has been made to show the various community patterns found within each city. It becomes apparent that there are many areas within each township which are more closely allied with a nearby city than they are with the township as a whole or other communities within the township. Also, within each township, there were certain communities with a large degree of self-identification. These various community patterns have developed for a number of reasons. School district lines, postal zones, telephone exchanges, trade areas, historic traditions, and a sense of self identification are all factors which influenced the

development of the various forms of community identification. In many instances, even after incorporation has absorbed these communities into one large city, many of the older community names survive. "When the citizens of Livonia call the city hall concerning some problem they invariably identify themselves as Mr. Jones from Newberg or Mr. Smith from Clarenceville."²⁴

In the next three chapters, it will become apparent that these small communities within each township develop certain values and attitudes toward township government and the issue of incorporation. In many instances, these small communities played an important role in the incorporation attempts of the three townships.

²⁴Interview with Mr. William Brashear, Mayor of Livonia, March 26, 1959.

CHAPTER III

INCORPORATION OF WARREN TOWNSHIP

On October 2, 1956, the voters of Warren Township adopted a municipal charter and Warren Township became the third largest city, in land area, in the state of Michigan. Between 1949 and 1956, Warren Township had operated under the Charter Township Act of 1947.¹

As a charter township, Warren began to provide new services to its residents. Prior to incorporation in 1956, the township had weekly garbage and rubbish pickup, black-topped roads, increased police and fire protection, and a beginning of a township water system.

Although the Township Charter Act gave the township more flexibility in providing municipal services, the people in 1956 elected to become a home-rule city.

When Warren Township incorporated in 1956, the population had reached approximately 65,000 and the population density was 1,980 persons per square mile. The population of

¹Michigan Public Acts (1947), No. 359, as amended. Michigan Statutes Annotated, Secs. 5.46(1) - 5.46 (34).

Warren is concentrated in the southern half of the township while the northern half remains predominantly rural.

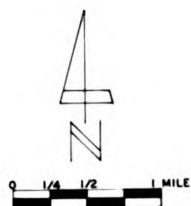
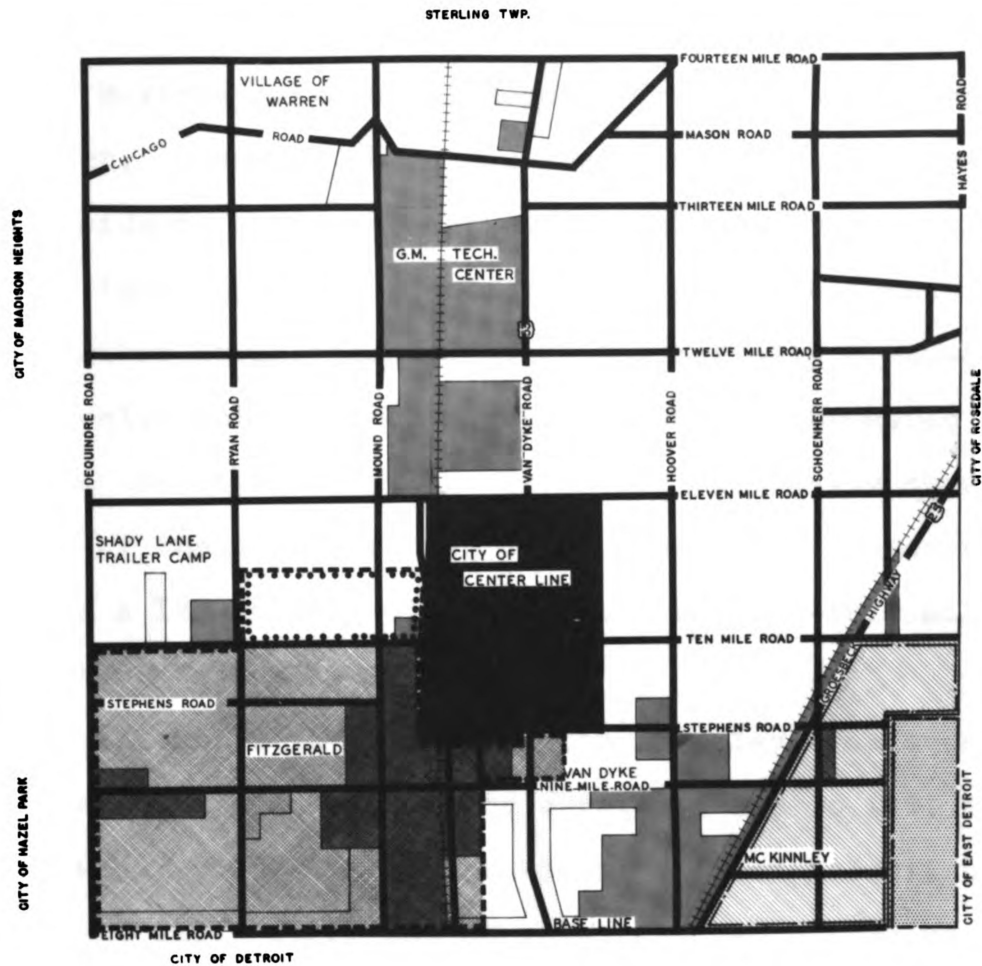
There were two incorporated areas within the township prior to incorporation of the township unit. The oldest, Warren Village, incorporated as a village in 1897, chose to give up its village status and became part of the new city of Warren. The other incorporated area was the city of Center Line. Incorporated as a home-rule city in 1932, Center Line today is an enclave within the city of Warren.

Prior to incorporation of Warren Township in 1956, there were a number of smaller communities which had unsuccessfully attempted to incorporate parts of the township as home-rule cities. There was also an unsuccessful attempt from the residents in the southeastern area of the township to annex to the city of East Detroit.

The first attempt to incorporate a small area within the township came in the spring of 1945. An area, one-half square mile, east of the city of Center Line attempted to incorporate into the Village of Ladd Center.² However, the proposal was defeated by the voters in the area.

During the same spring election in 1945, the residents of the McKinley area attempted to annex the southeastern section of the township to the city of East Detroit. As it was indicated in the previous chapter, the residents of the McKinley area identified with citizens of the city of East Detroit.

²Identified on map, page 35.



J.M.H.

FIGURE 11

The identification with the city of East Detroit was fostered by the same postal zone and telephone exchange. The people of the McKinley area were included in the East Detroit School District. Whenever there was need for fire or police services, the residents would automatically call East Detroit instead of the township fire or police agencies. The identification was further strengthened because the McKinley area was geographically cut off from Warren Township by Groesbeck Highway and the Grand Trunk Railway which cut diagonally across the corner of the township. In 1942, East Detroit successfully annexed a 12,000 foot wide strip one and one-half miles long from the McKinley area.

Although the voters of the McKinley area overwhelmingly approved of the annexation by a vote of 235 to 108, the proposal was turned down by the voters of East Detroit by a vote of 247 to 212. There was no vote required by the rest of the township because East Detroit had a population of less than 15,000. Michigan law provides that in case of annexation to a city of less than 15,000, the electors in the balance of the township have no vote.³

The second attempt to incorporate a small community within the township boundaries came in November, 1947, when the Fitzgerald community attempted to incorporate into the city of Dodge.

The Fitzgerald area, approximately five square miles,

³Michigan Statutes Annotated, Sec. 5.2088; Home Rule City Act, Sec. 9, as amended.

is located in the southwestern corner of Warren. The area is bounded by cities on the west and south, by a rural area on the north and by an industrial belt on the east. In 1949, the population in this area was approximately 6,000 people. The majority of the workers in this area were employed in one of the many industries found in the area. Over the years strained relations had developed between the people living in the Fitzgerald area and the Warren Township Board. The strained relations between the Fitzgerald area and the township board developed over the existence of a trailer-park located in the Fitzgerald School District. In 1943, the township board granted permission for a trailer-park to be built in the Fitzgerald School District over the protest of the people living in the area. Since 1943, the location of the trailer-park has been an important issue with the people in the Fitzgerald area who wanted the trailer-park removed. Although a number of meetings were held between township officials and the residents of the area, the township board refused to reconsider its decision. In effect, this issue united the people in the Fitzgerald area into a cohesive, well organized community.

It is probable that dissatisfaction with the township board led the residents of Fitzgerald to attempt to divorce itself from the township. However, the incorporation attempt in 1947 was defeated by the voters of the Fitzgerald area.

In 1949 another attempt was made to incorporate the

Fitzgerald School District into the city of Fitzgerald. Leadership of both incorporation attempts was centered in the Fitzgerald Civic Council. In attempting to promote the incorporation proposals, the Civic Council sponsored a number of public meetings throughout the Fitzgerald School District. In both the 1947 and 1949 incorporation attempts, the same arguments were used by the proponents of the issue. These arguments were:

1. Although the Fitzgerald area consisted of only 11 percent of the township area and had only 14 percent of the township's population, yet they paid 24 percent of the township taxes.
2. Incorporation would be a means to receive better fire and police protection.
3. Industry would pay 85 percent of the taxes of the new city.

The proposal to incorporate the Fitzgerald area resulted in heavy opposition from groups in the rest of the township. The organizations which opposed the Fitzgerald incorporation attempts were the South Warren Township Businessmen Association, the Farm Owners Association, the home owners of School District No. 7, and in 1949 the Charter Township Committee fought the proposal. The main reason why these organizations fought the Fitzgerald incorporation proposals was the fear of losing the valuable industrial valuation which was included in the boundary description of the proposed city of Dodge and Fitzgerald. Included within the boundaries of

the proposed city of Dodge and Fitzgerald were such large industries as the Dodge plant, the Carboloy plant and the Rotary Electric Steel Company. A loss of these industries would place a greater burden on the remaining property owners of Warren Township. The organizations opposed to the incorporation attempts of the Fitzgerald area distributed brochures and leaflets in the Fitzgerald area opposing incorporation. In addition to distributing leaflets in the Fitzgerald area, the opponents of incorporation ran a number of full-page advertisements in the local newspaper. In the September 22nd and 29th issues of the South Macomb Record, there were a total of five full-page advertisements against incorporation and not a single advertisement favoring the proposal.

The arguments used by the opponents of the Dodge and Fitzgerald incorporation proposals were centered around the problem of industrial location. The main argument used by the opponents stated that "Industry prefers to locate in unincorporated areas. Therefore, if Fitzgerald incorporated it would lose its appeal to industries which are considering moving into the area. Furthermore, additional industries were necessary to help finance the new city."⁴ As an example, the opponents would point to the city of Center Line and state that since Center Line incorporated in 1932 very few industries moved into the city.⁵ In the September 22 issue of the South

⁴South Macomb Record, Advertisements Opposing Incorporation of Fitzgerald, September 22 and 29, 1949.

⁵Ibid.

Macomb Record, the opponents pointed out that although industry would pay approximately 75 percent of the taxes of the new city, if the people would hold off for a few years, before incorporating, more industry would move into the area and pay even a greater percent of the taxes.⁶

Other arguments presented against the incorporation proposals were:

1. Incorporation as a city would mean higher taxes.
2. A city would mean more politicians feeding at the "public trough."
3. Additional urban services are very costly.
4. Businesses and industry moved into Warren Township to escape high city taxes.⁷

Besides the groups already mentioned that opposed the incorporation of the Fitzgerald area, the Warren Township Board went on record opposing the 1949 incorporation attempt. The reason for the township board opposition was that in 1949 the township board was supporting the charter township movement and did not want the Fitzgerald area to secede from the township without giving the proposed charter township a chance to provide additional urban services.

In comparison, time and money spent by the opponents of Fitzgerald incorporation was much greater than that spent by the proponents of incorporation. Although there is no proof,

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

it is widely believed that industry in Warren Township was opposed to the incorporation of the Fitzgerald area and contributed financial support to the opponents of the proposal.⁸

Apparently the arguments supporting the incorporation of Dodge and Fitzgerald were not convincing to the residents of the area. The voters of the Fitzgerald area rejected the proposal twice within two years.

In 1947 the incorporation proposal failed by a vote of 862 to 507. In 1949 the issue was defeated again, this time by an overwhelming vote of 1,045 to 414. Thus the residents of the Fitzgerald School District lost an opportunity to become one of the wealthiest small cities of the nation.

In 1948, petitions were presented to the Warren Township Board requesting that Warren Township become a charter township.

The Charter Township Act passed by the Michigan State Legislature in 1947 was a compromise between a full-fledged municipal government and the simple township form.⁹ The charter township was designed for highly urbanized townships to cope with the many problems found in the urban fringe. The chief differences between the simple township form of government and the Charter Township form is that a Charter Township has

⁸Interview with Gerald Neil, September 23, 1959. Mr. Neil was a leader in the township incorporation movement and is presently a city employee. Mr. Neil is also the unofficial historian of Warren.

⁹Ralph Jans, The Urban Fringe Problem: Solutions Under Michigan Law No. 26, Bureau of Government, Institute of Public Administration, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1957, pp. 2-6.

power to levy a maximum tax of 10 mills instead of the normal township's share of the fifteen mill limitation. Second, the people under the charter township government form of government can vote general obligation bonds, and third, the charter township has the power to appoint a chief administrative officer with broad managerial powers.

The petitions for the charter township were honored by the township board and the election date was set for January 9, 1949. However, on January 9, 1949, the voters of Warren Township turned down the proposal by a vote of 895 to 562.

Although the township board honored the petitions for a charter township, the township officials were opposed to the change. As far as can be determined, there was very little campaigning for the issue. No advertisements appeared in the local newspaper and there was no evidence that any meetings were held on the issue. However, five months after the defeat of the proposed charter township, another petition was presented to the township board in July, 1949, requesting another vote on the Charter Township proposal. The election was set for April 3, 1950. This time the voters approved the charter township proposal by a vote of 2,318 to 1,535.

The change in the voters' attitude toward the charter township proposal can probably be explained by the changing political situation in Warren Township around 1949 and 1950. Prior to 1949 the township board, with a few exceptions, had been Republican Party controlled. The Republican Party

leadership, represented by the township board, came from Warren Village and the rural, northern part of the township, where the Republican Party strength is centered.¹⁰ Although the Republican Party Township Board had approved the petitions for the charter township in 1948, they were opposed to making the change. The opposition to the charter township by the township board may be explained by the fact that the village of Warren at this time was already providing a number of municipal services to its residents. Therefore, the residents of Warren Village would be reluctant to increase township taxes in order to help pay for improvements in the southern part of the township; since the rural northern area would not benefit by improvements in the urbanized southern part of the township. Since the township officials lived in Warren Village and the rural area surrounding the village they probably reflected the attitudes of their own community. However, in the spring election of 1949 the Democratic Party gained control of all the township offices except the Supervisor's position. The supervisor, Arthur Miller, was a newcomer in township politics. Miller had won the Republican Party primary from the incumbent Republican Supervisor and went on to win the general election. When the second petition for a charter township was presented to the new township board, the board enthusiastically endorsed the proposal. The township board not only endorsed the proposal but actively campaigned for

¹⁰ Interview with Democratic State Representative William Romano, November 10, 1959.

the charter township.

A few weeks before the election, Supervisor Miller "barnstormed" around the township addressing as many organizations and public meetings as he could. The arguments used by Miller in campaigning for the charter township were: (1) that the township would be able to improve its roads by issuing general obligation bonds, (2) that the money received from fines would remain in the township, (3) that ordinances could be adopted more easily, and (4) that the people could vote an additional five mills for improvements if they desired. This time the voters of Warren Township approved the charter township form of government by a vote of 2,318 to 1,535. The success of the campaign for the charter township is generally attributed to the effective leadership of Supervisor Miller.¹¹ The effectiveness of Miller's campaign can be seen by comparing the turnout of the voters in 1959 with 1949. In 1949 only 17 percent of the registered voters went to the polls while in 1950, 25 percent of the registered voters turned out for the election. The proposal passed in all precincts except the two precincts including Warren Village and the northern rural area.

Under the charter township form of government, Warren Township financed many new services. By the time the township incorporated as a home-rule city in 1955, Warren had weekly garbage and rubbish pick-up, good fire and police protection,

¹¹Gerald Neil, op. cit.

good street lighting, black-topped roads and the beginning of a system of water mains. By 1955 the township budget had reached \$2,112,720.00. The township employees numbered 220 in 1955 of which 64 were on the police force. Township taxes had increased from \$2.33 per thousand in 1950 to \$12.60 per thousand by 1955.

Early in 1955, a group of citizens in the VanDyke community area began discussing and studying the feasibility of incorporating the VanDyke area into a home-rule city.¹² The VanDyke area is located in the heavy urbanized section of Warren, just south of the city of Center Line. For a number of years, the residents of the area had been concerned with increasing problems of the area. Lack of adequate city services had been their major concern. The voting precinct covering the VanDyke area was the only precinct in the township which cast a majority vote in favor of the first charter township proposal. The largest majority favoring charter township also came from this precinct on the second charter township proposal.

While the VanDyke citizens were debating incorporation, a rumor was circulated around the township that the village of Warren was also considering incorporation as a home-rule city.¹³ Included in the new proposed city of Warren Village

¹²Gerald Neil, op. cit.

¹³Although a charter township has many municipal powers, it is still considered a township and therefore has no protection or legal recourse in preventing a small area within the township from incorporating as a city.

was the General Motors Technical Center, the largest taxpayer in the township. When the VanDyke citizens committee heard the rumor concerning Warren Village they began to consider incorporating the entire township in order to prevent the largest taxpayer from going to the proposed city of Warren Village.¹⁴

The VanDyke citizens committee formally organized into the Committee for the Incorporation of Warren Township. The committee consisted of approximately seventy-five people from all areas of the township. The leadership of the committee was embodied in a nine-man steering committee. Chairman of the steering committee was Victor Lams, an advertising agent for the Detroit News and chairman of the township planning commission. Vice-Chairman was Charles Ratick, an engineer at the Ford Motor Company. Treasurer was Mrs. Margaret Dravecky, a housewife, and secretary was Gerald Neil, an employee at the Carboloy Manufacturing plant.

Petitions for the incorporation of Warren Township were filed with the Macomb County Clerk on March 22, 1955. On June 15, 1955, the Macomb County Board of Supervisors approved the request of the petitioners and set the election date for the incorporation proposal for October 31, 1955.

The steering committee appointed six other men to serve with the steering committee as an educational sub-committee. Between July and November, 1955, the educational

¹⁴Gerald Neil, op. cit.

committee held approximately thirty meetings throughout the township. These "town hall" type of meetings were held in every elementary and high school in the township. These meetings were held for the purpose of acquainting the people of Warren with the facts concerning incorporation. The speakers at these "town-hall" meetings were usually members of the educational committee or other well-known township officials who were in favor of incorporation. The main argument presented at these public meetings was that if the township did not incorporate, small communities within the township would probably incorporate and take the most valuable tax assets away from the township. This would result in an increase of taxes for the small property owner. For an example, the speaker would point to the neighboring township of Royal Oak and remind the people that it could easily take place in Warren Township also.¹⁵ Another strong argument used by the proponents of township incorporation was that it would be possible to incorporate as a city without an increase in taxes. Other arguments presented to the people of Warren Township at these meetings were:

1. Incorporation would relieve the confusing postal zones found in the township. Instead of nine different postal zones covering the township there would be only one.
2. Incorporation would mean more representatives on the County Board of Supervisors.

¹⁵Royal Oak Township to the west of Warren Township was divided up into nine cities.

3. Incorporation would open the way to a municipal court system and do away with the outmoded Justices of the Peace.

4. As a city, Warren would receive their share of the gas and weight tax from the state.¹⁶

At first the people of the township were confused and suspicious over the incorporation proposal. Many people were so closely identified with their own small neighborhoods that they thought they were being taken into the Township of Warren. Other people were suspicious of the motives of the incorporation committee. They would ask, "what's in it for you fellows?" or "why are you men so interested in incorporating the township?"¹⁷ In order to alleviate the suspicions of the people that the incorporation committee was not interested in their own personal welfare, the committee made a pledge that none of the committee members would run for either the charter commission or for city office. This pledge by the committee appeared to have a good "psychological" effect on the audience.¹⁸ As the committee went from meeting to meeting the audience would ask them if it was true that none of the committee members would run for office. Once assured that the pledge was true, the audience became less hostile and listened more attentively to the speakers.

¹⁶Gerald Neil, op. cit.

¹⁷Gerald Neil, op. cit.

¹⁸Ibid.

The committee's "grass roots" campaign appeared to be effective, for on October 31, 1955, the people voted three to one in favor of incorporation. In spite of the strong campaign only 19 percent of the registered voters went to the polls. The incorporation proposal passed in every one of the ten precincts in Warren Township. The precincts in the Van Dyke and Base Line areas turned in the highest percent of favorable votes while the lowest percent of favorable votes were found in the village of Warren and the Fitzgerald area.

Besides the Warren Township Citizen's Committee for Incorporation, a number of other groups and individuals supported incorporation in one way or another. One of the earliest supporters of incorporation was the Warren Chamber of Commerce. Soon after the initiation of incorporation proceedings, on May 11, 1955, the Chamber of Commerce in a formal announcement in the South Macomb News came out in favor of incorporation of Warren Township. The support of the incorporation proposal by the Chamber of Commerce took the form of financial assistance for the activities of the incorporation committee. The Chamber of Commerce paid for six full-page advertisements in the South Macomb News. The Chamber of Commerce also paid for approximately 300 "vote yes" automobile bumper stickers. The Chamber of Commerce not only provided financial support for the proponents of incorporation, but its executive secretary, Melvin Scheets, was a member of the incorporation committee's steering committee.¹⁹

¹⁹Ibid.

A few days after the Chamber of Commerce came out in support of incorporation the Warren Metropolitan Club also formally announced support of the incorporation proposal. Although the Metropolitan Club did not take an active part in the incorporation proceedings, they did sponsor a full page advertisement in favor of incorporation in the October 26, 1955 issue of the South Macomb News.

One of the strongest advocates for the incorporation of Warren Township was Arthur Miller, the township supervisor. Although the township administration as a whole favored incorporation none of them worked as hard for the success of the proposal as the supervisor. Miller's stated reason for favoring incorporation of the township was to prevent the splintering of the township into a number of smaller cities.²⁰

Arthur Miller's political career began in 1947 when he was elected Justice of the Peace of Warren Township. Previously Miller had worked as a welder at the Carboloy Manufacturing plant. While he worked at the Carboloy plant, Miller was the secretary-treasurer of Local 771 of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. In the spring primary of 1949, Miller defeated the incumbent Republican Supervisor and went on to win the supervisory position in the general election, the only Republican to win a township office in 1949.²¹

²⁰Detroit News, August 17, 1955.

²¹Gerald Neil, op. cit. According to Gerald Neil who worked alongside of Miller at the Carboloy plant, Miller is a "lone-wolf" politician. The only reason why Miller ran on the Republican Party ticket was because he (Miller) had it doped out that the Republican Party would win the 1947 township elections.

Miller was successfully elected supervisor on the Republican Party ticket for four consecutive terms and when the township became a city he was elected its first mayor. Mr. Arthur Miller was later elected clerk of Macomb County. In 1955, after winning the supervisor's position on the Republican Party ticket he renounced the Republican Party and in a formal ceremony he became a card-carrying member of the Democratic Party. However, the Warren Township Democratic organization refused to accept Miller and never gave him their support in subsequent township or city elections.

According to Democratic State Representative William Romano, Miller's political success is based on a well organized political "machine."²² This appears very plausible. When a township grows as fast as Warren Township in a few short years, the governmental activity also greatly increases. If one is in a position of responsibility and has broad appointive powers as Miller had under the Charter Township and later as the mayor under a "Strong Mayor" form of government, one can build up a sizeable following through political appointments. One can argue that under civil service this is impossible but in this case Miller controlled the hiring of township employees through his appointments to the Civil Service Commission.²³

²²William Romano, op. cit.

²³Ibid. In an interview with Mr. Romano, Romano told the writer that one township policeman told him (Romano) that he had to pay \$1,000.00 for his job under civil service.

The effectiveness of Miller's political "Machine" can be seen in the case of Representative Romano. William Romano has been the Democratic State Representative from the Warren area since 1944 and has had very little difficulty in being elected. Yet, the two times that Romano has faced Miller in an election, Romano was soundly defeated. Romano ran against Miller for the supervisor's position in 1955 and in 1956 he faced Miller for the mayoralty. Both times Romano had the support of the Warren Township Democratic organization and both times he was defeated in a normally Democratic area.²⁴

If this is a true picture of the politics of Warren, it is very likely that any issue that had the support of Miller would have a good chance of succeeding.

Opposition to the township incorporation proposal was centered in the village of Warren. Although unorganized, opposition to the incorporation proposal was manifested at the "town hall" meetings held in Warren Village by the incorporation committee. By 1955, the Village had its own Public Works Department, Fire and Police Department, a water plant and a sewage disposal plant. The villagers argued that since they had all the necessary urban services there would be no advantage of becoming part of the proposed city of Warren and help pay for the same services in other parts of the township. The

²⁴Ibid. According to Romano, in opposing Miller one is licked before he starts since Miller has approximately 300 township employees and their families to start with. Also, a number of township employees have told Romano that they would have liked to vote for him but they had promised their vote to Miller.

incorporation committee argued that their taxes would not go up and in addition they would receive benefit from industry in paying their taxes. The village officials were also concerned with what would happen to the employees of the village. In answer to this, Supervisor Miller promised that he would do all he could to absorb the village employees into the new city of Warren.²⁵

Although there was opposition to the incorporation proposal in the village of Warren, the villagers chose to give up their Village status and became part of the city of Warren. The 58 percent favorable vote in Warren Village was the lowest favorable vote of the township's ten precincts.

Opposition to the incorporation proposal was unorganized and ineffective. There was not a single advertisement in newspapers opposing incorporation. The fact that only 19 percent of the registered voters went to the polls indicates that for the most part, that people were apathetic to the proposal.

There were thirty-one candidates for the nine-member charter commission. Supervisor Miller led the candidates with the most votes, followed closely by the township treasurer, William Shaw. Besides Miller and Shaw, there were four other township officials elected to the charter commission. Including Miller and Shaw the other township officials elected to the

²⁵The promise to absorb the village employees into the new city government was formalized in Chapter 16, Secs. 9 a-d in the Charter of the City of Warren, Michigan, 1956.

charter commission included a civil service commissioner, a township planning commissioner, a township trustee, and one of the township tax assessors. In all, there were six township officials on the charter commission. In addition to the six township officials who were elected to the charter commission, two other township officials and two township employees ran for the commission but were unsuccessful.

Of the three remaining charter commissioners one was an ex-state senator and former township trustee, another was an insurance broker and also a former township trustee, and the ninth commissioner was a minister. True to their pledge, not a single member of the steering committee of the Warren Incorporation Committee ran for a commissioner's seat.

There were two township organizations which put up a slate of candidates for charter commissioners. Both the Warren Township Democratic organization and the McKinley Home Owners Association supported the same candidates for the charter commission. However, only two of the eleven candidates supported were elected to the charter commission.

The Charter Commission

The first meeting of the charter commission was held November 6, 1955. At this meeting Reverend Warneke was elected chairman and supervisor Miller, vice-chairman.

There were two main issues which engendered a great amount of discussion. The first issue was concerned with the form of government for the new city. The discussion revolved

around the question whether the city of Warren should have the "council-manager" form of government or the "strong" mayor form. The proponents for the "strong" mayor form of government were the Democratic incumbent township officials-- Miller, Runey, Dunn, Nicholson, and Tallman. Opposing the "strong mayor" form of government and advocating the council-manager form were Reverend Warneke, Standley, and Stillwell. The township treasurer, William Shaw, claimed he had an "open mind" but he eventually voted with the proponents of the "strong mayor" group. After weeks of wrangling over the issue, the commission voted six to three in favor of the "strong mayor" form of government.

After the charter commission had decided in favor of the mayor form of government, the Warren Chamber of Commerce came out for the "council-manager" form of government. During the next five months the Chamber of Commerce attempted to mobilize public opinion in favor of the "council-manager" form of government. At one time the Chamber of Commerce sent out 14,000 post-card questionnaires asking the residents of Warren Township to state their preference concerning the form of government. With a response of only 1,756 post-cards, the questionnaires showed 1,002 votes for the "council-manager" government and 754 votes for the "mayor" form of government. This action on the part of the Chamber of Commerce embarrassed the charter commission. Supervisor Miller criticized the Chamber of Commerce and told them that the charter commission would decide on the form of government and not the Chamber of

Commerce.

In June, 1956, the Warren Community Council was organized and joined the Chamber of Commerce in the fight for the "council-manager" form of government. The Warren Community Council was an organization consisting of representatives from the various churches, civic, and service clubs of Warren Township. Victor Lams, who was chairman of the Warren Township Incorporation Committee, was also chairman of the Community Council. Other organizations which made a stand for the manager form of government were the McKinley Home Owners Association and an organization from Warren Village. In spite of all the opposition to the "strong mayor" form of government, the charter commission stood firm and refused to reverse its decision concerning the form of government.

The second major issue which faced the charter commission was whether to have the city clerk and treasurer appointed or elected. In favor of having the city clerk and treasurer appointed were Miller, Dunn, Warneke, and Standley. Opposed to appointment and in favor of having the positions elective were Shaw, Tallman, Runey, Stillwell and Nicholson. Thus, the line-up was five commissioners in favor of appointment to these positions. The issue was not decided until a few weeks before the last meeting of the charter commission. Three weeks before the last commission meeting, Shaw and Runey were absent from the meeting. At this meeting the proponents of having the city clerk and treasurer appointed, forced the issue to a vote. By a four to three vote the city clerk and treasurer became

appointive. When Shaw, the township treasurer, heard of this maneuver he was furious and charged the commission of railroad-ing the issue through purposely when he and Runey were absent. At the next meeting a motion by Shaw was carried and the issue was reconsidered. This time by a vote of five to four the city clerk and treasurer became elective positions.

The Warren Community Council backed the proponents of having the clerk and treasurer's position elective. According to the Council, the election of these positions would be more democratic than having them appointed. The Township Clerk, Mrs. Hildegarde Lowe, was also in favor of having the clerk and treasurer elected. According to Mrs. Lowe, "I would rather have the public as my boss instead of being accountable to only one man."²⁶

The finished charter for the city of Warren provided for election-at-large, a "strong mayor" form of government, non-partisan elections, and the positions of clerk and treasurer being elective.

The election for the adoption of the charter was set for October 2, 1956. There was very little campaigning either for or against the adoption of the charter. What campaigning there was for the charter took the form of small advertisements in the South Macomb Record, by candidates running for one of the city offices.

A week before the charter vote, the Warren Community

²⁶Interview with Mrs. Lowe, Warren City Clerk, September 22, 1959.

Council questioned the eligibility of ten of the eighty-six candidates running for office. The Community Council threatened court action to stop the election if certain candidates were not removed from the ballot. The Community Council based their objections to certain candidates on the grounds that some candidates did not qualify to run according to charter requirements. However, since the charter had not yet been accepted, their objections had no legal grounds. Mrs. Maxine Pflanzner, Secretary of the Warren Community Council, charged that "apparently the plan is to let candidates who cannot hold office run anyway so that the incumbent 'machine' can walk away with the election."²⁷

On October 2, 1956, the voters of Warren Township approved the new charter by a vote of 6,410 to 1,342. The charter received a favorable vote in every one of the twenty-five precincts.

The incumbent Democratic township officials, the supervisor, clerk and treasurer were elected to similar positions in the new city of Warren. Supervisor Miller was elected Mayor by a 3,000 vote margin over his opponent, State Representative Romano. Mrs. Lowe, the township clerk, was elected city clerk and William Shaw was elected treasurer.

There were fifty-eight candidates running for the nine seats on the city council. Of the six charter commissioners who chose to run for city office, all were successful. Besides Miller and Shaw, three of the charter commissioners were elected

²⁷South Macomb Record, Sept. 21, 1956. News item.

to the city council. Another commissioner was elected municipal judge, while another commissioner was appointed by Miller to be the city tax assessor.

The only organization which slated candidates for positions in the new city government was the Warren Township Democratic organization. Although the Warren municipal elections are non-partisan, the Democratic Organization usually supports a slate of candidates for city office. Of the eleven candidates supported by the Democrats, four were elected. The Democrats supported both Shaw and Lowe, but supported William Romano for the mayor's office.

A few days after the charter vote, the new City of Warren was rocked by charges of election fraud on the part of the township officials. A few hours after the polls closed, a Mr. Bernard Guzdial, through the assistance of Representative Romano, requested the State Elections Division to investigate the charter election. The charges brought by Mr. Guzdial were:²⁸

1. Voters who had participated in the previous August primary were told they were not registered for the October 3, 1956 election.
2. Absentee voters did not live at the addresses listed.
3. Voters in line at 8:00 p.m. were not permitted to vote.

²⁸Detroit News, October 4, 1956.

4. Persons whose registration had lapsed were permitted to vote.

Shortly after the polls closed, a team of election investigators from the State Elections Division appeared in Warren and seized the ballots and took them to Lansing where they were microfilmed. Mrs. Lowe, the township clerk, was upset at the charges. She charged that the controversy was started by Mr. Guzdial because he was defeated for councilman. According to Mrs. Lowe, "he (Mr. Guzdial) was just plain mad and is trying to get back."²⁹ Mr. Guzdial admitted that he was the instigator of the charges but not because he was a loser, but because he was convinced of election irregularities.³⁰ Mrs. Lowe threatened "if the state investigation proves that there has been no serious violation, I intend to propose court action against anyone who has made false accusations for political reasons."³¹ However, a preliminary investigation by the State Elections Division found a number of voting irregularities concerning the charter election.

A few days later two other citizens of Warren, Robert Sinclair and Harry Tacina, also brought charges of voting irregularities against the township officials. They presented their charges directly to the Attorney General of the State of Michigan in hopes that the Attorney General would bring their case to the Supreme Court. According to Mr. Sinclair, the reason why

²⁹Ibid., Oct. 14, 1956.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., Oct. 16, 1956.

they appealed directly to the Supreme Court was that they felt the cause of justice would stand a better chance in the Supreme Court than in the Circuit Court of Macomb County.³²

The charges made by Sinclair and Tacina were substantially the same as the charges made by Guzdial except that Sinclair and Tacina wanted the charter election annulled on grounds that a special election was held within ninety days of a state general election. However, State Attorney General Thomas Kavanaugh refused to intercede before the Supreme Court on behalf of Sinclair and Tacina.

The State Elections Division continued to investigate charges after receiving a number of letters from citizens in Warren asking that the investigation be continued.³³

The investigation centered in the sixteenth precinct which is located in the Van Dyke area. In this precinct, state investigators found ten instances where non-existent people had voted absentee ballots. These non-existent people all had the same address. The address turned out to be a vacant house owned by a real estate broker by the name of Irving Little.³⁴

Irving Little was a controversial figure in Warren politics. He can probably best be described as a "veteran

³²Interview with Mr. Robert Sinclair, November 9, 1959.

³³Interview with Mr. Robert Montgomery, Head of the State Elections Division, November 9, 1959.

³⁴This information is on file in the office of the State Elections Division.

township politician."³⁵ Irving Little was president of the Van Dyke School Board located in the sixteenth precinct. He was also a former Warren Township Trustee. Little was also elected to the new city council in spite of a provision in the charter which prohibited elected school and county officials to run for a city office.³⁶

The evidence found by the State Elections Division was given to the State Department and from there presented to the Attorney General. On December 18, 1956, the Attorney General called for a Grand Jury to investigate the election practices in Warren. Three months later, Irving Little was indicted by the Grand Jury and bound over to stand trial in the Macomb County Circuit Court.

Also indicted by the Grand Jury was another township official, Louis Kelsey, a former township trustee and a member of Warren's city council was indicted for perjury concerning his knowledge of election irregularities. However, Kelsey was later on acquitted of the charge by the Macomb County Circuit Court.

The township clerk, Mrs. Lowe, was reprimanded by the State Elections Division for using a rubber stamp signature on registration cards. Also, she did not require an affidavit or other proof of the identity and residence of people whom she registered.

³⁵Detroit News, Oct. 14, 1956.

³⁶Charter of the City of Warren, Michigan, adopted October 3, 1956. Chapter 4, Section 4.3.

The charter election was declared valid since there was no evidence that the election irregularities would have affected the outcome of the charter election in any form. Thus, the city of Warren began its life under rather scandalous circumstances.

CHAPTER IV

INCORPORATION OF SOUTHFIELD TOWNSHIP

Southfield Township, Oakland County, is located just beyond the City of Detroit's northern limits. The township in 1950 consisted of 36 square miles and was bounded by Eight Mile Road on the south, Greenfield Road on the east, Fourteen Mile Road on the north and Inkster Road on the west. Bordering Southfield Township on the east were the cities of Berkley and Oak Park; on the south, the city of Detroit; while the city of Birmingham was to the northwest, and the township of Farmington was Southfield's neighbor to the west.

The history of Southfield Township since 1950 illustrates how an urbanized township can be carved into a number of separate home rule communities. Instead of being drawn together by the proposal of becoming one large city, the development among Southfield Township communities has been to separate, with each community going its own way. In the eight years between 1950 and 1958, Southfield was divided into five home rule communities--two cities and three villages. The three home-rule villages, Bingham Farms, Franklin, and Westwood, are located just to the north of the city of Southfield

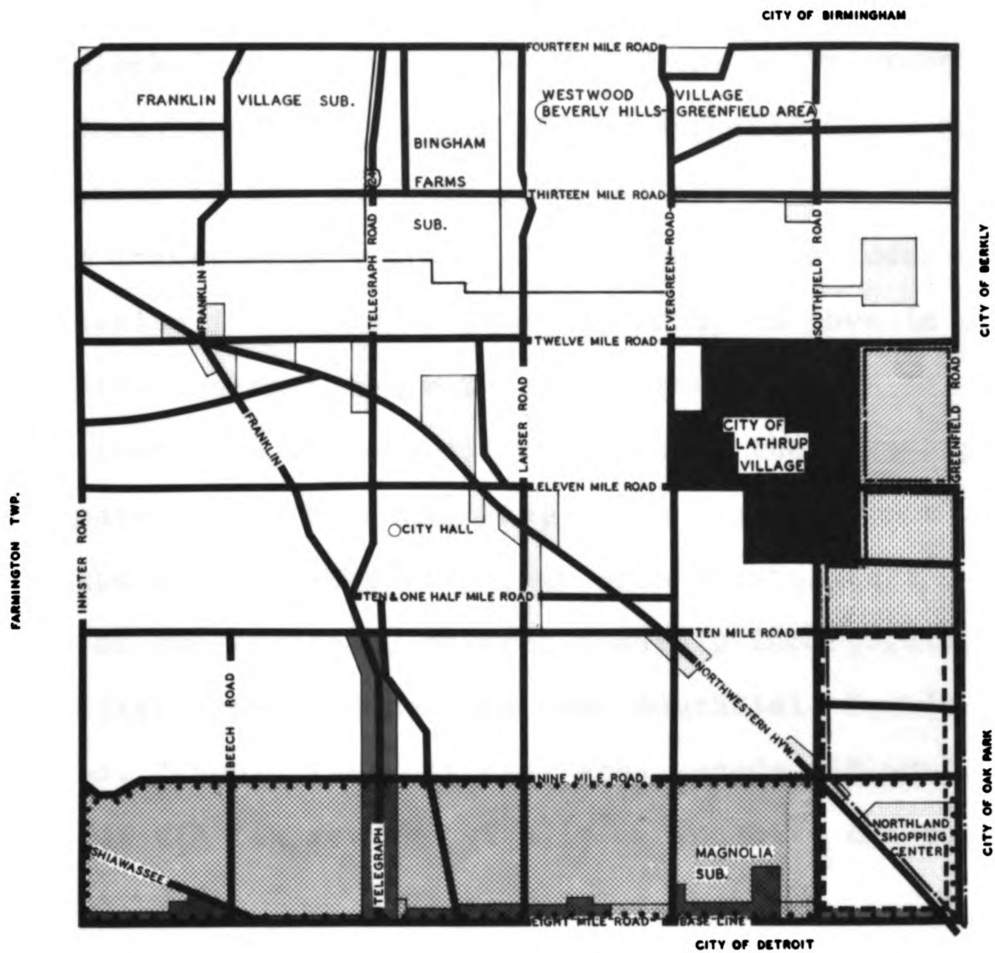
and comprise what is left of Southfield Township. Of the two cities, Southfield is the larger with twenty-six of the original thirty-six square miles of Southfield Township. The city of Lathrup Village, located in the central eastern part of the original Southfield Township is an enclave within the city of Southfield.

I. FIRST TOWNSHIP INCORPORATION ATTEMPT

The scramble to carve out the largest and best tax paying areas of the thirty-six square mile township began late in 1950. Approximately a month after the J. L. Hudson Company of Detroit announced that it was planning to build a \$20,000,000 shopping center in southeastern Southfield Township, a petition was filed with the Oakland County Clerk to incorporate two square miles of southeastern Southfield Township into the city of Southfield Park. The Southfield Township Planning Commission reacted to the Southfield Park proposal by going on record opposing the proposal as poor planning. The Planning Commission requested legal advice concerning ways to halt Southfield Park plans. An opinion by the township attorney stated "that the only way to protect the township from losing the valuable assessed valuation located in the southeast corner would be to incorporate the whole township."¹

Also opposed to the Southfield Park incorporation proposal was the Magnolia Subdivision Association located just to the west of the proposed city of Southfield Park. Guided by

¹Pontiac Press, News Item, December 18, 1950.



CITY OF SOUTHFIELD

COMMUNITY PATTERNS



- INDUSTRY
- COMMERCIAL
- 1ST SOUTHFIELD PARK INCORPORATION ATTEMPT DEC. 1951
- 2ND SOUTHFIELD PARK INCORPORATION ATTEMPT JUNE 1954
- OAK PARK ANNEXATION ATTEMPT SEPT 1953
- BERKLEY ANNEXATION DISCUSSION FALL 1953

J.M.H.

FIGURE III

the advice of the township attorney the Magnolia Subdivision Association on December 14, 1950 filed a petition with the county clerk for the incorporation of the entire township. Mr. E. Christensen, president of the Magnolia Civic Association and a member of the township planning commission, said "that plans to incorporate Southfield Park, which includes most of the townships industries forces his group to move in order to protect the industries for the whole township."²

There was divided opinion whether the township should incorporate. Fred Neidermiller, civic leader from the Beverly Hills Subdivision Association, an area located in the northern section of the township, favored township incorporation. Neidermiller expressed concern over Southfield Park's proposal. He stated, "should the southeast area secede, it would take 38 percent of all tax revenue with it and no city can survive without industry."³

The township officials took a different view toward township incorporation. The Republican township supervisor, Dudley Frame, claimed it would be too "uneconomical" to incorporate the entire township.⁴

Similarly, the township clerk, Mrs. Fanny Adams, who lived in the northern part of the township, opposed township incorporation on the grounds that the "populated areas were too scattered to make a single city and that the township should

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

remain the same."⁵

Thus, it appears that plans to incorporate the entire township did not have unified support and that the proponents of township incorporation favored incorporation only as a means to protect the possible loss of the assessed valuation in the southeast corner.

But twenty minutes before the Magnolia Civic Association filed petitions for the incorporation of the entire township a petition was filed with the county clerk for the incorporation of Lathrup Townsite as a home-rule city.⁶

At the January meeting of the Oakland County Board of Supervisors the election for the Southfield Park proposal was set for December 17, 1951. No action was taken on the Lathrup and township petitions because the county clerk was still checking the validity of the two petitions. In February, 1951 a petition was filed with the county clerk requesting incorporation of the Franklin Area as a home rule village.

During the March, 1951 meeting of the County Board of Supervisors, action was taken on the Lathrup and the township petitions. Since the Lathrup petition was filed only twenty minutes before the township petition there was some sympathy for approving the township petition first. However, the Boundaries Committee ruled that incorporation petitions must be considered in order in which they were filed with the county clerk. Thus, the Lathrup petition had priority over the

⁵Ibid.

⁶Refer to Chapter 2, page 26, for history of Lathrup Townsite.

township petition.

As of April, 1951, Southfield Park would have the first opportunity to incorporate as a home rule city. After the Southfield Park vote, Lathrup would have the next opportunity to establish a home rule city. If Lathrup failed, then the entire township would have a chance to incorporate. The situation was further complicated by the fact that if either Southfield Park or Lathrup were successful in incorporating, the petition to incorporate Southfield Township would become invalid because the boundary description of the township petition included both the Lathrup and Southfield Park areas. If the township petition became invalid, which eventually happened when Lathrup incorporated, then the residents of Franklin would have an opportunity to vote on village status. Thus, within a six month period it became apparent that many communities were not interested in having the township incorporate as one large city but were only interested in preserving the identity of their own small communities.

The Southfield Park Incorporation Attempt - December 17, 1951

The proposed city of Southfield Park covered two square miles in the southeastern corner of the township. The Southfield Park proposal included approximately 4,000 people. In addition, the area consisted of a number of small shops and retail establishments along Eight Mile Road and Northwestern Highway. Also included in the proposed city of Southfield Park was the scheduled \$20,000,000 Northland Shopping Center.

The campaign to incorporate the City of Southfield

Park was initiated and led by the Base Line Men's Club. This organization consisted of businessmen from the southeast corner of the township. According to the Men's Club, the reason for incorporating Southfield Park was ". . . that township and county laws are inadequate to supply the needs for our roads, health, and general welfare."⁷

Also supporting Southfield Park incorporation was George Kelley and his wife Louise Lathrup Kelley, the developers of Lathrup Townsite. One reason given for the support of the Kelleys on the Southfield Park proposal was expressed by the township clerk, that with the incorporation of Southfield Park the proponents of Lathrup incorporation could point to the Southfield Park incorporation as evidence that the township was breaking up and therefore those areas remaining with the township would pay greater taxes in order to make up for the loss in assessed valuation.⁸

Opposing the Southfield Park proposal was the Magnolia Civic Association and the Four Corner Press. As previously stated, the Magnolia Civic Association opposed Southfield Park incorporation on the grounds that the township could not afford to lose the assessed valuation located in the area. The Four Corner Press opposed the Southfield Park proposal because the editor said he felt it would be too costly to incorporate such a small area.⁹

⁷The Four Corner Press, November 11, 1950.

⁸Mrs. Fanny Adams, September 26, 1959. Interview with Township Clerk.

⁹Four Corner Press, Editorial, June 15, 1951.

In October, 1951, a Taxpayers Committee, comprised of residents in the Southfield Park area, was organized to oppose incorporation of Southfield Park. Between October and December, 1951, a spirited campaign was waged by both the proponents and opponents of Southfield Park incorporation. According to the editor of the local newspaper, the Taxpayers Committee accused the businessmen of sponsoring incorporation in order to promote their own interest and without regard for the tax-paying homeowner. Also according to the newspaper report, the proponent of Southfield Park incorporation retaliated by conducting a smear campaign by assassinating the characters of the leaders of anti-incorporation organization.¹⁰

The editor of the Four Corner Press deplored the way the campaign was conducted and urged the voters to vote against the incorporation proposal.¹¹

Taking the advice of the editor, the voters in the Southfield Park Area on December 17, 1951, turned down the incorporation proposal by a vote of 611 to 224.

Incorporation of Lathrup Townsite, May 14, 1953

It had long been the dream and plan of the Kelleys, developers of Lathrup Townsite, to organize Lathrup Townsite as an independent and self-ruled community.¹²

When the Southfield Park Area petitioned for home rule and others began to discuss township incorporation it is probable

¹⁰Ibid., December 11, 1951.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Adams, loc. cit.

that the Kelleys decided it was time to act in order to fulfill their own dream of incorporation before Lathrup found itself a part of another city. As indicated before, the Lathrup petitions for home rule were filed twenty minutes before the township petitions.

Although the Lathrup petition for incorporation was filed December, 1950, the vote on the issue was not held until May 14, 1953. The delay of almost three years was due in part to a special census of the Lathrup Townsite to determine whether Lathrup met the necessary population requirements for a home rule city. The special census revealed that Lathrup had a population of 2155 and therefore met the required five-hundred persons per square mile.¹³ Besides having a population of 2155, the 1 1/2 square mile of Lathrup Townsite had 753 homes which comprised 12 per cent of the total township's assessed valuation.

The proponents of Lathrup incorporation argued that unless Lathrup incorporated the residents of Lathrup would help pay for the development of urban services in other parts of the township. Since Lathrup already had paved streets, water, and sewage disposal it would be foolish to help pay for the same services in other parts of the township. With Kelley's backing, the proponents of Lathrup incorporation proposal printed and distributed many pamphlets trying to convince the residents of the area as to the merits of incorporation.

¹³Michigan Statutes Annotated, Sec. 5.2086; Home Rule City Act, Secs. 6-9, 11, as amended.

Opposed to the incorporation of Lathrup Townsite was the Lathrup Townsite Association. The Townsite Association argued that since Lathrup had neither industry nor commercial development the heavy burden of supporting the proposed city would fall upon the homeowners.

The same argument was used by the editor of the Four Corner Press. The editor as in the Southfield Park Issue, came out against small-area incorporation as being "too costly and uneconomical."¹⁴

In reply, the proponents of Lathrup incorporation argued that since Lathrup already had the essential urban services it would not be necessary to increase taxes.

Also opposed to the incorporation of Lathrup Townsite was the new supervisor of Southfield Township, William Roeser. Roeser was appointed township supervisor on the death of Dudley Frame. Where Frame was opposed to township incorporation, William Roeser was a strong advocate of incorporating the entire township and thus opposed incorporation of small areas in the township on the grounds that it would result in excessive duplication of services.

After waiting almost three years the residents of Lathrup Townsite went to the polls, May 14, 1953, and approved incorporation of Lathrup Townsite by a small majority of 85 votes. By a vote of 598 to 513, Lathrup Townsite became the first incorporated community in Southfield Township.

¹⁴Editorial in the Four Corner Press, April 16 and May 10, 1953.

With the incorporation of Lathrup Townsite as a home rule city the petition to incorporate the entire township became invalid. Thus, the way was clear for the residents of Franklin to vote on village status.

While the advocates of township incorporation waited the outcome of the Franklin election, the Southfield Citizens League circulated petitions for another attempt to incorporate Southfield Park. Instead of incorporating the previous two square mile corner section, the new boundary description included a mile wide strip across the entire southern end of the township. There were two reasons for the new boundary description. First, the proponents of the first Southfield Park incorporation proposal believed that the heavy opposition from the Magnolia Subdivision was because they were not included in the proposed city. Thus, by including Magnolia in the new proposed city of Southfield Park the proponents of Southfield Park incorporation believed that opposition from Magnolia would disappear. Second, there was a desire stated by a number of residents living in the southwest corner of the township to be included in the new city.¹⁵

During the same time that petitions were being circulated for the second attempt to incorporate Southfield Park, petitions were also circulated calling for annexation of the southeast corner of the township to the city of Oak Park. Oak Park's interest in annexing part of the township was probably

¹⁵Interview with Eugene Swem, September 27, 1954. Swem was a former Southfield Township Supervisor and first City Administrator.

caused by the construction of Northland Shopping Center, which would be a desirable tax base for any community. Since both the Oak Park annexation proposal and the Southfield Park incorporation plans included a part of the same township territory, there was a race over who would be first to file their respective petitions with the county clerk.

The Southfield Citizens League was the first to reach the county clerk with their petition to incorporate Southfield Park. However, they failed to bring the necessary deposit of Five Hundred Dollars required by state law. While the Southfield Citizens League was raising the required deposit, the city of Oak Park filed their annexation petition. Thus, the residents of Southfield Park would have to await the outcome of the annexation proposal before they could vote on incorporation of Southfield Park.

The Southfield Township Board opposed the Oak Park annexation plan and attempted to get an injunction against the annexation election on the grounds that Oak Park's population was over 15,000 and therefore the entire township should have a vote on the issue.¹⁶

However, the Oakland County Circuit Court ruled that the population requirement was to be based on the 1950 Federal Census. Since the 1950 Federal Census showed that Oak Park had a population under 15,000, Southfield Township's objection was without legal basis.

¹⁶Michigan Statutes Annotated, Sec. 5.2088; Home Rule City Act, Sec. 9, as amended.

On September 15, 1953 the residents of Oak Park and the affected township area went to the polls. Although the proposal passed in Oak Park the residents of the affected township territory turned down the proposal by a vote of 225 to 25. Thus the way was clear for the second Southfield Park incorporation attempt. The date for the election was set for June 7, 1954.

At the same time that Oak Park and Southfield Park were circulating petitions for their respective proposals, the City of Berkley, located adjacent to the northeast limits of Southfield, voiced ambition to annex a strip of Southfield Township three-fourths of a mile wide between Ten and Eleven Mile Roads. The Berkley Chamber of Commerce with the blessings of the Berkley City Council initiated the proposal. With promises of lower sewer rates and better police and fire protection the city manager of Berkley attempted to convince the residents of the township area on the merits of annexation to the City of Berkley. However, there was very little favorable response from the residents of the area to be annexed and the annexation proposal never materialized into concrete action.

The Franklin election for village status was the next proposal on the home rule agenda. The Franklin election for home rule status became possible when the township incorporation petition was invalidated by the incorporation of Lathrup Townsite.

The residents of the Franklin Area had long been interested in home rule in order to preserve the "historic

identity" of the area.¹⁷ Already in 1949, before the township and other communities within the township were considering incorporation, the residents of Franklin were discussing the issue of village incorporation. On November 20, 1949, the residents of Franklin heard John Iglauer of the Michigan Municipal League present the pros and cons of village incorporation. However, no action was taken toward village status until after Southfield Park, Lathrup Townsite, and Southfield Township had filed their respective incorporation petitions.

The campaign for Franklin Village was very quiet. The only apparent opposition to the Franklin proposal came from the editor of the Four Corner Press who again opposed small-area incorporation as "too costly and uneconomical."¹⁸

The voters of Franklin on November 3, 1953, approved village incorporation by a vote of 435 to 165. Thus, Franklin Village became the second incorporated area in Southfield Township.

Following the incorporation of Franklin Village the campaign for the second Southfield Park incorporation got under way. The second incorporation attempt was led by the Southfield Citizens League. The same businessmen from the Base Line Men's Club who led the first Southfield Park incorporation attempt provided the leadership of the Southfield Citizens League. However, the Southfield Citizens League was more representative of various organizations and subdivision associations than the

¹⁷Franklin Village Charter, loc. cit.

¹⁸Editorial in the Four Corner Press, October 27, 1953.

Base Line Men's Club. A large part of the membership of the Southfield Citizens League came from the southwest corner of the township. The reason given by the Southfield Citizens League for incorporating Southfield Park was the need for greater urban services, especially fire and police protection.

Opposition to the Southfield Park incorporation was centered in the Save Our Southfield Committee which was organized to oppose the Southfield Park incorporation. The Chairman of the committee was Mr. John Holmes. Membership of the Save Our Southfield Committee consisted of a number of township officials including the supervisor, clerk, planning commissioners, and attorney. Representatives of various subdivisions associations, including Magnolia Subdivision, which was included in the proposed city, also joined the Save Our Southfield Committee. The Save Our Southfield Committee (S.O.S.) considered the Southfield Park proposal as a land grab for the best taxpaying area of the township.¹⁹

The members of the Save Our Southfield Committee attempted to influence the voters by attending public meetings held by the Southfield Citizens League and asked questions which embarrassed the speakers by making them appear unacquainted with problems facing a new city.²⁰ Besides attending meetings held by the Southfield Citizens League, the Save Our Southfield Committee ran a number of advertisements in the Four Corner Press a few weeks prior to the election.

¹⁹Adams, loc. cit.

²⁰Ibid.

Supporting the Save Our Southfield Committee in its opposition to the Southfield Park proposal was the Four Corner Press. Consistent with previous stands, the editor of the Four Corner Press opposed small-area incorporation for the usual reason.

On June 7, 1954, the voters of the Southfield Park Area turned down the incorporation proposal for the second time. The issue was defeated by a vote of 1337 to 906. The heaviest vote against the proposal came from the Magnolia area while the largest favorable vote came from the precinct in the southwest corner of the township.

While the campaign for the second Southfield Park incorporation proposal was in progress another petition was filed with the county clerk calling for the incorporation of the entire Southfield Township excluding the Village of Franklin and the City of Lathrup Village. On May 14, 1954, John Holmes, president of a new organization called the Southfield Urban League filed petitions for the incorporation of the township. The Southfield Urban League was organized for the specific purpose of promoting incorporation of the entire township. The president of the organization was John Holmes, who was also chairman of the Save Our Southfield Committee. There were many members, including the township supervisor Roeser, of the Save Our Southfield Committee, who were also members of the Southfield Urban League. Although the petition calling for township incorporation was filed in May, 1954, the Oakland County Board of Supervisors did not act upon the petition until

a year later. While the Southfield Urban League waited for the supervisor's action on the township incorporation petition another petition was filed with the county clerk January, 1955, requesting village home rule for the Bingham Farms Subdivision, which was located at the northern part of the township adjacent to the Village of Franklin.

As an insurance, the Southfield Urban League filed another petition in March, 1955 for township incorporation, this time excluding Franklin Village, City of Lathrup Village, and the Bingham Farms Subdivision.

When the Oakland County Board of Supervisors met in April, 1955, they declared the first township petition insufficient and went on to approve both the second township petition and the Bingham Farms petition. The county board of supervisors set the election for both incorporation proposals for June 7, 1955, only two months away.

On June 7, 1955, both Southfield Township and Bingham Farms approved incorporation of their separate areas. Bingham Farms proceeded to approve a charter thereby formalizing village statutes but for Southfield and its attempt to become a home rule city, the struggle had only begun.

While a number of communities in Southfield Township were occupied with plans to incorporate their own communities, township incorporation was kept alive by the Southfield Civic Association. Organized in 1953, the Southfield Civic Association consisted of representatives from a number of township subdivisions and service clubs. The objective of the Civic Association was to study township incorporation and recommend

a course of action. The members of the association were broken down into subcommittees, each studying and gathering information on various aspects of municipal government. However, the Southfield Civic Association proved ineffective in providing leadership for township incorporation because the members of the association could not reach a consensus concerning township incorporation.

Leadership for township incorporation came from the Southfield Urban League. The Southfield Urban League was organized in April, 1954 with the purpose of promoting township incorporation. The Southfield Urban League filed petitions for township incorporation with the county clerk on May 14, 1954. The membership in the Urban League was open to anyone interested in working for township incorporation. John Holmes, president of the Save Our Southfield Committee, which effectively fought the Southfield Park proposal was also president of the Southfield Urban League. During the two months prior to the incorporation election, the Southfield Urban League held a number of public meetings around the township promoting incorporation. The Southfield Urban League presented their case for incorporation by stating that incorporation would: (1) protect the community from breaking up into smaller cities, (2) provide a more sensible way of preparing the annual budget, (3) provide more representation on the county board of supervisors, and (4) make it easier to enforce enacted ordinances. These arguments were presented in two full-page newspaper advertisements in the Four Corner Press for two

consecutive weeks before the incorporation election.

Supporting township incorporation was the Four Corner Press. According to the editor of the Four Corner Press, township incorporation was desirable in order "to protect what we already have . . . that is a fine residential community."²¹ The editor also pointed out that if the township did not incorporate, it would be broken up into a number of small, uneconomical cities.²²

There was divided opinion among township officials concerning the incorporation of the entire township. The township clerk and two trustees wanted Southfield to remain a township while the supervisor, treasurer and the other two trustees favored incorporation as a home rule city. The members of the planning commission and zoning board also favored incorporation. The supervisor, William Roeser, was a member of the Southfield Urban League and a strong supporter of incorporation. However, just before the incorporation election Roeser died and Eugene Swem, a retired Detroit school teacher, was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Roeser. Swem became a strong supporter of township incorporation. According to Swem, incorporation would solve the township's budget problems because "the flexibility of city taxing powers would eliminate the dependence upon the county for the allocation of revenue."²³

²¹Editorial in the Four Corner Press, May 26, 1955.

²²Ibid.

²³Interview with Eugene Swem, September 27, 1956.

Opposition to township incorporation came from the Southfield Citizens League, proponents of Southfield Park incorporation. A week before the township incorporation election the Southfield Citizens League printed and distributed a pamphlet which, according to the editor of the Four Corner Press questioned the reputation of the leaders of the Southfield Urban League. In reply, the editor of the Four Corner Press, in an article titled "Charter vote a must for June 7," condemned the pamphlet distributed by the Southfield Citizens League as being a "letter of hate" and urged the voters to pay no attention to the pamphlet.²⁴ The editor in the same article urged the citizens of Southfield Township to show their disapproval of the "smear tactics" by voting for the incorporation proposal.²⁵

In the same issue of the Four Corner Press the Southfield Citizens League placed three small advertisements appealing for a "no" vote on the incorporation issue because as the advertisement read, "you have not had enough time to intelligently discuss the proposal."²⁶

Despite the opposition to the proposal from the Southfield Citizens League on June 7, 1955, the residents of Southfield Township voted 3176 to 2130 in favor of incorporating Southfield Township as a home rule city. The incorporation issue received a favorable vote in nine of the twelve voting

²⁴Editorial in the Four Corner Press, June 2, 1955.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

precincts. However, in the precinct located in the southwest corner of the township the issue passed by only one vote. This precinct voted in favor of incorporation by a vote of 114 to 113. In this precinct, the Southfield Citizens League had drawn most of its support. As mentioned earlier, the precinct voted overwhelmingly for the City of Southfield Park in 1954.

The three precincts which failed to provide a favorable majority vote on the incorporation proposal were located in what was known as the Beverly Hills area. The Beverly Hills area consisted of a number of small subdivisions located in the northeastern part of the township. The combined vote in these three northeast precincts was 430 votes in favor of incorporation and 1258 votes against the proposal. While the incorporation proposal had a 67 to 89 percent favorable majority in seven precincts, the issue had only a 25 percent favorable vote in the three precincts located in the Beverly Hills Area.

Opposition toward township incorporation had been developing for the past five years in the Beverly Hills Area. When the township incorporation issue was first brought up in 1950, the proposal had the support of civic leaders from the Beverly Hills area. However, as small communities began to break away from the township and incorporate as home rule villages, sentiment toward township incorporation began to change in the Beverly Hills Area. At the time of the township incorporation election in June, 1955, there were three schools

of thought in the area as to what would be the best course of action;²⁷ (1) there were a number of residents who wished to remain as a township, (2) others wanted to follow the example of their neighbors to the west, Franklin and Bingham Farms, and incorporate as a village, and (3) others were discussing annexing the Beverly Hills Area to the City of Birmingham to the north. Thus, the heavy "no" vote in the Beverly Hills Area toward township incorporation was probably a bid for time so that the residents of the area could reach a consensus concerning what would be the best course of action for their community. The township clerk and the two trustees who were mentioned earlier as opposing township incorporation resided in this area.

Southfield's First Charter Commission

A week before the incorporation vote the Four Corner Press ran a brief history of each charter commission candidate. The newspaper also included a map showing where each of the candidates lived. In checking the history of each candidate the editor of the Four Corner Press found that six of the thirty-eight candidates were members of the Southfield Citizens League. The editor brought this fact to the attention of the voters. The editor wrote, "having failed to incorporate a shoe-string city out of Southfield Township as an incorporated city to be known as Southfield Park, they are now making a dying attempt to control the entire township by recommending

²⁷Adams, loc. cit.

the election of six residents of the area to the charter commission."²⁸

The warning was apparently heeded by the voters as none of six candidates who were identified as members of the Southfield Citizens League were elected to the charter commission.

In addition to the interest shown by the Four Corner Press in the history and views of the candidates, the township's Democratic organization held a public meeting at which each candidate was invited to give a ten minute resume of his qualifications and views concerning municipal organization. Although the meeting was sponsored by the Township Democratic Party, the organization did not support a slate of candidates.

In addition to approving the incorporation proposals the voters elected the following citizens to serve on the nine member charter commission: F. Adams, township clerk; H. Allerton, township trustee; E. Christenson, township planning commissioner; E. Swem, township supervisor; C. Lane, township treasurer; F. Durban, architect; R. Andes, attorney; L. Leonard, superintendent of schools, and D. Swanson, manager of the Michigan State Fair and Chairman of the township Democratic Party. The voters' faith in the incumbent Republican township officials was shown by the election of five of them to serve as charter commissioners. Three of the charter commissioners, Adams, Allerton and Andes lived in the Beverly Hills Area. Two of the commissioners, Swem and Christenson, were from the

²⁸Editorial in the Four Corner Press, June 2, 1955.

southern part of the township while the other four commissioners lived in the central part of the township. Although Mr. John Holmes, president of the Southfield Urban League ran for election as a commission candidate, he was unsuccessful.

Southfield's Charter Commission began work a week after the election. At the first meeting the township supervisor, Eugene Swem was elected Chairman, while township clerk Adams was elected Secretary.

After a month of discussion and meeting with various civic associations, the commission decided to favor the council-manager form of government. The commission also decided that the city clerk and treasurer were to be appointed by the city council. There was to be a ten mill tax limitation, elections-at-large, and a seven-man city council elected for a four-year term. Although the township supervisor and charter commissioner, Swem, protested, the charter commission decided that he would serve as acting city manager until one was appointed by the city council. The charter commission also declared that all present non-elected township officials and employees would be retained in the new city government. The election for the adoption of the charter was set for December 12, 1955.

Before the charter commission had completed its work, opposition to the proposed charter began to appear in various parts of the township. In November, 1955 a group known as Citizens for Southfield Township was organized to oppose the charter. The president of the Citizens for Southfield Township was Marvin Marsh, a resident of Beverly Hills. The Citizens

for Southfield Township attempted to convince the voters that they would be better off remaining a township than becoming a city. According to a pamphlet distributed by the Citizens for Southfield Township, "Under your township government you have genuine Home Rule. Under the proposed city charter you will lose your Home Rule privileges to a city council machine that can be manipulated for selfish gain by any special interests. This is your last chance to preserve genuine Home Rule grass roots democracy! Keep control of your local government in your own hands."²⁹

It is apparent that the opposition from the Citizens for Southfield Township was directed more toward opposing incorporation as a home rule city than against the charter itself.

In attempting to convince the voters that Southfield would be better off remaining a township than become a city, the Citizens for Southfield Township placed heavy emphasis on trying to prove that incorporation as a city would mean higher taxes. In the pamphlet printed by the Citizens for Southfield Township, over one-half of the pamphlet presented tables of figures from other cities showing that other communities were paying three times the taxes that the residents of the township were.³⁰

The Citizens for Southfield Township also attacked certain charter provisions. The Citizens for Southfield

²⁹Pamphlet by Citizens for Southfield Township, "Your Last Chance." No date.

³⁰Ibid.

Township attacked the proposed charter on the grounds that: (1) the charter provided for no democratic checks and balances, (2) the manager form of government was a poor form of government since only 10 percent of the American cities had the manager form of government, (3) the appointment of the clerk and treasurer removed a traditional democratic right of the voters to elect their own officials, and (4) the four-year term for city council members was too long.³¹

In the December 1, 1955 edition of the Four Corner Press, the Citizens for Southfield Township Committee sponsored a full-page, colored, advertisement against the adoption of the charter. According to the advertisements, the voters were urged to vote NO on the proposed charter because (1) taxes would increase by 60 percent, (2) there were no democratic checks and balances, (3) the council-manager form of government was used by only ten percent of American cities and therefore it was a poor form of government, and (4) the four year term for council members was too long.³²

Joining the Citizens for Southfield Township in opposing the proposed charter was the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association.

As mentioned earlier, the voters from this area voted against incorporation in the June 7, 1955 election. In a pamphlet similar to the one published by the Citizens for

³¹Ibid.

³²Four Corner Press, Advertisement sponsored by Citizens for Southfield Township, December 1, 1955.

Southfield Township, the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association also pointed out that taxes would increase by 60 percent.³³ The majority of the space in the pamphlet was dedicated to show how incorporation as a home rule city would destroy the quiet suburban atmosphere of the community. The pamphlet attempts to show that the only ones to gain by incorporation are the "city council machine" and the "real estate interest."³⁴ The pamphlet states that " . . . if the interests have their way, with new housing development sprouting in all directions, what would happen to the secluded suburban character of Southfield--the very character that makes an ideal residential community for all of us."³⁵

Also opposing township incorporation were two elected township officials. Mr. H. DeMeyer, township trustee and a member of the Citizens for Southfield Township organization, and Mrs. F. Adams, township clerk and charter commissioner. DeMeyer and Adams went on record at the December 7, 1955 meeting of the Southfield Township Board as opposing the proposed charter on the grounds that they wished to see Southfield remain a township. Mrs. Fanny Adams stated, "We moved to Southfield because it was a township."³⁶

³³Pamphlet published by Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association. "Prevent Skyrocking Taxes, Preserve the Suburban Character of your Community, Protect your Future." No date.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Adams, loc. cit.

The Charter Commission held a number of public meetings to inform the voters concerning the provisions of the proposed city charter. As it turned out, considerable objections were voiced to certain provisions in the charter by the people who attended these meetings. The main objections were a dislike for the election-at-large and the four-year term for the council members.³⁷

Supporting the proposed city charter was the Southfield Urban League. In an advertisement in the Four Corner Press, the Southfield Urban League attempted to refute the charges made by the Citizens for Southfield Township that taxes would increase 60 percent. Although the Southfield Urban League admitted that taxes were bound to increase a little, they pointed out that the charter set a limit of ten mills and that taxes could not increase beyond that unless the people voted additional millage.³⁸ The Southfield Urban League also pointed out to the residents of Southfield Township that the opponents of the charter were the same people who fought incorporation. However, the incorporation election showed, they were a minority voice.³⁹

Although the editor of the Four Corner Press questioned the wisdom of the four-year terms for the city councilmen, she threw her support behind the proposed city charter. In the December 8, 1955 issue of the Four Corner Press, there

³⁷Four Corner Press, News Item, September 22, 1955.

³⁸Advertisement in the Four Corner Press, December 1, 1955.

³⁹Ibid.

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³⁷Four Corner Press, News Item, September 22, 1955.

³⁸Advertisement in the Four Corner Press, December 1, 1955.

³⁹Ibid.

was a full-page editorial discussing the arguments for and against the adoption of the charter. In conclusion, the editor decided that the arguments used by the Citizens for Southfield Township were immaterial and urged the adoption of the proposed charter. The cartoon on the editorial page pictured a horse and buggy surrounded by modern technological advances and the caption above the cartoon read, "Are the Horse and Buggy Days good for you yet?"

A week before the election, C. Andes, one of the charter commissioners, published a long letter to the public in which he accused the opposition of creating an "atmosphere of fear" toward incorporation. Andes went on to urge the voters to adopt the charter and later change the undesirable provisions of the charter.⁴⁰

However, despite the support of the Four Corner Press and the Southfield Urban League, the voters on December 12, 1955, turned down the proposed city charter by a vote of 4,925 to 1,929. The proposed charter was defeated in every precinct except the Magnolia Subdivision precincts. It was from this area where the leadership for incorporation lived. In the Magnolia Subdivision the charter was adopted by 56 per cent of the voters. The heaviest vote against the proposed charter came from the three precincts in the Beverly Hills Area.

The Beverly Hills Area was located in the northeast part of the township. The area was developed shortly after the war with housing which cost from \$20,000 to \$50,000. The

⁴⁰Four Corner Press, December 8, 1955. Letter to the Editor.

residents in this area were socially and economically allied with the City of Birmingham to the north. In 1945, the residents of the area joined the Birmingham School District. The residents also belonged to Birmingham clubs and churches. Their opposition to incorporation appears to have been based on a desire to retain their own identity and a quiet residential neighborhood. In the pamphlet published by the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association, a statement is made that if the township incorporates " . . . our community of Southfield would forever lose its treasured individuality. All of our homes and neighborhoods would become COLORLESS SEGMENTS OF A COLORLESS CITY."⁴¹

In the three precincts located in the Beverly Hills Area only 8 per cent of the voters approved the charter. In comparing the turnout of registered voters, the Beverly Hills precincts had a turnout of almost 90 per cent of the registered voters while the average turnout in the other nine precincts was approximately 65 percent.

Thus, Southfield's first attempt to consummate home rule by the adoption of a city charter was overwhelmingly defeated by the voters.

Within ten days after the December 12, 1955 city charter defeat, a petition was filed by township trustee DeMeyer with the county clerk. The petition called for an election of a new

⁴¹Pamphlet published by the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association, loc. cit.

charter commission.⁴² The county board of supervisors set new elections for April 16, 1956.

Since DeMeyer had received the highest vote for the de facto city council the responsibility of filing a new petition rested with him. DeMeyer was the township trustee from the Beverly Hills Area who had opposed township incorporation. A reason for DeMeyer filing for a new charter commission election was probably a strategic move by the opponents of township incorporation. The opponents of township incorporation, who were victorious over the issue, probably reasoned that if a new election were called, an anti-incorporation commission could be elected, who would sit out the two years required by state law.

However, the proponents of township incorporation were not sitting still. On December 20, 1955, a few days after the charter defeat, John Holmes, president of the Southfield Urban League, the organization initiating the original township incorporation petition, filed another petition with the county clerk for the incorporation of Southfield Township. The new petition excluded the Beverly Hills Area which had strongly opposed the first charter. Although Southfield had approximately a year and a half remaining in which to adopt a charter, the

⁴²The Michigan Home Rule Act provides for the election of a new charter commission if petitions are filed within ten days of the previous charter defeat. If no petitions are filed calling for a new charter commission, the previous charter commission must revise the charter and resubmit it to the electorate. If a charter is not adopted within two years or if three charters are rejected, the area considering incorporation returns to township status.

new petition was an insurance in case Southfield failed to adopt a charter. Thus, if Southfield failed to adopt a charter in the next year and a half, it would again vote on incorporation before any other community would have a chance to incorporate.

In addition to being an insurance petition, the filing of another incorporation petition which excluded the Beverly Hills Area, may have been a threat to the residents of Beverly Hills. In other words, the new petition could be interpreted that unless the residents of Beverly Hills dropped their opposition to the township incorporation issue, they could conceivably end up as the only area left in the township.

On April 16, 1956, nine new charter commissioners were elected.⁴³ The charter commissioners with the largest vote were DeMeyer and Marvin Marsh, residents of Beverly Hills and leaders of the Citizens for Southfield organization. Besides DeMeyer, who was a township trustee, only two other township officials were elected to the charter commission, Costello, a township trustee, and Ellsarelli, the Justice of the Peace. Other members of the charter commission included two teachers, an engineer, a retailer, and a salesman.

The first move of the new charter commission was an attempt to elect DeMeyer, a known opponent of incorporation, as chairman of the commission. However, DeMeyer lost by a

⁴³Under Michigan law "all persons who have served on a previous charter commission within one year shall be ineligible as members of every such commission." Michigan Statutes Annotated, Sec. 5.2088.

five to four vote and Mr. Walton, a teacher and volunteer fireman, was elected chairman.

At the first meeting of the charter commission approximately one hundred people crowded into the township hall and appealed for a lower tax rate than the ten mill limit provided in the previous charter. The large crowd caused a great deal of commotion and so the charter commission decided to hold a number of public hearings. Each civic and subdivision association was invited to send a representative to speak before the charter commission. Fifty-two organizations complied with the request. The charter commission devised a schedule so that ten representatives would have the opportunity to speak at each weekly meeting of the charter commission. However, after two months of public hearings the commission found it impossible to determine the desires of the people and the public hearings were cancelled. Each organization presented different ideas concerning the organization of the new city and some came out against incorporation altogether.

After approximately seven months of deliberations the charter commission presented a charter in which the main provisions were unlike the provision of the first charter. Instead of a manager form of government, the new charter called for a strong mayor form of government. Instead of election-at-large, Southfield was divided into six wards. The city clerk and treasurer were to be elected instead of appointed and the council members were to be elected to two-year instead of four-year terms. The new charter provided for a five-mill tax limit, just half of the ten-mill limit set by the previous

charter. The election for the adoption of the new charter was set for December 12, 1956.

The proponents and opponents of the adoption of the new charter were the same organizations which were active in the charter campaign of the previous year.

Opposition to the charter was again led by the Citizens for Southfield Township and the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association. Although the opponents of the charter again distributed pamphlets opposing the charter, there was not one advertisement in the Four Corner Press against the charter.

If the opposition to the charter was less vocal compared to the campaign of the previous year, the proponents of the charter were more active than they were during the first charter campaign. The Southfield Urban League distributed pro-charter handbills to approximately 95 per cent of the homes in Southfield Township. The Southfield Urban League also rented a sound truck a few days before the election and travelled through the entire township urging the people to vote in favor of the charter.⁴⁴ Besides distributing handbills and renting a sound truck, the Southfield Urban League placed a full page advertisement in the Four Corner Press which listed approximately the names of 1,000 prominent citizens who were supporting the charter.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Eugene Swem, loc. cit.

⁴⁵The Four Corner Press, Advertisement by Southfield Urban League, November 29, 1956.

The charter also had the support of the editor of the Four Corner Press.⁴⁶ A week before the charter election there was an open letter to Southfield's township supervisor from the mayor of the City of Livonia listing the advantages which Livonia Township experienced when they incorporated the entire township. Thus, considering the evidence on hand a very impressive campaign was waged by the proponents of the new charter. But on December 3, 1956 the proposed charter was again defeated. The vote was 4,148 to 4,105 against the adoption of the proposed charter. The 56 percent of the registered voters who went to the polls turned down the charter by only 43 votes.

Of the twelve voting precincts, the voters of seven precincts approved the charter. Opposition to the charter was primarily registered in the precincts located in the Beverly Hills Area. The three precincts in the area had a turnout of approximately 90 per cent of the registered voters with about the same percent voting against the adoption of the charter. The strong opposition from the Beverly Hills Area provided the margin for the defeat of the charter.

In a post-election analysis of the charter defeat the editor of the Four Corner Press discovered that five hundred more voters cast their ballots for candidates for city offices than voted on the charter proposal. According to the editor of the Four Corner Press the charter would probably have been adopted if those five hundred voters had voted on the charter proposal. The editor of the newspaper blamed the defeat of the

⁴⁶Ibid., November 22, 1956.

charter specifically on the voters' unfamiliarity with the voting machines which were used for the first time in this charter election.⁴⁷

After the defeat of the second proposed city charter on December 3, 1956, there remained six months in which to present another charter before the two year statute of limitation ran out. In a move to take as much time as possible another petition was filed with the county clerk calling for an election of a new charter commission. Mr. Ted Shirtleff and Paul Reed of the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association filed the new petition eight days after the second charter defeat. The petition calling for a new charter commission was probably a maneuver by the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association to take as much time as possible, for on November 27, 1956 a petition was filed with the county clerk for the incorporation of the Beverly Hills Area as the Village of Westwood. However, no election could be set for the Westwood petition until Southfield reverted to township status. Therefore, if the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association could stall off another charter vote it would be too late to present another charter to the voters. The county board of supervisors set the election for the new township charter commission for April 1, 1957, just two months before Southfield reverted to township status.

Between January and April, 1957, a spirited campaign for the election of charter commissioners took place. The

⁴⁷Editorial in the Four Corner Press, December 6, 1956.

Citizens for Southfield Township presented a slate of candidates for the charter commission who pledged to sit out the few remaining months without acting on a charter.

Opposing the Citizens for Southfield Township was a new organization called Citizens for Southfield. The Citizens for Southfield also presented a slate of candidates who promised that they would "quickly" revise the former charter and present it for a final vote.⁴⁸

The results of the April 1, 1957 election for the new charter commission showed that the anti-charter faction had a one-man majority on the nine man charter commission. At the first meeting of the new charter commission a number of committees were appointed to make a thorough study of municipal organization. In reality this meant that there would be no charter presented to the voters since there were only two months remaining before Southfield reverted to township status. The editor of the Four Corner Press wrote, "no matter what they do, it's all baloney."⁴⁹ On June 7, 1957, Southfield reverted back to township status.

II. SOUTHFIELD'S SECOND INCORPORATION ELECTION

Because of the "just in case" incorporation petition resting in the county clerk's office, Southfield Township faced the necessity of starting the incorporation proposal a second time. The first step was an election on whether or not

⁴⁸Four Corner Press, Advertisement by Citizens for Southfield Township and Citizens for Southfield.

⁴⁹Editorial in the Four Corner Press, May 11, 1957.

to incorporate the township without the Beverly Hills Area. The election on the incorporation proposal was set for September 17, 1957.

As Southfield again faced the issue of incorporation there appeared to be a lack of interest concerning the coming incorporation election. Two weeks before the deadline for filing petitions for the charter commission there were only two candidates who had filed. This situation prompted the editor of the Four Corner Press to make a plea for well-qualified candidates to file for the charter commission.⁵⁰

Although the editor of the Four Corner Press came out strongly for the incorporation proposal, there was very little campaigning for incorporation from other groups. The only noticeable activity was the distribution of handbills by the Citizens for Southfield. In addition to this there were individual advertisements by the candidates running for the charter commission in the local newspaper.

On September 17, 1957 the voters of Southfield voted 3,247 to 653 in favor of incorporating twenty-six square miles as the new city of Southfield. The incorporation proposal received a favorable vote in every one of the eleven precincts. The apathy on the part of the voters was indicated by only 21 per cent of the registered voters turning out for the election. Compared to the 56 - 60 percent turnout of registered voters in previous incorporation and charter elections it appears that the voters had lost their interest in the issue. On the

⁵⁰Ibid., August 10, 1957.

same day, the residents of Beverly Hills approved the incorporation of the village of Westwood by a 2 to 1 margin.

The members of the new nine-man charter commission were Swem, Wuerful, Dohany, Swanson, Maloney, Hollywood, Costello, Walton and Flannery. Six of the charter commissioners were incumbent township officials. The six township officials elected to the charter commission were the township supervisor Swem, Zoning Commissioner Wuerful and township trustees Hollywood, Maloney, Swanson, and Costello. In addition, all of the elected charter commissioners, except zoning commissioner Wuerful, had served on one of the three previous charter commissions. Thus, the new charter commission consisted of a group of experienced men.

The issue generating the most discussion among the charter commissioners concerned the tax limit for the new city. The commissioners were divided on the issue. Five of the charter commissioners wanted a five-mill limit while the other four commissioners held out for a ten-mill limit. In order to decide the issue the charter commission called for a public meeting. The meeting held November 25, 1957 was attended by over two hundred people. After a discussion of the tax issue a show of the hands indicated that the consensus was that the tax limit should be set between five and eight mills. At the next meeting of the charter commission the tax limit was set at seven mills.

The other main provisions of the new charter called for: (1) election-at-large on a non-partisan ballot, (2) a modified council-manager form of government with the mayor

having a veto power which could be over-ridden by a two-thirds vote by the council, (3) the election of the city clerk and treasurer, (4) a three-year term for the council members, and (5) a seven-mill tax limit. The election for the adoption of the charter was set for April 21, 1958.

The charter commissioners were very active in campaigning for the new proposed charter. In addition to sponsoring public meetings the commissioners spoke at meetings held by various civic and subdivision associations.

Supporting the proposed charter was the Citizens for Southfield. The Citizens for Southfield distributed handbills urging the voters to approve the charter in the coming election. The Citizens for Southfield argued that if incorporation failed, Southfield would lose the Northland Shopping Center to some other community.⁵¹

On April 10 and 17, 1958 the Citizens for Southfield sponsored half-page advertisements in the Four Corner Press. The committee reasoned that incorporation through the adoption of the charter would: (1) maintain our boundaries, (2) acquire rightful authority, (3) provide more equal representation on the county board of supervisors, and (4) provide for improved highways, police and fire protection.

The Four Corner Press also came out in support of the proposed charter. The editor also made a plea to the voters to elect a well-qualified mayor "since it is a very responsible position."⁵²

⁵¹Handbill distributed by Citizens for Southfield.

⁵²Four Corner Press, Editorial, April 3, 1958.

III. THE ADOPTION OF THE CHARTER, April 21, 1958

On April 21, 1958, the voters of Southfield adopted the proposed charter by a vote of 4,381 to 1,134. With 31 per cent of the registered voters going to the polls the proposed charter received a favorable vote in all eleven precincts.

In addition to adopting a city charter the voters elected Southfield's first city officials. Donald Swanson, an active Democrat and an appointee of Michigan's former Governor Williams, as manager of the Michigan State Fair, was elected mayor of Southfield. Swanson, a two-time charter commissioner and township trustee, was elected mayor by a 2,000 vote margin over his closest opponent. Swanson's election marked the first time a known Democrat had been elected to the top executive position in Southfield.

There were four candidates for the office of Mayor. Three of the candidates for Mayor, Swanson, Costello and Maloney, were township trustees. The other candidate was Mr. Bullock, a Justice of the Peace. Eugene Swem chose not to run for the mayor's office although at the two previous charter elections Swem was elected de facto mayor.

Patrick Flannery, also a two-time charter commissioner and township trustee, was elected city clerk. Mrs. Fanny Adams, township clerk, was a resident of Beverly Hills and therefore was not eligible to run for an office in the new city of Southfield. Clara Lane, township treasurer, was elected to the same position in the new city government.

There were nineteen candidates for the new seven member

city council. Five of the elected councilmen had been officials in the former township government. In fact, the five former township officials were the only township officials seeking election to the new council. Thus, all of the former township officials seeking election to the new city council were successful. Including the two judge positions there were a total of ten elected positions in the new city government. Seven of the ten elected positions were filled with former township officials.

Seven members of the previous charter commission chose to run for positions in the new city government. Of the seven charter commissioners who chose to run, five were successful. However, three of the charter commissioners chose to run for the mayor's position and only one could be successful. Costello, one of the commissioners to run for mayor, was later appointed chairman of the planning commission. The two charter commissioners who did not choose to run for office were the former township supervisor, Eugene Swem, and Leo Walton. Swem chose not to run for city office because of his advanced age and because he had promised to fill the position of city administrator until the city council hired another man for the position. Walton, the other charter commissioner who did not run for city office, was appointed to the planning commission. Thus, eight members of the last charter commission filled positions in the new city government.

The Citizens for Southfield was the only organization to slate candidates for city offices. The Citizens for

Southfield interviewed candidates for the city council and recommended some as "preferred," some as "well qualified," and still others as "qualified."⁵³ All six of the candidates which the Citizens for Southfield listed as "preferred" were elected to the city council plus one who was listed as "well qualified."

Thus, after eight years, two incorporation votes, and three charter elections, Southfield became a home rule city.

IV. THE ROLE OF INTEREST GROUPS

The Newspaper

The Four Corner Press was the official township newspaper. Although it was a weekly newspaper it had good circulation throughout the township. The Four Corner Press had more subscribers in the southern half of the township than in the northern part of the township. The newspaper most commonly subscribed to in the northern part of the township was the Birmingham Eccentric.

The Four Corner Press is an independent weekly newspaper and was started in the northern part of the township by Betty Lewis and Marion White. The newspaper was started according to Betty Lewis and Marion White because they "lived in Southfield, they believed in Southfield, and they were irked because it was so difficult to find out what was happening in Southfield."⁵⁴

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Four Corner Press, Southfield Birthday Issue, April 28, 1959, page 43.

The Four Corner Press had consistently been a strong advocate of home rule for the entire township, and against the incorporation of small communities. The editor's attitude toward incorporation of small areas was revealed shortly after the incorporation of the City of Lathrup Village in May, 1963. In discussing the tendency of small communities to incorporate, the editor wrote:

This is as American as apple pie and of course thoroughly understood in terms of short range interest of those engaged in the scramble. Each community has its own problems and is impressed with the desirability of preserving the opportunity to deal with them in their own way. Even as they act on this impulse, however, the citizens must realize that the present conditions can not prevail for very long. The peculiar problems of one neighborhood will tend to merge with those of the next and the next and become less capable of solution on other than general basis. The apparent advantages of having seven or twelve governments, where one might have done the job, will tend to disappear. Meanwhile the difficulty of achieving common solutions for common problems will have vastly increased.⁵⁵

The editor of the Four Corner Press consistently opposed small area incorporation. Approximately a month before each small area incorporation election the editor of the newspaper ran a series of articles titled "These are the Facts about Incorporation." In these articles the editor discussed roads, schools, fire and police protection, and other service problems. The editor pointed out that it would be "too costly and uneconomical" for a small area to incorporate.

While the editor of the Four Corner Press was opposed to small area incorporation, she strongly favored township incorporation. The editor of the Four Corner Press viewed the struggle for township incorporation as a struggle between those

⁵⁵Four Corner Press, Editorial, April 16, 1953.

who were afraid that becoming a city would mean an urban atmosphere against those who favored incorporation as a means of protection against the exploitation of the township's tax base. In an editorial the editor wrote, "basically the question is not rural versus urban atmosphere as so many think-- but a question of self determination and self government."⁵⁶

The editor appealed to those who wanted Southfield to remain a township on the grounds that incorporation as home rule city was the best way "to protect what we already have-- that is a fine residential community."⁵⁷ On September 12, 1957, the editor wrote, "this newspaper has consistently recommended incorporation because we believe incorporation is a protection for the area. Under a home rule city or village government we can better protect ourselves from exploitation and preserve, in the face of rapid growth, those elements of suburban living which seems most important to us."⁵⁸

It would be difficult to determine the effectiveness of the influence of the Four Corner Press. However, the outcome of various incorporation proposals show that where the Four Corner Press had its greatest circulation the voters apparently followed the advice of the Four Corner Press and where the paper had its poorest circulation the voters went against the stand of the newspaper. This is supported by the fact that both Southfield Park attempts to incorporate failed

⁵⁶Four Corner Press, Editorial, September 12, 1957.

⁵⁷Ibid., May 26, 1955.

⁵⁸Four Corner Press, September 12, 1957.

and also the Oak Park annexation proposal failed. This is also true of the charter elections which were supported by the Four Corner Press. The only exception was the first charter election, and in this case although the Four Corner Press supported the charter, it had reservations concerning certain of its provisions. However, in the northern portion of the township where the Four Corner Press had poor circulation the voters did not agree with the newspaper. The incorporation of Franklin, Bingham Farms, Westwood, and Lathrup are examples of incorporation of small areas which the newspaper opposed.

Groups, Organizations and Township Officials

In reviewing the history of the incorporation issue in Southfield Township it becomes apparent the neighborhood associations and civic associations played an important part in township politics. The original petitioner for township incorporation was the Magnolia Subdivision Association. Also, the primary opponent of township incorporation was the Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association. To the proponents, incorporation was a must to preserve the total tax base of the community while to the other group home rule appeared to be a threat to a rural way of life. The importance of these civic associations is also apparent during the deliberation by the various charter commissions as to form of government and limitation of taxes. These associations also provided the opponents and proponents of incorporation avenues to reach the residents of the community through numerous meetings. Larger organizations, both against and for incorporation, were

usually organized so that representatives of various neighborhood organizations could have a voice in the incorporation issue. The Save Our Township Committee, Citizens for Southfield Township, Southfield Urban League and Citizens for Southfield were usually ad hoc coalitions of various organizations either for or against incorporation.

There was little, if any, apparent support or opposition to incorporation from such organizations as Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Board of Realtors and others. The exception to this general observation was the Base Line Men's Club, which initiated the two incorporation attempts of Southfield Park in 1951 and 1954. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the Base Line Men's Club was an organization of businessmen in the southern part of the township.

There were mixed opinions on the merits of incorporation by the township officials. The township supervisor in office at the initiation of incorporation was opposed to it. However, the two succeeding township supervisors were strong supporters of the issue. The township clerk and two trustees were vocal opponents of incorporation. However, their opposition was probably because they lived in the Beverly Hills area and therefore voiced the opinions of the residents of that area. The township planning board strongly supported the incorporation of the entire township.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In summary the following chronology is a history of incorporation activities in Southfield Township between 1951

and 1958.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Type of Elector</u>	<u>Result</u>
Dec. 1951	Southfield Park	Home Rule City	Failed
May, 1953	Lathrup	Home Rule City	Passed
Sept. 1953	Eastern Part of Township	Annex to Oak Park	Failed
Sept.-Nov. 1953	The City of Berkley discusses annexation of part of township		
Nov. 1953	Franklin	Home Rule Village	Passed
June, 1954	Southfield Park (2nd attempt)	Home Rule City	Failed
June, 1955	Bingham Farms	Home Rule Village	Passed
June, 1955	Township (excluding Lathrup, Franklin, and Bingham Farms)	Home Rule City	Passed
Dec. 1955	Township	Home Rule Charter	Failed
Apr. 1956	Township	Home Rule Charter	Failed
Sept. 1957	Westwood (Beverly Hills)	Home Rule Village	Passed
Sept. 1957	Township (excluding Franklin, Lathrup, Bingham Farms, Westwood)	Home Rule City	Passed
Apr. 1958	Township	Home Rule Charter	Passed
Apr. 1958	Election of New City Officials		

The history of Southfield Township between 1950 and 1958 saw the township divided up into a number of small home rule villages and cities. By 1958, Southfield was divided up into three villages and two cities of which the City of Southfield is the largest with 26 square miles. In two communities,

Franklin and Lathrup, incorporation was a means of preserving their historic identity. The apparent motivation in the incorporation of the Village of Bingham Farms and Westwood was a fear that incorporation would destroy the rural atmosphere by huge real estate development which would spring up if Southfield became a city. In the case of Westwood, there was a long fight for their independence which also demonstrated that State laws governing incorporation allows for much maneuvering particularly as to when petitions are filed and regulations governing the charter commission.

In Southfield's case, the motives for incorporating the entire township appear to be a means to protect the township from losing its valuable tax base to other communities either through annexation or incorporation.

Thus, the Michigan Home Rule Act, which was enacted as a solution for areas attempting to cope with service problems arising from rapid population growth, was used only as a means of preserving community identification or preventing selfish land grabs for the advantages of some at the expense of others.

CHAPTER V

THE INCORPORATION OF LIVONIA TOWNSHIP

Few newly incorporated cities gain distinction for their physical size, but when Livonia Township incorporated as the City of Livonia in 1950, it became Michigan's second largest city in land area with 36 square miles. Prior to 1950, Livonia Township was a quiet, rural community with a population of 17,354. The population was concentrated in the southern and eastern part of the township. The western and northern sections were predominantly agricultural. When Livonia incorporated as a city in 1950 there were more than one hundred farms within its boundaries. Today, however, the farm land is fast being subdivided to meet Livonia's rapid population growth. The 1960 Federal census shows Livonia's population at 66,702, over three times the population in 1950. In 1958 there were 221 recorded subdivisions in the city. It is estimated that by 1970, Livonia's population will have grown to 100,000.¹

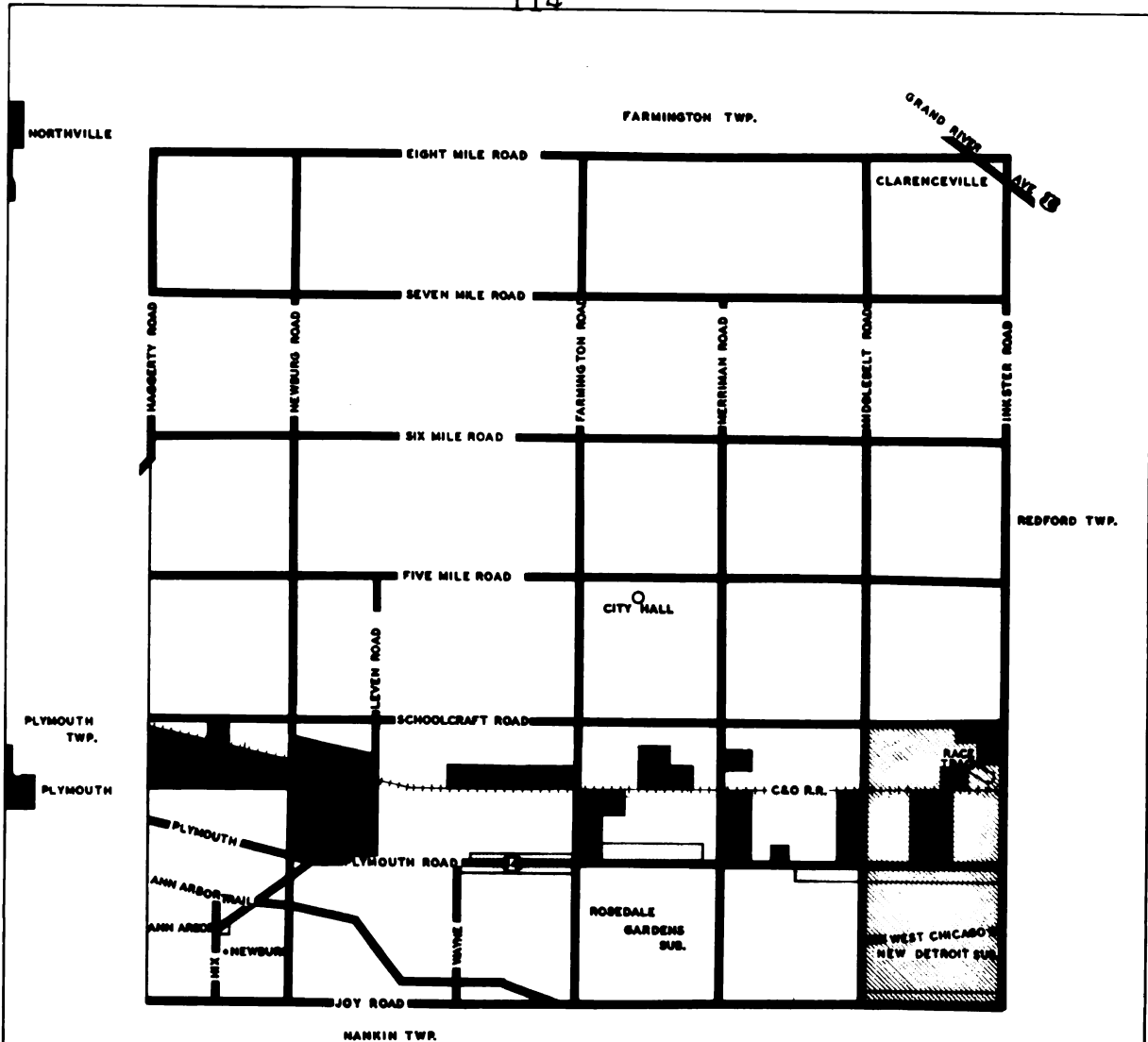
The event which prompted initiation of township

¹City Planning Commission of Livonia, Economic Base Study of Livonia: A Master Plan Study, Livonia, Michigan, 1957, p. 5.

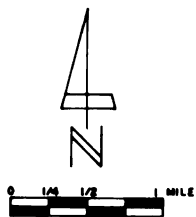
incorporation occurred in 1948 when Michigan legislature passed a bill outlawing gambling and horse racing on state owned property. At that time horse racing was being conducted on the Michigan State Fair Grounds in Detroit. With the passage of the new law, the Michigan Racing Association was forced to seek a new location. After looking around, it leased a parcel of land in the southeast corner of Livonia Township and made plans to construct a \$5,000,000 race track. Although the township residents in the southeast part of Livonia opposed the construction of this race track, the township board approved the plans of the racing association and construction of the track began in the spring of 1949.

Ordinarily, an invasion of an entertainment facility would not have meant much to a community, but this case was different. The State of Michigan levies a tax on horse race wagering and at that time the law provided that 20 per cent of the receipts, but not more than \$500,000 was to be returned to the city in which the horse racing track is located.² As a township, however, Livonia could not share the state tax on pari-mutual betting. Based on the 2.5 mill property tax limit at the time, it was estimated that the township would receive \$6,500 from the race track with all but \$2,000 going to the schools. Therefore, the \$500,000 Livonia could receive if it were an incorporated city, looked tempting to a number of township officials who at that time were limited to an annual budget of \$67,000 and who were having a difficult time

²Michigan Statutes Annotated, Sec. 13.950. In 1956 the law was amended to include townships and villages.



CITY OF LIVONIA COMMUNITY PATTERNS



- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- ELM (PROPOSED INCORPORATION)

keeping the township out of the red.³ Although the township officials were aware of the law no action was taken toward incorporation until September, 1949, when petitions to incorporate Livonia Township as a home rule city were presented to the clerk of Wayne County.⁴

The first knowledge that many township residents had concerning township incorporation was an editorial in the township newspaper, the Livonian, only a week before the incorporation petitions were filed with the county clerk. In an editorial titled "Why Hurry," the editor of the Livonian gave notice that township incorporation proceedings had begun. The first reason the editor gave to explain the need for immediate action was that if the township did not incorporate as a whole, any section of the township could incorporate and take the choice land within the township and leave the rest of the township poor.⁵

Was the fear expressed by the editor groundless or was there evidence that this was a real threat? To certain township officials the possibility of a part of the township incorporating was very real. However, to understand the situation in Livonia one must go back to 1942.

In 1942, the Livonia Township Board zoned Livonia Township. In so doing, the board created an industrial zone along the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad which traverses east

³Interview with Carl Wagenschultz, former township treasurer and currently the city treasurer. February 17, 1959.

⁴Editorial in the Livonian, September 23, 1949.

⁵Ibid.

and west across the southern part of the township. The zoning of the township, especially the new industrial belt, was fought by the residents of the New Detroit subdivision, located in the southeast corner of the township, and adjacent to the newly created industrial zone.⁶ The residents of New Detroit maintained that they had moved out of Detroit to escape noisy and smoky industrial plants and wanted to keep Livonia Township completely residential. However, the values of the residents of New Detroit conflicted with the goals of the township officials who were interested in promoting industry and commerce in order to increase and broaden the tax base, and thus reduce the individual homeowner's burden of financing a rapidly growing community.

Livonia, bypassed by industrial expansion during World War II, was fast becoming a "bedroom suburb" much to the pleasure of the residents of New Detroit. In 1948 however, conditions began to rapidly change. General Motors Corporation, in its expansion program, selected a site in southeastern Livonia, just north of the New Detroit Subdivision, for the erection of an automotive transmission plant.

The announcement that General Motors was planning to build a manufacturing plant in Livonia renewed the conflict between the residents of New Detroit Subdivision and the township board. However, by this time the residents of New Detroit were resigned to the idea that industry would eventually

⁶For the history and development of the New Detroit Subdivision, see the section on Livonia Township in Chapter II, page 20.

locate in Livonia and the conflict centered around stricter zoning provisions. The residents of New Detroit wanted stricter ordinances, particularly stronger control over smoke and noise.

Friction between the residents of New Detroit and township officials increased with the coming of the race track. The race track was also located in southeastern Livonia near the New Detroit Subdivision. The residents of New Detroit protested construction of the track on grounds that horse racing would bring undesirable persons into Livonia. However, as in the case over the zoning issue, the residents of New Detroit received no satisfaction from the township board. The two issues, zoning and horse racing, resulted in dissatisfaction toward the township board among the residents of the New Detroit Area.⁷

On July 23, 1949, the New Detroit Subdivision Association held a meeting to discuss the zoning and horse racing issues. The township supervisor, Jesse Ziegler, and the township attorney, William Brashear, were invited to present the township board's position on these issues. During this meeting the question was raised whether the township officials were considering incorporation in order to obtain the \$500,000 which would be gained through incorporation. The township officials present at the meeting could not answer the question

⁷Interview with Mrs. Virginia Maltby, September 24, 1959. Mrs. Maltby's husband was one of the leaders of the New Detroit Subdivision Association.

since the issue was still under consideration by the township board.

A few days later, the township attorney related the events of the meeting to the township clerk, Harry Wolfe.⁸ A week later William Brashear and Harry Wolfe met with a group of friends at his home and it was decided to proceed with township incorporation.⁹ Thus, it appears that the July 23, 1949 meeting of the New Detroit Subdivision Association awakened the township clerk and attorney to the realization that the New Detroit Area was a possible threat to the orderly development of the township as a whole unit. In fact, later on during the incorporation campaign Mr. Wolfe at a public meeting stated "that the first move on the part of the City of Livonia group was defensive. A meeting held by the Elm group in July was felt to be a definite threat to Livonia . . ."¹⁰ Thus, the reason given in the September 23, 1949 editorial of the Livonian that any section of the township could incorporate and take the high tax revenue producers in the township probably referred to the New Detroit area.

Petitions to incorporate Livonia Township as a home rule city were quietly and quickly circulated and were filed with the Wayne County Clerk on September 27, 1949.

The sudden move to incorporate the township as a home

⁸Interview with Harry Wolfe, former township clerk, February 16, 1959.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Livonian, News Item, December 30, 1949.

rule city caught the residents of New Detroit by surprise.¹¹

On the night of October 10, 1949, the New Detroit Subdivision held a meeting at which the guest speaker was a political scientist from Wayne State University. In discussing the proposed township incorporation the speaker told the audience that it would be more advantageous to incorporate a smaller unit rather than a larger area. According to the speaker, "The large amount of vacant space would make it very difficult to carry out services of a city efficiently such as keeping roads in condition, fire department services, and police protection. But with a smaller compact unit these services could be carried out more efficiently."¹²

It appears the speech was convincing because within the next seven days, petitions were circulated and signed to incorporate 2.5 square miles of southeastern Livonia Township into the City of Elm. The proposed city would include both the General Motors Hydromatic plant and the new race track plus the residential area known as New Detroit.

By the time the Wayne County Board of Supervisors convened on November 1, 1949, both the Livonia Township and Elm petitions had been filed with the county clerk. However, only the petitions for the incorporation of Livonia Township had been checked for legal requirements by the time of the meeting. Thus, only the Livonia petition was placed on the

¹¹Maltby, loc. cit. According to Mrs. Maltby, the first knowledge that the residents of New Detroit had concerning township incorporation was through news items in the Detroit newspapers.

¹²Livonian, News Item, October 14, 1949, p. 1.

agenda. The Elm petition would have to be reviewed and placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the board of supervisors.

On November 1, 1949, the Wayne County Board of Supervisors referred the Livonia petitions to the Ways and Means Committee for its scrutiny and recommendation.

I. THE LEGAL STRUGGLE OVER THE LIVONIA PETITIONS

The first signs of opposition to the Livonia petitions became evident during a hearing in the Wayne County Ways and Means Committee. After the motion "that the prayer for incorporation of the city of Livonia be granted," Mr. Libby, attorney for the proposed City of Elm, challenged the Livonia petition relative to the population density of 500 persons per square mile as required by state law.¹³ Attorney Libby insisted that the 1940 Federal Census must be used or a special census would have to be taken in order to determine the population density of Livonia Township. Mr. Libby contended that Livonia did not meet the required 500 persons per square mile. In answer to this charge, William Brashear, Livonia Township attorney, replied that the population density had been computed on the basis of figures provided by Detroit Edison Company which were accepted by the county clerk to be in compliance with the

¹³Minutes of the Ways and Means Committee of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors, November 2, 1949.

legal requirements.¹⁴

Since the population figures and stated boundaries of the proposed City of Livonia had been determined by the county clerk to be in compliance with the state law, the Ways and Means Committee was obligated by law to send the incorporation petitions to the county board of supervisors with the recommendation that the petitions be honored and an election date set.

However, Mayor Hubbard of the City of Dearborn and a member of the Ways and Means Committee, attempted to delay the committee's recommendation by moving that the motion be tabled until the Elm petition could be presented at the same time. Mayor Hubbard's motion was defeated and the committee by a vote of 11-5 released the Livonia petition from committee. The committee told Mr. Libby, attorney for the Elm petition, that the petitions for the incorporation of the City of Elm would be considered when they were presented to the board of supervisors as prescribed by law.¹⁵

Two days later, November 4, 1949, the favorable recommendation of the Ways and Means Committee was presented to the Wayne County Board of Supervisors for final approval. Again,

¹⁴The Detroit Edison Company computes the population of an area by counting the number of electric meters and multiplying by four. In the case of Livonia Township there were 4,805 light meters which, multiplied by four, gave Livonia a population of 19,220, just a little over 500 persons per square mile. However, a year later the Federal Census showed Livonia Township to have a population of only 17,534 which would give Livonia less than 500 persons per square mile. Thus, Livonia did not in fact meet the legal requirements at the time of incorporation.

¹⁵Ways and Means Committee, loc. cit.

Mayor Hubbard opposed passage of the Livonia petition. Mayor Hubbard contended that because of the legal controversy over the Livonia petitions and because of another petition proposing the incorporation of Elm City, it would be wise to "hold off on the matter until both petitions could be presented at the same time."¹⁶

Following his speech, Mayor Hubbard moved that the Livonia petition be tabled until the Elm petition could be presented. The motion lost by a close vote, 33-30. Following this vote, Mayor Hubbard moved that the matter be sent back to the Ways and Means Committee. The motion was defeated 34-29. Again Mayor Hubbard moved that the petition be tabled; however, this motion lost by a vote of 46-17. Finally, Hubbard moved for adjournment but this motion also lost. Following Mayor Hubbard's delaying tactics, the Board of Supervisors accepted the recommendation of the Ways and Means Committee and set the date for the election of township incorporation, February 6, 1950.¹⁷

Mayor Hubbard and Mr. Libby continued to fight against the incorporation of Livonia in the courts. Hubbard and Libby took the decision of the supervisors on a Writ of Certorari to the Wayne County Circuit Court. Their case was based on the contention that Livonia did not meet the population requirements. The Circuit Court upheld the action of the Board of

¹⁶Minutes of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors, November 4, 1949.

¹⁷Ibid.

Supervisors.¹⁸ After the defeat in the Wayne County Circuit Court, Libby and Hubbard appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court. The Supreme Court denied their appeal and thus upheld the decision of the Wayne County Circuit Court.

On Monday, November 28, 1949, the Wayne County Board of Supervisors, at a special session, considered the petition for the incorporation of Elm. The Supervisors were perplexed over the problem of disposing of these petitions. The legality of the Livonia petition was still being tested. In addition the Elm petition requested that an incorporation vote be set for January 17, 1950, which would be three weeks before the Livonia incorporation vote. In seeking a solution the board sought advice from the Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney. In reply, Gerald K. O'Brien, the Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney, wrote, "In determining the rights of the respective petitions the time element becomes an important factor which must be given due recognition. It might be construed an absurdity to grant priority to the Elm petition. It would surely be unjust and prejudiced to the rights of the Livonia petitioners, who acted diligently, to permit the Elm petition to have a vote on their question first. Reason and logic would, therefore, dictate that the statute be construed to permit the question of incorporation to be submitted to the electorate in order of filing the petitions, viz. Livonia petition first and the Elm

¹⁸Wayne County Circuit Court, Maltby vs. the Wayne County Board of Supervisors. Opinion 675, November 29, 1949.

petition second."¹⁹

The Board of Supervisors referred the petition to the Ways and Means Committee for its recommendation. At the Committee hearing both sides presented their case. Failing to reach a decision, the Ways and Means Committee decided to refer the issue to a committee of three to investigate the whole matter. However, the next day the Prosecuting Attorney delivered the decision of the Circuit Court supporting the previous action of the Board of Supervisors concerning the Livonia petition. Thus the air was cleared and the Elm petition was tabled pending the outcome of the Livonia incorporation vote.

II. THE STRUGGLE FOR INCORPORATION

While the Livonia's incorporation petition was being contested in the courts, the issue also was being fought in the township. Shortly after the filing of incorporation petitions, the Livonia Citizens Committee for Incorporation was organized. The Committee for Incorporation was composed of approximately one hundred members who were assigned to one of a number of functional sub-committees including Public Information, Finance, Speakers Bureau and Others.

Membership in the committee was open to anyone who was interested in promoting township incorporation. Chairman of the committee was James Hagen, an employee of General Motors

¹⁹Letter from Gerald K. O'Brien, Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney, to the Wayne County Board of Supervisors. Minutes of the Board of Supervisors, November 28, 1949.

Deisal Plant, a leader in the township Republican Party and who, along with Harry Wolfe, filed the incorporation petitions with the county clerk. Harry Wolfe, township clerk, was vice-chairman of the incorporation committee. W. W. Edgar, former sports writer for the Detroit Free Press, and Robert Grimm, a local truck gardener, were co-chairman of the Committee for Public Information.

Other organizations which came out in favor of township incorporation included the township Republican and Democratic Clubs, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, the Woman's Republican Club, and the Rosedale Garden Civic Association. Although these organizations favored incorporation there was no evidence of active organizational participation.

Also supporting and promoting incorporation was the township weekly newspaper, the Livonian.

Opposition to incorporation was centered in the New Detroit Subdivision, the area proposing the incorporation of Elm City. The Elm Founders League, organized to promote the incorporation of Elm led the fight against township incorporation. A women's auxiliary of the Founders League was organized to raise money in support of the Elm Founders League activities.²⁰

The arguments presented by the proponents of township incorporation were published in a pamphlet called "Birth of a City." This pamphlet was sponsored by a group calling itself Citizens for Incorporation and distributed to all the residents of the township. In addition the pamphlet was printed in the

²⁰ Interview with Virginia Maltby, March 24, 1959.

Livonian.²¹

It appears that the move on the part of New Detroit residents to incorporate gave the proponents of township incorporation added ammunition in support of township incorporation. The argument often presented to the public by the proponents of incorporation said, ". . . In order to prevent a small selfish group taking away the township's most valuable assets and revenues, a group of public minded citizens, representing the entire township has put into motion a proceeding to incorporate the entire area of the township as a home rule city to be known as the City of Livonia. In doing so we feel that we are about to create a city for all the people of Livonia and by all the people of Livonia, rather than allow the most valuable part of the township to be seized for the benefit of a few."²²

In the same advertisement, the Citizens Committee claimed that opposition to township incorporation was not actually sponsored by the New Detroit Subdivision but by other Wayne County interests who did not want Livonia Township to become a city. The Citizens Committee pointed out that incorporation was opposed by Mayor Hubbard of Dearborn at the meeting of the County Board of Supervisors and that the attorney for the Elm petition was a close friend of Mayor Hubbard. According to the advertisement, the reason that Livonia incorporation was opposed by Mayor Hubbard and other Wayne County

²¹Livonian, December 16, 1949.

²²Livonian, December 9, 1949 (Birth of a City) advertisement by the Livonia Citizens Committee.

interests was because both the cities of Detroit and Dearborn wanted to annex parts of Livonia.²³

Other arguments presented by the Citizens for Livonia Committee promoting the City of Livonia were:

1. As a city, Livonia would receive \$500,000 from the race track each year. One-half of this money they said should be spent on capital improvements.
2. Incorporation would be a means of providing additional public services which the township could not financially and legally provide. The services mentioned most frequently were police and fire protection, better roads, more playgrounds, and recreation facilities.
3. Incorporation would give the citizens of Livonia "Home-Rule" which is more democratic than the present form of government.
4. Incorporation offers an opportunity for planning future development in the Livonia area.²⁴

Arguments of Opposition

After losing the fight in the Wayne County Board of Supervisors, the Elm Founders League attempted to convince the voters of Livonia Township that incorporation was impractical.

The major argument against incorporation was that it would result in higher taxes and would only benefit the real

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

estate developers in the township. According to a pamphlet published by the Elm Founders League, "The development of a planned city is all very well and profitable for real estate dealers and people who own property on which the city is to be developed, but can you afford the cost in higher taxes over the years it will take to build a city."²⁵

The pamphlet, "True Facts," devoted over half of its pages attempting to show how large real estate dealers would make a big profit by becoming a city.²⁶

This was probably an attempt to discredit the motives of Mr. Harry Wolfe, the township clerk who was one of the first proponents of incorporation. Mr. Wolfe was a local realtor and one of the petitioners for township incorporation. After the incorporation of the City of Livonia, the Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney investigated charges that city officials played politics with certain real estate developers. The report, according to Mrs. Virginia Maltby, was never made public, but she claimed it found that high city officials owned large amounts of land in Livonia. A few years after incorporation, the zoning of land became a major issue in Livonia politics and the dispute led to an attempt to recall the mayor. However, the recall petition failed. At the next city election, however, the mayor and several commissioners

²⁵"True Facts." Pamphlet published by the Elm Founders League. (On file in Livonia city clerk's office.)

²⁶Ibid.

were defeated and were out of office for two years.²⁷

Opponents of incorporation attempted to show that the cost of becoming a city would be much more than the proponents of incorporation stated. According to the opposition it would take a budget of at least \$400,000 to run the proposed city of Livonia.²⁸

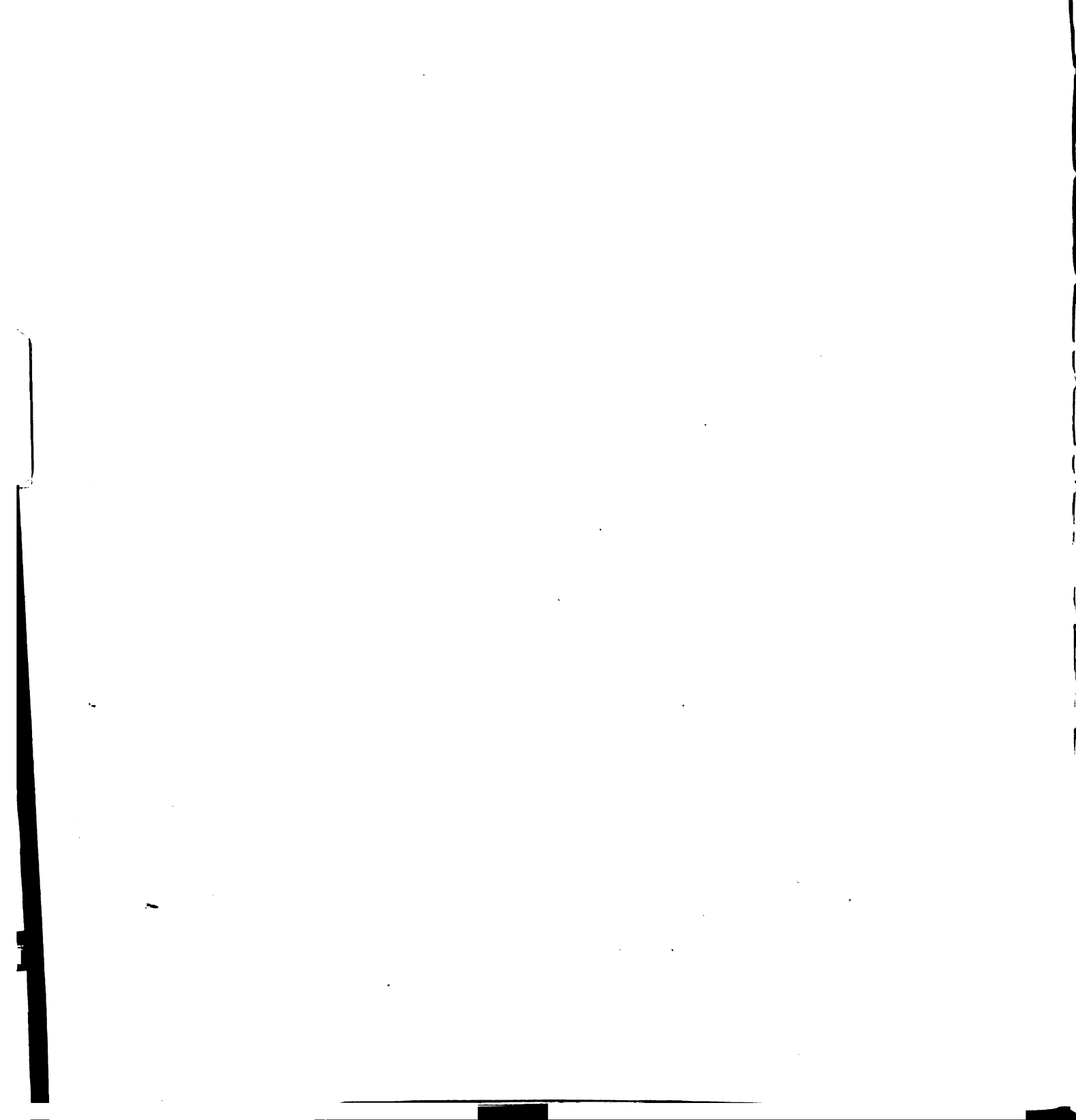
The Citizens for Livonia Committee claimed that a budget between \$175,000 and \$200,000 would be adequate for the new city. Both sides attempted to prove their points by use of the budgets of nearby cities which they claimed were similar to Livonia. The issue over the size of the budget became so controversial that a Taxpayers Association, headed by the Superintendent of Schools, was organized to thoroughly investigate the matter. After studying the matter, the Taxpayers Association agreed with the incorporation proponents on the \$200,000 budget figure. The Taxpayers Association further stated that the issue was irrelevant since the new "city government would cost just as little or just as much as the people desire."²⁹

The Citizens for Livonia Committee held a series of meetings to present the case for incorporation to the public. Speakers at their meetings ranged from township officials to

²⁷The part that land played in Livonia politics is described by O. Paul Rosbolt, "How A City Adopts a Zoning Ordinance," unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, 1956.

²⁸"True Facts," op. cit.

²⁹The Livonian, Editorial, September 23, 1949.



representatives of the Michigan Municipal League and officials from nearby cities. The usual procedure was that after the speeches, the meetings were often opened for discussion. Usually the opponents and proponents managed to present their arguments.

In addition to these meetings, the proponents of incorporation ran weekly advertisements in the Livonian. The opponents distribution of literature was limited to the "True Facts" pamphlet. According to Mrs. Virginia Maltby, the reason why the Elm Founders League was not more effective in bringing its story to the people was that they were denied the rights of free speech and the right of assembly. Mrs. Maltby claimed that the Livonian would not accept advertisements opposing incorporation nor would the township and school officials allow the league the use of public meeting places. She said that the League had to hold its meetings in a nearby township.³⁰

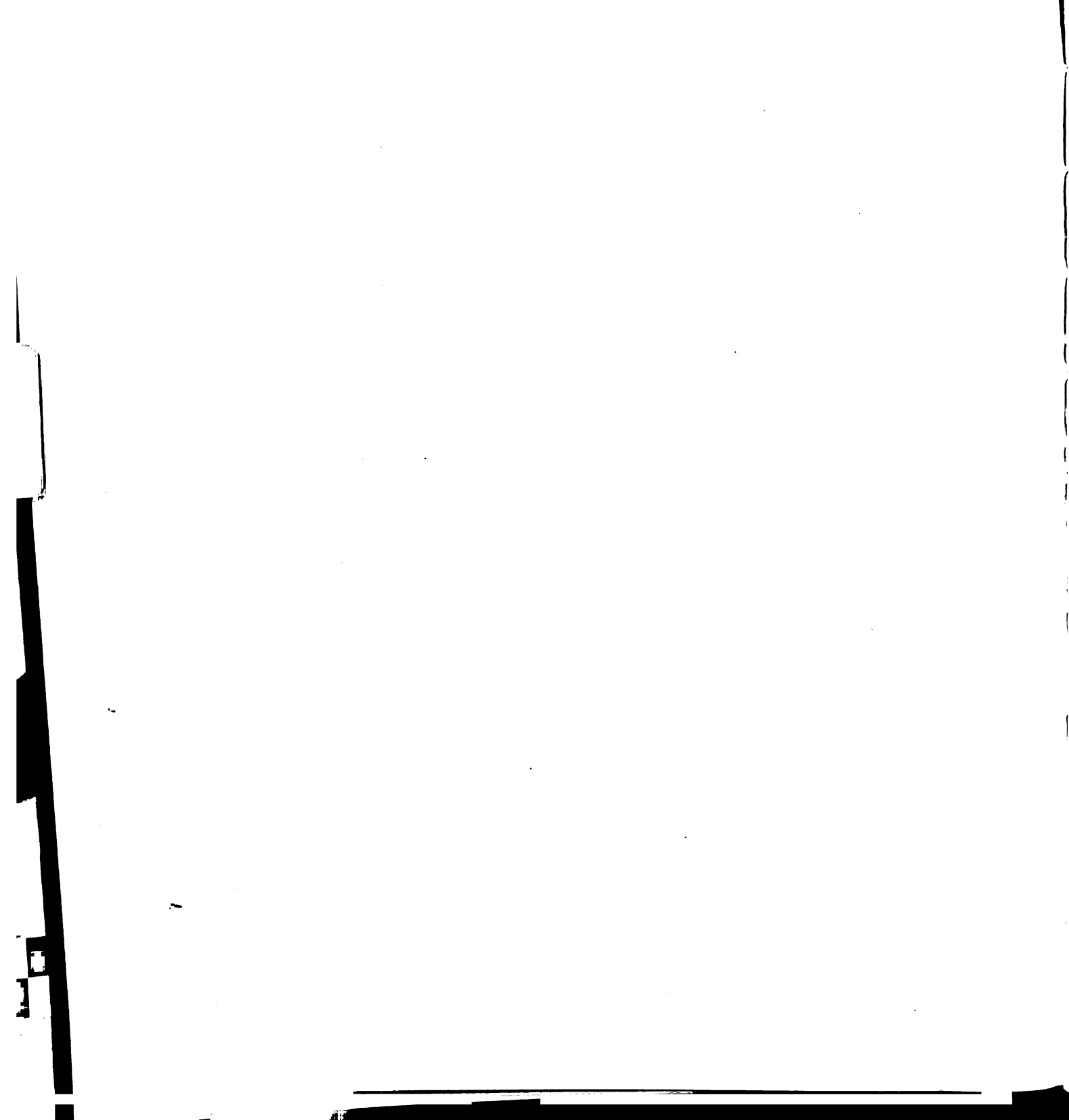
In summary, the chief arguments used by the proponents of incorporation were:

(1) That a small "selfish" element was attempting to steal the tax base of the entire township.

(2) Incorporation would add \$500,000 from the race track to the city treasury.

The proponents of incorporation had a very effective advertising campaign through the press and public meetings while the opponents campaign was limited to attending open

³⁰Interview with Mrs. Virginia Maltby, September 24, 1959.



public meetings and the distribution of one "fact sheet" espousing their cause.

The action on the part of the New Detroiters to incorporate the city of Elm not only gave the proponents a strong argument for township incorporation but it also had the effect of unifying the township officials in support of township incorporation. Although the township incorporation plan was initiated by two township officials, the clerk and the attorney, there appears to have been reluctance at first by other township officials that incorporation was the best course of action at that time. Mr. Jesse Ziegler, the Republican township supervisor for 17 years, was hesitant to support incorporation. Evidence of Mr. Ziegler's reluctance to support incorporation was indicated shortly after the filing of petitions for Elm incorporation. Mr. Ziegler stated that " . . . at first I was not in favor of incorporation, but I have changed my mind, . . . in order to take some of the tax burden off the home owners it is necessary to have more industry. Now that some is here and more is coming, we don't want to lose it all just because a greedy group thinks otherwise."³¹

Further evidence that Mr. Ziegler was not in favor of incorporation but had later changed his mind became evident when he said, "the township is far from ready for incorporation as a city, but, . . . the people who want to grab the two square miles with most of the township valuation . . . and

³¹Livonian, News item, January 20, 1950.

are willing to leave the rest of the area utterly poor as far as schools and other township functions are concerned . . . leaves us with the only alternative of incorporating the entire township so that taxes are equitable."³²

By the time of the election, township incorporation had the strong support of all township officials. Not only did the township officials verbally support incorporation but the supervisor actively campaigned for incorporation. In addition to speaking at public meetings, on December 9, 1949, Mr. Ziegler ran a half page advertisement in the Livonian urging the voters to approve incorporation.

One of the strongest advocates of incorporation was the local township press--the Livonian. From the very outset, it took an active part in supporting incorporation. The Livonian was circulated only in Livonia Township and was owned by a company who published a number of weekly newspapers in the Wayne County area.

Already, in the September 23, 1949 edition, before the petitions for township incorporation were filed, the editor of the Livonian pointed out that petitions were being circulated for incorporation because there were strong reasons to believe that a small section of the township was after choice industrial development.³³ Furthermore, as a city, the people would have more power to decide on their own problems, and also it would provide an opportunity to better plan future developments

³²Detroit News, November 3, 1949, p. 46.

³³Livonian, Editorial, September 23, 1959.

within the township.³⁴

When the New Detroit Subdivision filed petition for the incorporation as the city of Elm, the Livonian announced in bold headlines "Segment Seeks to Divorce Itself From the Township."³⁵ According to the front page story such a separation would mean that the township would lose more than half of its assessed valuation. The article stated that the reason for the action of the New Detroit residents was to obtain "revenge" against the township board.³⁶

In the last five weeks of the campaign, the Livonian began a series of editorials promoting incorporation.

In the January 20, 1950 editorial, the editor wrote that "under a home rule city, supervision of roads would be taken away from the "cold hearted" commissioner's office in downtown Detroit and brought back to Livonia where it belongs."³⁷

A week later the editor discussed the advantages of planning future development as a city. He wrote, "It will give you the chance to make a better place for children to live and eliminate the possibility of their being forced at a tender age to break the ties of home and seek a living elsewhere."³⁸

Earlier the editor discussed taxes and pointed out that with the race track revenue taxes would not increase.³⁹

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Livonian, October 14, 1949.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Livonian, Editorial, January 20, 1950.

³⁸Ibid., January 27, 1950.

³⁹Livonian, January 13, 1950.

On February 3, 1950, the editor pointed out that " . . . incorporation would result in better police protection, better fire protection, improved roads, and more playgrounds and recreation centers, for the same price you are paying now."⁴⁰

In every editorial the editor reminded his readers that if they were interested in the welfare of the community, they should "Vote Yes" for incorporation.

The Election

On February 6, 1950, 60 per cent of the township registered voters went to the polls to vote on the incorporation issue. By a vote of 2,508 to 1,752, a majority of 656, Livonia Township voters approved becoming the City of Livonia. The issue passed in four of the township's six voting precincts.

The two precincts which voted against incorporation were the first and the sixth. The sixth precinct, which included the New Detroit Subdivision, turned down incorporation by a vote of 396 to 186. Precinct number one, which was the sparsely settled area covering ten square miles in northern Livonia Township, turned down incorporation by 36 votes. The actual vote in the first precinct was 404 against and 368 for incorporation. Of the precincts approving incorporation the third gave the largest support to incorporation, 77 per cent of the precinct's voters favored the issue. Not only did the third precinct give the largest favorable majority, but it had the largest turnout. Of 1,112 votes, 863 votes were for

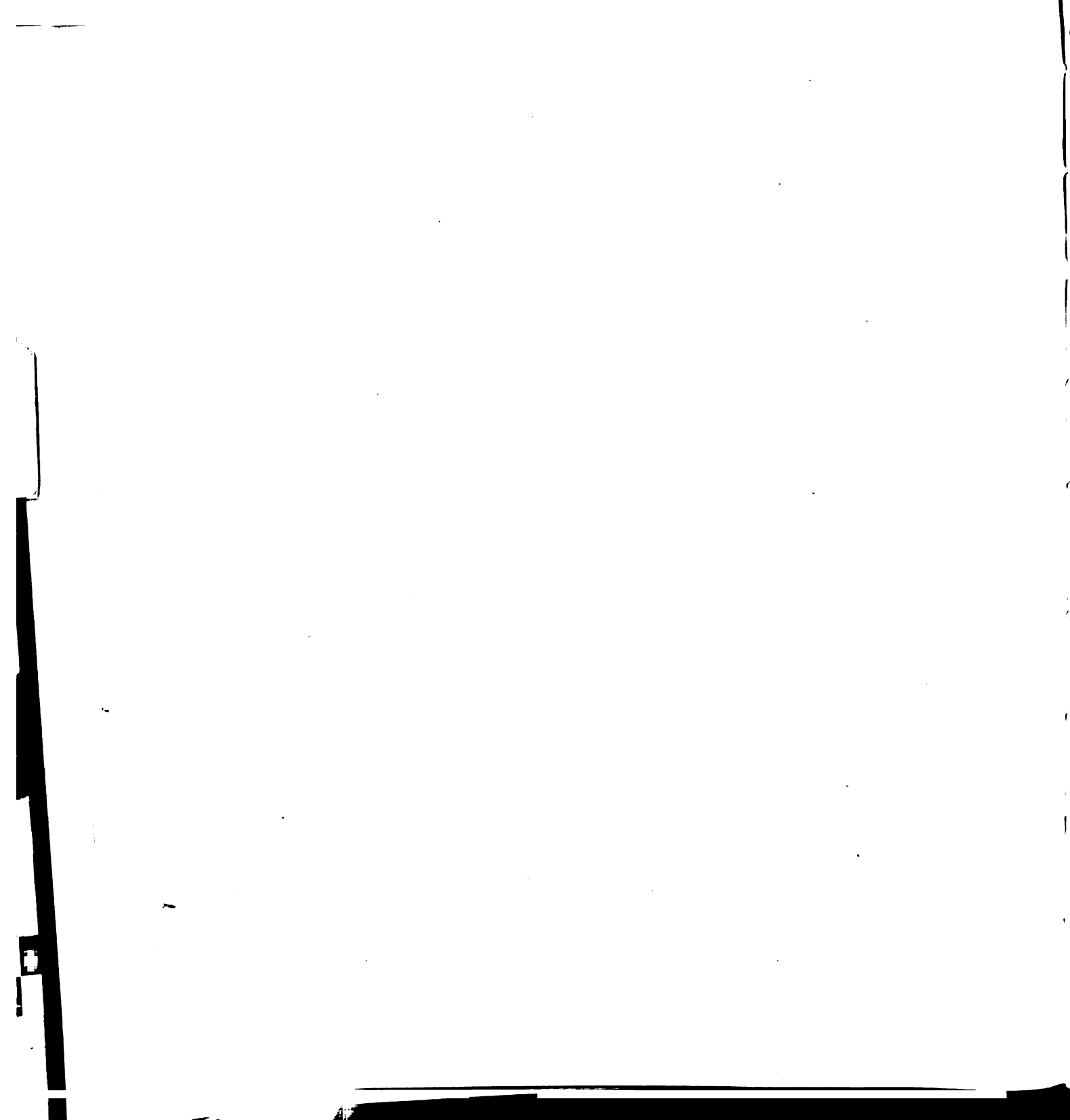
⁴⁰Ibid.

incorporation. The third precinct, 6 miles long and 2 miles wide, runs through the center of Livonia. The eastern half of the precinct consisted of new subdivisions built since the Second World War. The western half of the precinct was predominantly rural with farming the main occupation. The second precinct, consisting of Rosedale Gardens Subdivision approved incorporation by a vote of 376 to 349, a slight majority of 27 votes. The fifth precinct, 2 square miles in the northeast section of the township, and one of the oldest areas of Livonia, voted 70 per cent in favor of incorporation. The remaining precinct, the fourth, located in the southwest corner of the township, gave incorporation a 64 per cent majority vote.

In summary, those areas which supported incorporation were the urbanized sections of the township with the exception of the New Detroit Area which opposed. The rural areas and less settled areas of township voted against incorporation.

III. THE CHARTER COMMISSION

In addition to approving the incorporation of the City of Livonia the voters also elected a nine-member charter commission. The campaign for election to the charter commission was conducted by advertisements by each individual candidate. There is no evidence of any organized support for charter commission candidates. There were a total of forty-four candidates for the charter commission. Elected to the charter commission were five incumbent township officials. The five township officials elected to the charter commission



were Township Clerk Wolfe, Township Treasurer Wagonschultz, Justices of the Peace Nye and McKinney, and the Township Attorney Brashear. The other four elected charter commissioners were Mr. Grimm, a truck gardener, Mr. Edgar, a sports writer, and Mr. Kleinert and Mr. Weinert, who were engineers. Although the Citizens for Livonia Committee did not support any of the candidates for the charter commission, four of the nine commissioners were leading members of the committee including Brashear, Wolfe, Grimm and Edgar.

Although the Elm Founders League entered five candidates for a seat on the charter commission, none placed better than 35th of the 44 candidates. The township supervisor, Mr. Jesse Ziegler, chose not to run for the charter commission.

At the first meeting of the charter commission, Mr. Harry Wolfe, township clerk, was elected chairman of the commission. Also elected officers of the charter commission were Mr. Grimm, Vice-Chairman, Mr. Edgar, Secretary, and Mr. Kleinert, Assistant Secretary.

The commission decided to meet weekly until a charter was drawn up and presented to the people.

The major decision facing the charter commission was a determination as to the form of government for the new city. The majority of the commission favored the "strong mayor" form of government. However, there were two members who advocated "council manager" government. The two charter commissioners who opposed the "strong mayor" form of government were Fred Weinert and Rudolf Kleinert, who resided in the Rosedale

Garden Subdivision.

Shortly after the incorporation vote, the Rosedale Civic Association had gone on record supporting the "council manager" form of government. Since both Weinert and Kleinert were members of the association they reflected the association's point of view.

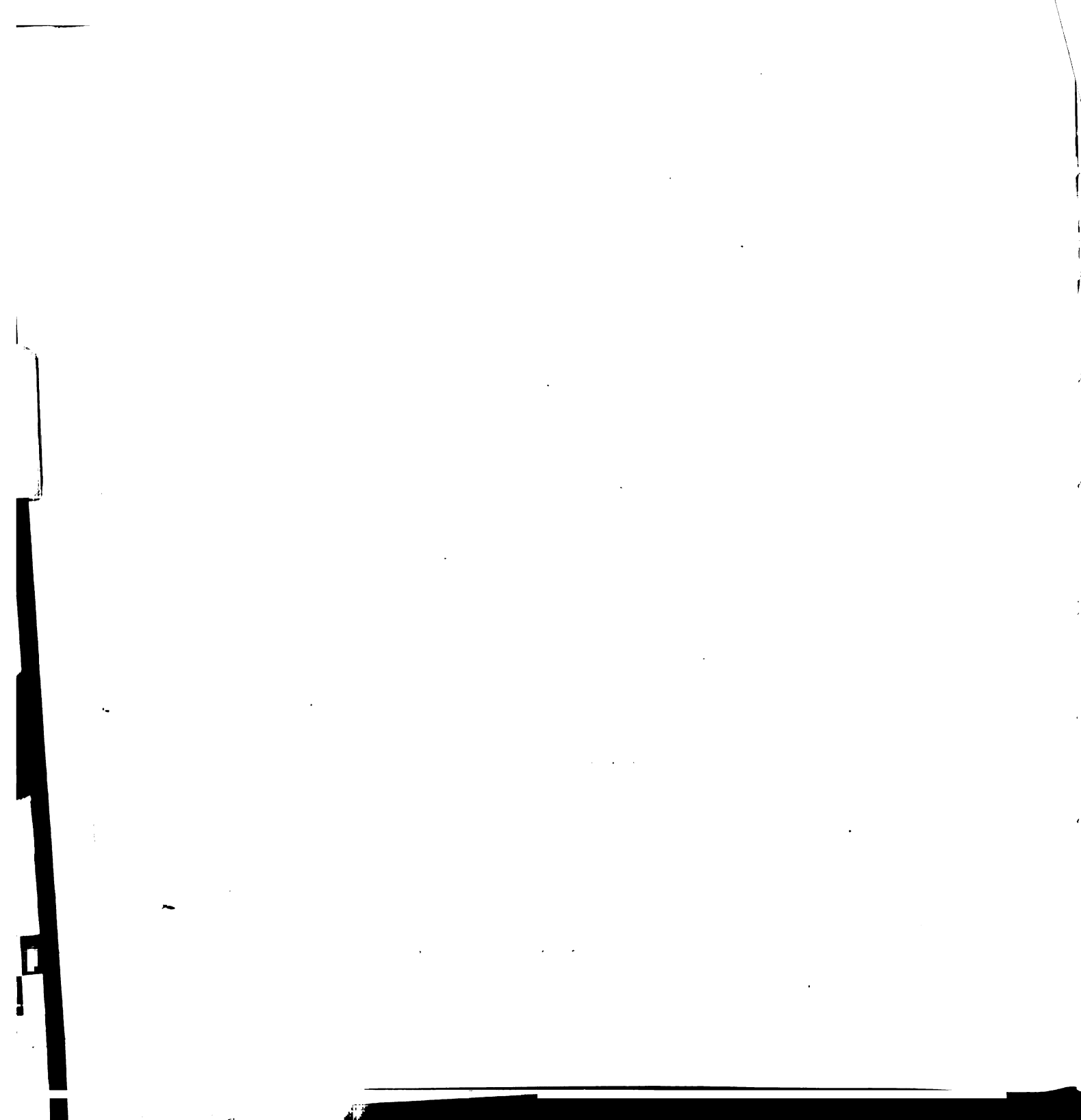
Since there was opposition to the "mayor form" of government, the commission decided that various township organizations and clubs should discuss the issue and refer their recommendations to the commission. In the meantime the commission would take up other matters.

However, two weeks later, the commission decided that they had waited long enough. On the night of March 17, 1950, the charter commission by a vote of seven to two, voted in favor of the "strong mayor" type of government. Immediately after the vote Rudolf Kleinert accused the charter commission with "stacking the cards before the first meeting for the mayor form of government."⁴¹ William Brashear, township attorney and charter commissioner, criticized Kleinert for his statement and accused Kleinert of "lacking good judgment, common courtesy, sportsmanship . . . and he (Kleinert) should not let his defeat warp his attitude toward his fellow commissioners."⁴²

The seven members of the charter commission favoring the "strong mayor" form gave the following reasons for its

⁴¹Livonian, March 31, 1950, p. 2. News item.

⁴²Ibid.



action:

(1) The chief executive of the new city should be one of our citizens instead of an outsider brought in to do the job.

(2) That under the mayor council form, the mayor would be more familiar with the problems, because he had grown up with them and because of his familiarity he would have a better idea of what remedies might be used.

(3) Since a city manager would control all the appointment of employees, too much authority would be in the hands of an outsider. On the other hand, our own mayor would have the knowledge of all the folks, what they can do, and what they cannot do. Therefore, the mayor would be in a better position to choose the right man for the right job.

(4) Livonia is unique in that it is starting with wide open spaces and the problems are of a much different nature than those managers who have all their experience in concentrated areas.

(5) The township officials who had done a good job for the township could do just as well for the city.⁴³

Although the Charter Commission decided on the "strong mayor" form of government, the battle had only begun. After the decision of the charter commission Livonia became divided into those favoring the "strong mayor" form of government and those supporting the "council manager" form. The editor of the Livonian viewed this conflict over the form of government

⁴³Livonian, news item, March 19, 1950.

as " . . . the most bitter factional dispute in the history of Livonia Township."⁴⁴

The Good Government League was organized to promote the "council manager" form of government. Membership in the Good Government League was open to anyone interested in the "council manager" type of government. Chairman of the Good Government League was Mr. Louis Humpert, owner of a local sports shop located near Rosedale Gardens Subdivision. Supporting the position of the Good Government League were various organizations including the Rosedale Gardens Civic Association, the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, and the Taxpayers Association.⁴⁵

The Good Government League ran full-page advertisements in the Livonian for five consecutive weeks. Starting with the March 31, 1950 edition, the Good Government League tried to convince the people that the "council manager" form of government would be the best for the new city. The campaign for the "council manager" government was directed toward demonstrating the success of the "manager" form of government in other cities. The Good Government League leaned heavily on statistics showing the popularity of the "council manager" form of government. The League labeled the "strong mayor" form as a "grief producing type of government." As an illustration the Good Government League pointed to the troubles

⁴⁴Livonian, editorial, May 26, 1950.

⁴⁵Livonian, advertisement by the Good Government League, March 31, 1950.

in the nearby City of Dearborn under Mayor Hubbard.⁴⁶

In addition to five full-page advertisements in the Livonian the Good Government League held a number of meetings at which city managers and city councilmen from nearby cities discussed the advantages of the "council manager" system of government.⁴⁷

Supporting the "strong mayor" form of government were the Citizens for Livonia Committee, township officials and several businessmen. To the Citizens for Livonia Committee, the Good Government League was a group of "disgruntled folks who were selfish, sectional, stubborn, trouble makers, rumor preachers, petty and narrow minded."⁴⁸

The Citizens for Livonia Committee campaigned for the "strong mayor" form of government under the slogan "Home Rule for a Home Rule City." The proponents of the "mayor" pictured the mayor as the true "American" form of government and the manager as an outsider brought in to tell us what to do. In the April 21, 1950 edition of the Livonian, a letter to the editor from the Citizens for Livonia Committee stated, " . . . Well, out of it all, there is only one question. Simply stated it is whether the democratic way of life shall

⁴⁶Livonian, advertisement, April 14, 1950.

⁴⁷It is interesting to note that the Good Government League accused the township officials of preventing the use of the township hall for meetings. (Advertisement in Livonian, April 14, 1950 and an interview with Louis Humpert, Chairman of Good Government League). The same charge was brought by the Elm Founders League.

⁴⁸Livonian, Advertisement by the Citizens for Livonia Committee, May 19, 1950.

continue in our midst or whether we shall fall victim to a sort of semi-dictatorship--whether we shall preserve the right of the ballot or whether we shall abandon the Old American custom and be told what to do--and when--and at what price. . . ."

Under "Mayor Council" form of government, the people of the community will retain that American heritage for which our forefathers spilled their blood at Lexington and Concord, on the battlefields of Europe and on the islands of the Pacific. It is the right of ballot the right to choose our leaders from our own folks."⁴⁹

In the April 28, 1950 edition of the Livonian, a full-page advertisement by the businessmen made it appear that if the charter was voted down it would mean that Livonia would revert back to township status. Furthermore, the businessmen charged that the Good Government League was composed of the same group which opposed incorporation.⁵⁰

The Citizens for Livonia Committee also reminded the people that more was at stake than just the form of government. According to the committee the issues which should guide the voters are:

- (1) Prevent the community from breaking up,
- (2) Obtain revenues from the race track, and

⁴⁹Livonian. Letter to Editor by the Citizens for Livonia Committee, April 21, 1950.

⁵⁰Livonian. Full-page advertisement by the businessmen, April 28, 1950.

(3) Keep taxes low.⁵¹

The work of the Good Government League was to no avail. The charter commission refused to reconsider changing the form of government and so the "strong mayor" form of government went to the voters for approval. Three days after the election, the editor of Livonian summarized the struggle by saying, "While the issue appeared quite simple, it was far from that, actually it was the most bitter factional dispute in the history of Livonia Township. To one group, the veteran officials were trying to preserve unity and peace, while to the Good Government League it was a political machine grasping for undue power and trying to continue its dynasty."⁵²

The Charter Election

In a special election, May 23, 1950, the voters of Livonia Township went to the polls to vote on the proposed charter, and to elect their first city officials. The charter was approved by a vote of 2,970 to 1,490. The charter was approved in every precinct except the second. The second precinct, Rosedale Gardens, voted against the charter by a vote of 444 to 323. Although Rosedale Gardens had approved incorporation they turned the charter down probably because of their dissatisfaction with the mayor form of government. The other township precincts including New Detroit precinct

⁵¹Livonian. Letter to Editor from Citizens for Livonia Committee, April 28, 1950.

⁵²Livonian. Editorial, May 20, 1950.

which had previously voted against incorporation, did an about face and voted for the proposed charter. In addition to the mayor form of government the charter included, (1) election at large, (2) two-year terms for elected officials, (3) the treasurer was to be elected but the clerk was to be appointed, (4) a five-mill tax limitation, and (5) non-partisan elections.

City Officials

Former township officials were very successful in their campaign for positions with the newly created city. Jesse Ziegler, former township supervisor, was elected without opposition as the first mayor of Livonia. Earl Wagonshultz, former township treasurer, was elected as City Treasurer. Harry Wolfe, former township clerk, and John Whitehead, former township constable, were elected to the city commission. William Brashear, former township attorney, was appointed as City Attorney. A few years later after the retirement of Jesse Ziegler, Mr. Brashear became mayor of Livonia, a position he held until 1963. R. Grim^m and W. W. Edgar, leaders of the incorporation committee and charter commissioners, were elected to the city commission. There were fourteen candidates for the city council. Of the five charter commissioners who decided to run for elective positions in the new city, all were successful. James Hagan, Chairman of the Citizens for Livonia Committee, in the original petitioner for township incorporation, was appointed Director of Public Safety for the new City of Livonia.

CHAPTER VI

PATTERNS OF TOWNSHIP INCORPORATION - LIVONIA, WARREN, SOUTHFIELD

The second chapter of this study described the patterns of urbanization in the three townships included in this study. A technological revolution coupled with the population explosion fathered what is known as the urban revolution--urbanization and suburbanization.

Rapid population growth in the three townships began in the early 1920's, and was greatly influenced by improved highways and technological advances in transportation, especially the automobile and interurban railway. As the use of automobiles became more common for most American families, and as the roads were improved, people were able to live further out and still have relatively easy access to their jobs in the central city. People settled along the main transportation lines radiating from the central city of Detroit.

Table 2, Chapter II, shows that the period between 1950 and 1960 was the period of the greatest absolute growth in the three suburban communities studied. During this period Warren almost doubled its population, Southfield more than doubled its population and Livonia's population tripled during

this period.

Paralleling population growth was rapid industrialization of the three townships since 1950 (Table 3, Chapter II). Both Livonia and Warren, which are located on main industrial corridors leading from the City of Detroit, had phenomenal industrial development since 1950. Southfield also now has a large number of manufacturing plants, but they consist of light industry rather than the heavy industry found in Livonia and Warren. Thus industry, like the population in the Detroit area, followed a pattern of decentralization since 1930.

But, the population growth and expansion in the rural areas surrounding Detroit cannot be attributed only to normal population expansion. Many people moved out to the suburbs to escape living in the central city. In recent years a number of studies conducted on the various aspects of suburban life have confirmed this pattern. These studies indicate that the suburban resident holds certain values which are reflected in their attitudes toward the purpose and organization of local governments. According to Professor Charles Adrian, studies show that people move from the central cities because " . . . people want to own their homes, that they want single-family dwellings, and they want more space than is available within built-up cities at a cost they can afford. They want to avoid or at least reduce dirt, noise, congestion, traffic, and taxes. They want vegetable gardens and rosebushes. They want a private play yard for children. People want better government than they think they are getting in the core

city."¹ The escape from the central city to obtain the above mentioned life indicates that the suburban residents would not be inclined to join themselves to the central city from which they have fled.

Professor Amos H. Hawley, Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan, pointed out in his studies of the suburbs surrounding Flint, Michigan, that although citizens were aware of deficiencies in public services, and they chose to believe that the suburban area was not significantly inferior in this respect from the central city and were thus not inclined to join the central city. Professor Hawley writes, "Most of them believe that improved services should be provided by the local government as it is presently constituted. In most cases they mean the township. Fewer than one-fifth feel that the path to better services is incorporation in the central city."²

Therefore, when problems of adequate services arise such as police and fire protection, sewer and water, the residents expect these services to be provided by the local government as it is presently constituted.

However, there appears to be some evidence that although the residents of townships expect services to be provided by the township government, many have very little knowledge and interest in township government. Professor Hawley found that

¹Charles R. Adrian, Governing Urban America (Boston, Mass.: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1955), p. 31.

²Amos H. Hawley, "Challenge of Population Change," Michigan Municipal Review, Vol. XXXIV, (January, 1961), p. 7.

" . . . two-fifths of the suburban residents were unable to identify a single elective office in their local governments. Less than eight per cent could name as many as five offices."³

In another article, Basil Zimmer and Amos Hawley conclude by stating, "In short, there is support for at least the tentative conclusion that the fringe residents in the Flint metropolitan area are not well informed about their own government, to say nothing of governmental forms and procedures in general, to make a mature decision on how to deal with their problems."⁴

If suburban residents are uninformed and uninterested in township government, and are not interested in the central city, what is their view of the function and purpose of local government?

One author suggests " . . . that urban Americans use political boundaries in place of economic interdependence as the catalyst to create some of the most important social and symbolic conditions of grass roots life."⁵ What are some of the important social and symbolic conditions of grass roots life? Professor Wood continues: "The small town, the small community, this is what seems good about the suburb. . . . Spontaneous collaboration, voluntary neighborliness, purposeful

³Ibid., p. 7.

⁴Basil G. Zimmer and Amos H. Hawley, "Local Government as Viewed by Fringe Residents," in Rural Sociology, Vol. 23, (December, 1958), p. 370.

⁵Robert C. Wood, Suburbia - Its People and Their Politics (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), p. 104.

participation, these are the goals of real suburbanites."⁶

Wood further states that "The justification of suburban legal independence rests on the classic belief in grass roots democracy, our long standing conviction that small political units represent finest expression of popular rule, that the government closest to home is best."⁷

In summary, suburban residents do not want to live in the central city because they associate dirt, noise, traffic, poor government with the former city; they appear to be uninterested and uninformed about township government, they want to belong to small units of government that provides or protects the values they associate with small town living.

Therefore, it would appear that suburban residents would not be interested in creating large cities. All the values and attitudes held by suburban residents would appear to predispose them against the creation of a large organization from which they are escaping. But one could argue that a city 36 square miles does not classify as a small political unit and yet the three suburban areas examined all finally became cities with extensive area and population.

In addition, the preceding chapters seem to indicate that the three townships were lacking in social and economic unity. It has been shown that the townships generally consisted of residential neighborhoods that differed greatly from each other. These were older residential areas that had their own

⁶Ibid., p. 16.

⁷Ibid., p. 12.

identity and others which had a definite historic origin. Other communities were created to fulfill dreams of the original owners. Many of these residential neighborhoods were more closely allied, geographically, socially, and economically with adjacent cities than they were to each other or the township as a whole. All three townships had more than one, often many, postal zones, telephone exchanges, school districts which contributed to the lack of unity among the communities and neighborhoods within a township. There appears to be no unifying force, whether political, economic, social or geographic, that would unite the many different communities and neighborhoods together as one large new city. The only thing all the separate communities and neighborhoods had in common was that by act of law, they were located in a political subdivision called a township.

It would seem then that when the residents of the various small communities and neighborhoods acted to attain their goals, they would establish these small communities as cities or villages.

This is what happened in some cases, particularly in Southfield Township, where the northern part of the township divided itself into three small home rule villages. Also, in Southfield Township, the town site of Lathrup incorporated as the City of Lathrup Village. It has been shown that there were many attempts in Warren and one in Livonia for smaller areas to attempt to incorporate their particular neighborhood or community into separate political units. However, in most cases these attempts failed because the voters refused to vote

favorably for proposed cities. The question can well be raised - Why did the separate neighborhoods and communities eventually join together and incorporate as a whole township into home rule cities? There is no single answer to the question. The elements of the decision to incorporate the entire township probably can best be viewed by investigating the various reasons why groups, government officials, associations and neighborhoods supported the movement to incorporate as a home rule unit of government. The remainder of the chapter will attempt to explore some of the more obvious and major events and reasons by various individuals, groups and associations as to their part in the incorporation movement.

I. URBANIZATION SETS THE STAGE

In the three township areas, rapid urbanization and industrialization can be viewed as setting the stage for some kind of community action. In all three townships, rapid population increases and industrialization in parts of the townships resulted in anxieties and tensions among various communities within the township and between residents and township officials.⁸

Tensions and anxieties become particularly evident when a large tax base is created suddenly in a small area within a township.

Also past differences encourage further feelings of antagonism between residents and officials and add to the desire to become independent. In 1942, Livonia Township

⁸In the context of this study "anxieties" refer to vague, unfounded fears while "tensions" is defined as a state of strained relations caused by friction and opposition between groups which lead to opposition and conflict.

officials, anticipating industrial expansion in the southern part of the township, rezoned a strip of land along the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad as industrial. The nearby residential area in the southeastern part of the township known as New Detroit strongly opposed this action of the township board on the grounds that they had moved from the City of Detroit to escape the noise and smoke of industry and therefore wanted to keep Livonia a quiet residential community. The residents of the New Detroit area held a number of meetings with township officials regarding their opposition to the rezoning but were unsuccessful in changing the situation. Problems between the Township Board and the residents of New Detroit were increased with the location of the race track adjacent to the New Detroit Subdivision. The residents of the subdivision argued that the race track would bring many "undesirables" to the township. But, again the residents of the subdivision were unsuccessful in changing the township board's decision.

In the southwest section of Warren Township was an area approximately five square miles known as the Fitzgerald Community. This area was one of older residential areas of the township and was located adjacent to some of the major industries of the township. In 1943 the township board allowed a trailer-park to be located in the Fitzgerald area. The residents of the Fitzgerald area strongly protested the construction of the trailer-park in their community and argued for a number of years with the township board for its removal. However, the township officials refused to take any action to satisfy the residents of the area.

The laws of the State of Michigan governing annexation and incorporation also contribute to the tensions and anxieties between residents of small communities and township officials. The state laws make it relatively easy for an area to incorporate as a home rule city or annex to an adjacent community, if the people within the area so desire. Since boundaries of a new city are determined by the petitioners, it allows small areas to incorporate and include desirable tax property (industrial and commercial) by a simple majority vote by the residents within the area as a whole. Similarly, annexation laws make it relatively easy for cities to annex valuable tax property adjacent to their cities when there are no residents in the area to vote on the issue.

When social tensions and anxieties build up in a township, and are intensified by the uncertainties of state law governing incorporation and annexation, small communities may try to divorce themselves from the township, who they look upon as the cause of their problems. Usually, when the small communities within the township attempt to incorporate as a home rule city, they are themselves made up of wealthy residents or include the most desirable tax base within the township.

In Warren Township, the residents of the Fitzgerald area, who were at odds with the township officials, attempted to incorporate as a home rule city in 1947 and 1949. Although the issue was defeated both times, the highest tax base of the township was included in the proposed new city. Also, in Livonia Township, the residents of New Detroit circulated incorporation petitions for a proposed city of Elm, which included

both the race track and the new General Motors Hydramatic Plant. However, in this case the township officials filed incorporation petitions for the entire township a few weeks prior to the residents of New Detroit. In Warren Township, the southeast area of the township attempted to annex to the City of East Detroit; however, the issue was defeated by the voters of East Detroit.

In addition, when a large commercial or industrial tax base is suddenly created in a small area and again the uncertainties of state law governing annexation and incorporation, small areas within a township are tempted to incorporate and grab the desirable tax base for their own without consideration of what effect it will have on other areas of the township or the township as a whole unit. In Southfield Township, a small residential area adjacent to the Northland Shopping Center, twice attempted to incorporate as the City of Southfield Park in order to capture this lucrative tax base. Also, the City of Berkley attempted to annex the Northland Shopping Center. In Warren Township, incorporation of the township was initiated when rumors were spread that the residents of Warren Village were planning to incorporate and include the new, huge, General Motors Corporation Technical Center. In Livonia, the area near the race track attempted incorporation.

It has been shown in the preceding chapters that prior to township incorporation, there were a number of attempts in each township to incorporate small areas within the township as home rule cities. As a reaction to the tension and anxieties and the strong possibilities of losing desirable tax base,

other groups initiated proposals to incorporate the entire township.

The proposal to incorporate the entire township led to further anxieties and tensions in other residential areas of the township who were not concerned prior to township incorporation. This is particularly the case in Southfield Township where residents in certain small communities and subdivisions felt that a way of life was being threatened. In those communities where the over-riding value was to maintain a quiet, peaceful residential neighborhood, industrialization, commercialization and incorporation threatened a way of life. In Southfield, the townsite of Lathrup incorporated as a separate home rule city to protect its identity and fulfill the dreams of its founder by creating a new kind of city. The area in the northern part of Southfield Township incorporated into three separate villages to protect a way of life. As stated in the charter of the Village of Franklin: "We, the residents of Franklin, by virtue of rights granted us by the Constitution and laws of the State of Michigan, wishing to preserve our simple rural way of life and the identity of historic Franklin, do hereby ordain and establish this village of Franklin Charter."⁹

Not only did these communities finally incorporate to protect their way of life, but they strongly opposed and fought township incorporation.

⁹ Preamble of the Charter for the Village of Franklin, Michigan, adopted June, 1954.

In the three townships included in this study, it appears that the areas most successful in incorporating a small area of the township have been in those areas where the residents feel that a "way of life" is being threatened; that is residents of a homogeneous community have values that separate it sharply from other township residents. In those areas where the major reason for incorporation was either to separate themselves from cause of their problem (the township board) or an attempt to "grab" the best tax base, the areas appeared to have little success in their incorporation attempts.

One author explains the feeling of preserving a way of life by stating, "Political authority aims to replace relative economic isolation and to engender the critical sense of separate identity and to give the lonely metropolitan man a home again."¹⁰

In summary, when tensions and anxieties build up between small communities within the township and the township board, and due to the state laws governing incorporation of a home rule city, many small communities attempt to resolve their tensions and problems by incorporating a small area or at least in many cases there were strong attempts to incorporate. Some of the major causes of the tension between township residents and township officials were (1) problems over zoning, industrial location, and trailer parks; (2) certain communities feel their "way of life" is being threatened by industrialization and commercialization; (3) attempts to "grab" the best

¹⁰Wood, op. cit., p. 104.

tax base; and (4) an uneven distribution of tax base usually concentrated in a small area.

Therefore, prior to incorporation of the entire township, there has been a history in each township of rapid population and industrial growth which have created many tensions within the township and as a solution to the tensions and anxieties many communities of the township attempted to incorporate a small area as a home rule city.

II. TOWNSHIP INCORPORATION - LEADERSHIP AND INTEREST GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

A. Leadership

Citizen Groups

Except for Livonia Township, where incorporation petitions were circulated and filed by the township clerk, initiation of township incorporation and the circulation of petitions were initiated by citizen groups organized specifically for the promotion of township incorporation. In Warren Township, the residents of the Van Dyke area were discussing the feasibility of incorporating their own residential area into a home rule city when they heard a rumor that the village of Warren was discussing an incorporation which would include the General Motors Technical Center which was the greatest taxpayer in the township. The residents of the Van Dyke area then quickly reorganized their committee to a committee of seventy-five people from all parts of the Township and began circulating a petition and began to actively campaign for incorporation of the entire township. In response to a small area attempt to

incorporate the southeastern part of Southfield Township and take the huge tax base of the Northland Shopping Center, a Save Our Southfield Committee was organized to oppose small area incorporation. A short time later the Save Our Southfield Committee was reorganized into the Southfield Urban League to actively support and campaign for the incorporation of the entire township. The Southfield Urban League was the primary organization which kept the township incorporation issue alive during the long period while various communities in the township separated from the township through incorporation. Although township incorporation in Livonia was initiated by the township clerk, immediately after the filing of the petitions a one hundred member Livonia Citizen Committee was organized to promote incorporation and was headed by a citizen not connected with the township government.

It is apparent that the main concern of the Citizen Committees in all three townships was to protect the tax base as a whole and prevent small areas or communities from incorporating and taking the best tax base away from the township as a whole.

In Livonia the main argument presented by the Livonia Citizen Committee was " . . . in order to prevent a small selfish group taking away the township's most valuable assets and revenues, a group of public minded citizens representing the entire township has put into motion a proceeding to incorporate the entire area of the township as a home rule city to be known as the City of Livonia. In doing so we feel that we

are about to create a city for all the people of Livonia, rather than allow the most valuable part of the township to be seized for the benefit of a few."¹¹

As in Livonia, the citizen committees in both Warren and Southfield also stressed the point that unless the township incorporated as a whole unit, the township would be broken up into smaller cities each grabbing the best tax and leaving the remaining part of the township in a poor financial situation.

Thus, the main force initiating township incorporation was a citizen's group very much concerned about what would happen to taxes if the best tax base disappeared. The concern for tax base also becomes very evident during the period the charter commissioners of the three townships were deciding the types of government for the new cities. It has been pointed out in the previous chapters that the tax rates for the new cities were important issues during the drafting of the charters. Although state law allows a maximum tax rate of 20 mills, none of the three new cities came close to maximum limit. In Southfield and Warren, the limit was a tax rate of 8 mills, and in Livonia 5 mills.

The concern over taxes was also evident during the campaign for incorporation. In all three townships the tax issue was the main argument of the opponents of incorporation. The opponents of incorporation constantly argued that becoming

¹¹Livonian, December 9, 1949. An advertisement by the Livonia Citizen Committee called "Birth of a City."

a city would result in higher taxes while the proponents of incorporation contended that a city would not necessarily mean higher taxes. Probably, because the tax rate was a heavily discussed issue during the incorporation campaign, the charter commissioners were committed to keeping the tax rate as low as possible.

Therefore, one of the strongest factors leading to township incorporation were the anxieties of the citizens concerning their tax base and what it would do to them as individual property owners if they lost their best tax base. In Livonia another factor was the race track. Since state laws allow 20 per cent of the betting proceeds to be returned to the local community, the township officials promoted incorporation since only home rule cities were eligible to receive the sizeable and allowable proceeds from racing.

Leadership Personality Holding Township Offices in the Decision Making Process

Usually uniting with the early supporters of township incorporation were various township officials both elected and appointed. In Warren Township shortly after the citizen organization had filed incorporation petitions, the township supervisor, treasurer, clerk and members of the planning commission became active champions for incorporation as a home rule city. In Livonia, the township clerk initiated the home rule movement. Although the popular supervisor of Livonia was hesitant at first to support township incorporation, Mr. Jesse Ziegler, the Republican township supervisor for 17 years became an active proponent of township incorporation. Mr. Ziegler's

reluctance was indicated shortly after the filing of the petition for the incorporation of New Detroit, when he stated that " . . . at first I was not in favor of incorporation, but I have changed my mind" ¹²

Earlier Mr. Ziegler stated that, " . . . the township is far from ready for incorporation as a city, but, . . . the people who want to grab the two square miles with most of the township valuation . . . and are willing to leave the rest of the area utterly poor as far as schools and other township functions are concerned . . . leaves us with the only alternative of incorporating the entire township so that taxes are equitable." ¹³

After Mr. Ziegler joined in support of township incorporation all the township officials endorsed the idea of township incorporation.

Southfield Township was the only township of the three where there was not 100 per cent support by township officials in favor of incorporation. In Southfield, after incorporation petitions were filed the township supervisor, clerk, and two trustees opposed incorporation as being too uneconomical and because the population was too scattered to make a single city. ¹⁴

Favoring township incorporation were the treasurer, two township trustees and members of the planning and zoning board. However, shortly after the initiation of township incorporation, the long-time supervisor died and the successor

¹²Livonian, January 20, 1959. News item.

¹³Detroit News, November 3, 1949, p. 46.

¹⁴Pontiac Press, December 18, 1950.

to the office came out very strongly for incorporation. However, the township clerk and two trustees remained opposed to incorporation to the very end.

A probable explanation of the opposition of the township clerk and two trustees in Southfield is that they lived in the northern part of the township where the opposition to township incorporation was centered. As was noted in the chapter on Southfield, the residents of the northern end viewed incorporation as a threat to their "fine residential community." Therefore, the clerk and two trustees probably reflected the attitudes of the community where they resided.

Excepting the three township officials in Southfield, the township officials in all three townships very strongly endorsed incorporation of the whole township and campaigned very actively for its approval. The township officials were speakers at many meetings and in many cases ran personal advertisements in the local newspapers urging the people to vote for incorporation. It is interesting to note that in two townships, Warren and Livonia, where the local elected officials supported the issue early in the campaign and actively campaigned for the issue, incorporation appeared to have an easier time in receiving the approval of the voters. In Southfield, where there was mixed feeling on the part of township officials, it took eight years from initiation of the issue until it was finally approved by the voters.

The question well may be raised why township officials supported incorporation as a home rule city. There is probably no single explanation why township officials endorsed and

campaigned for incorporation, but probably a combination of factors. I would suggest that the following three factors were considered by township officials prior to their commitment to township incorporation.

1. The change from a rural township form of government to a home rule city in a large growing area would appeal to those township officials who were interested in moving up the ladder to higher political positions. Also, the position of being mayor, clerk or treasurer of a large, fast growing city would be of more prestige and probably have a higher salary than the same office under a township form of government. In Warren Township the new, young, aggressive and popular supervisor could see the possibility of greater responsibility, powers, and prestige by the change to a city government. The supervisor became the first "strong mayor" of the City of Warren and later became the clerk of Macomb County. The actions of the supervisor prior to incorporation would lead one to believe that he was interested in climbing the political ladder of success. (See Chapter III on the background and history of the supervisor). Another political factor which probably played an important part in the decision of the township officials in supporting incorporation was the possibility of losing power, prestige, position and salary and political control if they did not support incorporation. It has been pointed out that initiation of township incorporation was by citizen committees who were concerned over the possibility of losing a tax base. In other words, township officials were probably convinced that the issue had a good chance of being

approved and if they failed to support the incorporation issue others would take control of the movement and leave the township official out of the basic decision making process of determining the form and organization of the new city government. If the township officials had determined in their own minds that the issue had a good chance of receiving voters' approval they would want to line up on the "winning side." Also, the township officials may have calculated that they had nothing to lose in supporting township incorporation. If incorporation failed, the township would remain as it was. If it won, they would participate in setting up a new government. If the issue lost but later was again an issue, they could argue that they consistently supported township incorporation because they were concerned over losing the tax base to other communities and they were concerned how this would affect home owners in the township. In fact, the only thing township officials had to lose was the "status quo" of township government and a traditional way of government. However, the township officials must have realized with the rapid population growth and industrialization that the former way of life would eventually change, especially when suburban residents began clamoring for services and improvements which would be difficult to provide under the township form of government. Thus, the township officials had nothing to lose and everything to gain by supporting incorporation as a home rule city.

2. If the township officials reasoned they had nothing to lose and much to gain by supporting township incorporation, they must have also reasoned that by not supporting incorporation

they could lose what control they already had--namely, political control of the township. The officials may have rationalized that if they did not support incorporation, or if they opposed it, and if the issue received voter approval, the voters would also elect pro-incorporation charter commissioners. Thus, if the township officials were to retain political control they must have a voice in deciding the organization of the new city. And, since they were known to the voters they would have a good chance of being elected to the charter commission if they supported incorporation. As it will be discussed later in the chapter, township officials did have a majority bloc on the charter commission in all three townships. Therefore, the officials could reason that unless they supported township incorporation they had everything to gain and everything to lose. But, if they did not support township incorporation they had everything to lose in terms of their future political hopes.

3. Township officials were also probably convinced that if they did not support incorporation, they would see the unity of the township broken. A number of small home rule communities would be incorporated. Township officials probably realized that because of rapid urbanization and the demand for additional services, the township type of government would be handicapped in providing future services. So, looking to the future and in order to preserve political unity, incorporation was the only way to solve the problems that had arisen in the township.

B. Role of "Interest Groups" in Township Incorporation Campaign
Role of Citizen Organizations

The one organization which primarily advocated township incorporation was the ad hoc Citizens Committees, that were organized for the express purpose of incorporating the township as a home rule city. These organizations consisted of from 75 to 100 people and were open to any citizen who wished to actively champion township incorporation. In Livonia, Warren, and Southfield these committees were highly organized with offices, steering committees and a large number of sub-committees. In Warren Township the Citizen Committee for incorporation was very active. Within a six-month period the committee held approximately 30 "Town Hall" meetings to tell residents why incorporation would benefit them. In fact, in Warren, the Citizens Committee committed themselves to the promise that none of the officers of the committee would run for elective office in the new city. In Southfield Township, the Citizen Committee also held a great number of meetings to acquaint the residents concerning incorporation. A Citizens' Committee was also active in Livonia to convince residents of the merits of incorporation. The methods used by the Citizens Committees were generally the same in all three townships. The committees sponsored a great number of meetings at which township officials would speak or else the committee would invite "experts" in from other cities, to speak on the advantages of being a city. It was also quite common to invite officials from the Michigan Municipal League to speak on the advantages

of incorporation. The Committees also printed brochures and ran advertisements endorsing incorporation in the local newspapers.

The Chairmen of the ad hoc Citizens Committee in all three townships were citizens who were not officially connected with the township government. However, in all three townships, local officials were prominent members of the Citizens Committee. A number of those who joined the Citizens' Committee in Southfield and Livonia were elected to the charter commission. In Warren, true to their promise, none of the officers of the committee ran for elective office. The Chairmen of the Citizens Committee in Livonia and Warren were both appointed to top administrative positions in the new cities.

Role of Business and Service Organizations

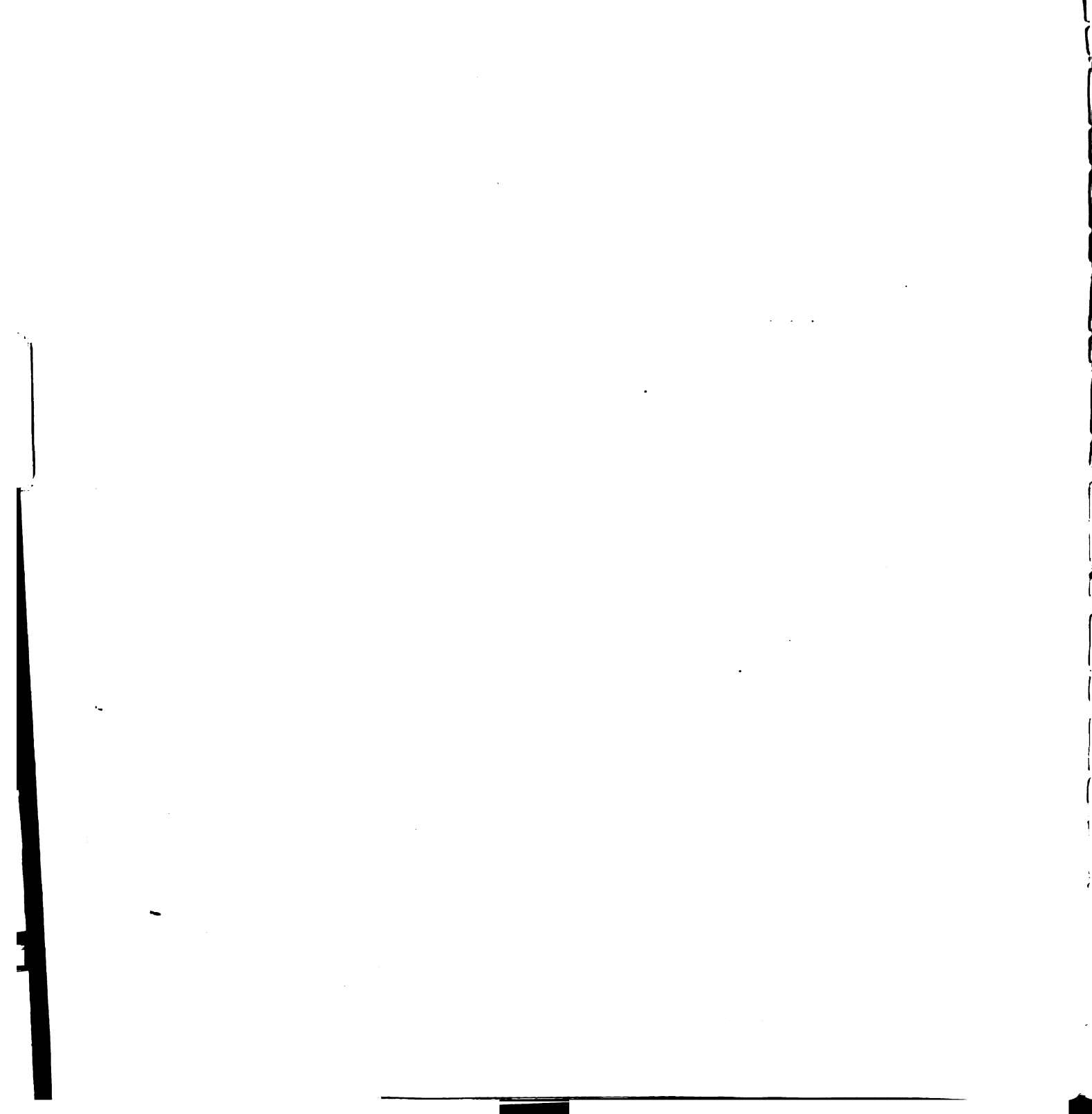
In Livonia Township the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs issued a statement endorsing township incorporation. In Warren Township the Chamber of Commerce supported incorporation with financial assistance channelled through the Citizens Committee. In addition, the executive Director of the Warren Chamber of Commerce was a member of the Citizens Committee Steering Committee. However, there appears to be very little activity by service clubs and business organizations during the incorporation campaign. Those business organizations who were in favor of incorporation usually announced their support through a news item in the local newspapers. Although there is no evidence of active support during the incorporation campaign, neither is there any evidence of service clubs, manufacturer's associations

or business associations opposing incorporation. It appears that the business interest supported incorporation but did no active campaigning such as newspaper advertisements, distribution of handbills or sponsoring of meetings. It appears that regular business interest of the township preferred to work with or through the ad hoc Citizens Committee as was done in Warren. In a recent publication Professor Adrian makes a comment that " . . . civic organization often consists of business or professional persons who do not want to alienate customers, clients, or patients. In order for a service club or community council to find something on which to center its activities over a period of time, it must find a project that will avoid an intramural clash of values and that will seem to members not to be likely to violate personal, social or economic interest."¹⁵ Thus, it is probable that given controversial issues such as township incorporation the business interest prefer to "play it safe" and support the issue through an ad hoc Citizens Committee.

Role of Political Parties

Since township governmental officials are elected on a partisan basis, one might expect incorporation to be a political issue with political parties on one side or the other. It could be argued that the political party out of office would support incorporation while the party in office would support the status quo. However, incorporation did not become a

¹⁵Social Science and Community Action, ed. Charles R. Adrian (Institute for Community Development, Michigan State University, 1960), p. 4.



partisan political issue. In Livonia both the Democratic and Republican Clubs endorsed incorporation, but there is no evidence of active campaigning by either party. There is no record of support of either party in Warren and Southfield Township. However, in Southfield the Democratic Party held a mass meeting for all the citizens and allowed each candidate for the Charter Commission to present his qualifications and opinions on certain issues such as tax rate, type of government, and type of elections. In Warren Township, the Democratic Party, which was in control of the township offices, did present a slate of candidates for the Charter Commission. But only two of eleven candidates supported were elected.

Mr. Robert Wood suggests a possible explanation why partisan politics does not enter local suburban campaigns. Mr. Wood argues that partisan political activity on local issues is contrary to the values held by suburban residents--it is one of the things they associate with the central city from which they are attempting to escape. Mr. Wood writes, "Finally, and apparently most frequently, local politics have no association, open or covered, with the established parties at all. Public affairs are the province of essentially political organizations--civic clubs, social leagues or improvement organizations--whose members are loosely tied together and whose announced goals are 'what is best for the community.'"¹⁶

¹⁶Wood, op. cit., p. 154.

Role of Neighborhood Associations

In connection with Mr. Wood's conclusion of how local affairs are handled, one thing stands out. In the incorporation campaign in the three townships, the neighborhood association, subdivision association, and improvement association played a prominent role. As indicated earlier in the chapter, many of the problems and anxieties in the township are the result of tension between small communities or neighborhood association and the township governing board. In Warren Township it was the Van Dyke citizens' organization, and those of the McKinley area and the Fitzgerald area. In Livonia, the citizens' group of the New Detroit subdivision was important. In Southfield such associations in such communities as Lathrup Townsite, Southfield Park, Franklin, Beverly Hills, Westwood, Bingham and the Magnolia Subdivision were important in the battle.

Generally, the major concern of a neighborhood improvement association was protecting property values. This attitude has been noticed in all the above mentioned neighborhood organizations. In some instances, where the neighborhood had all desired city services, township incorporation was opposed because the residents did not want to pay for the installation of water, sewer, new streets, etc., in other areas of the township.

In other neighborhoods, threatened commercialization or industrialization or the placing of a trailer park was a major concern to neighborhood associations. In other neighborhoods,

the desire to preserve residential development led to separate incorporation of their neighborhood. During the incorporation campaign these organizations held numerous meetings to discuss the merits of incorporation. In all three townships most opposition to township-wide incorporation came from such neighborhood associations. In Livonia, New Detroit bitterly fought township incorporation. In Warren, the Village of Warren opposed township incorporation. In Southfield, opposition to incorporation was so strong from the neighborhood associations located at the north section of the township that incorporation became a reality only after these neighborhoods were deleted from the boundary description of the finally approved City of Southfield. It was to these neighborhood associations that the Citizens Committees for incorporation carried their story.

The main story carried to these neighborhood associations by the proponents of township incorporation was that if the township did not incorporate, small areas would establish their own cities and include the most desirable tax base. By emphasizing this argument to neighborhood associations that had limited and self interested objectives in contrast to the broader needs of the township, the proponents succeeded in persuading the majority of neighborhood associations to support the incorporation issue at the polls. It was from such organizations that the Citizen Incorporation Committees drew their membership and strongest support.

Role of Newspapers

An important voice in the incorporation issue was the

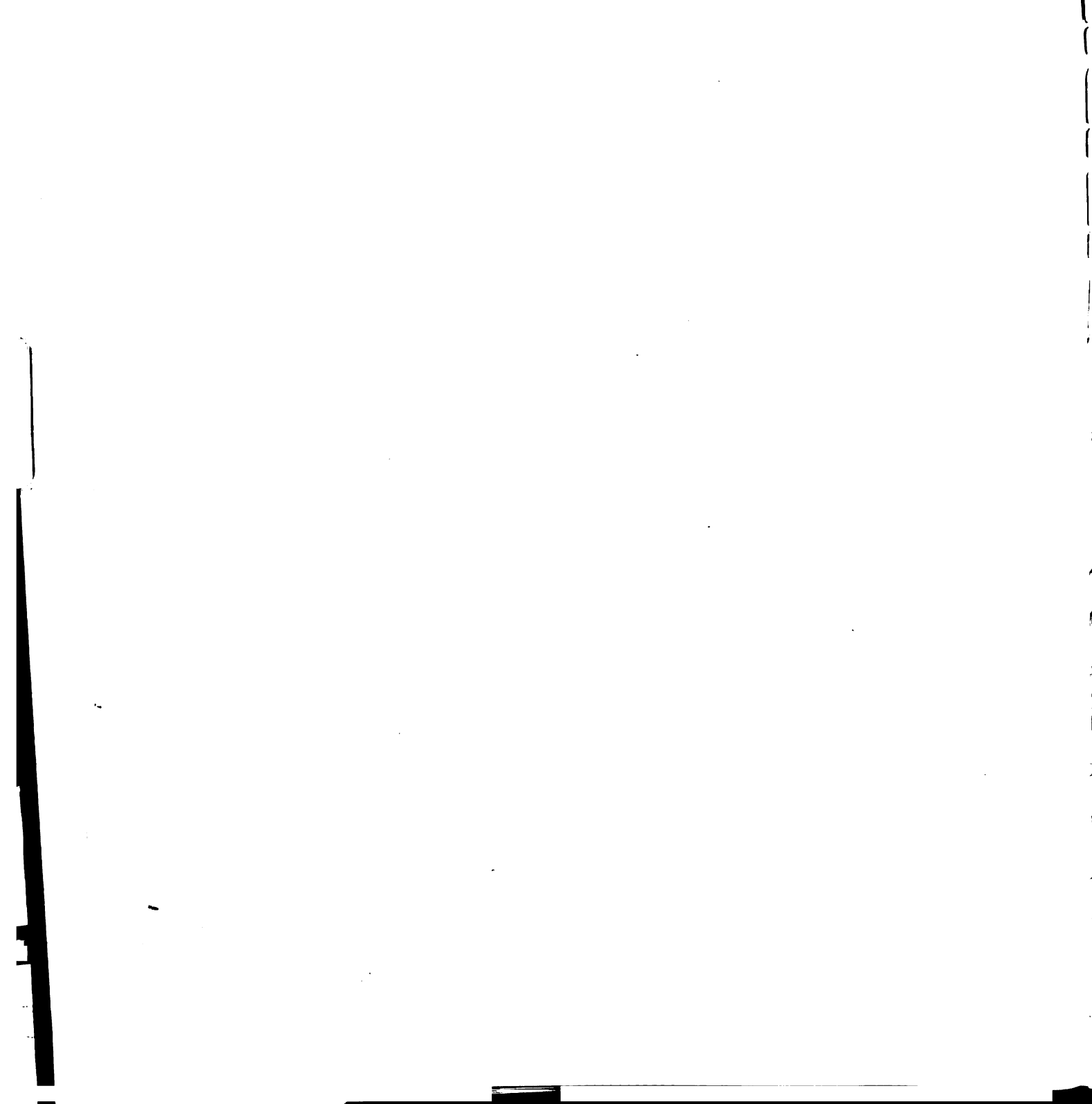
local weekly newspapers. All three townships were covered by weekly newspapers. The South Macomb News was primarily circulated in the southern part of Macomb County, which included Warren Township.

The Livonian, a weekly newspaper, was printed and published by the owner of the daily newspaper of Plymouth, Michigan, located to the west of Livonia. Its circulation was limited to the township of Livonia. The Four Corner Press gave weekly coverage in Southfield Township. The Four Corner Press was founded by two women who felt that there was need for news coverage in Southfield Township. It had its greatest circulation in the central and southern parts of the township. The newspaper circulated in the northern part of the township was the Birmingham Eccentric.

Of the three newspapers, The South Macomb News was the only newspaper that did not become involved in the incorporation issue. The only references to the incorporation issue in the township of Warren were occasional news items and advertisements by the Citizens Committee and by candidates seeking election as Charter Commissioners or city officers.

The reason for the lack of coverage by The South Macomb Record as compared to The Four Corner Press and The Livonian was probably because The South Macomb Record was circulated in a much broader area than the other two papers. The South Macomb Record was circulated in the southern part of Macomb County which included many cities and townships while The Four Corner Press and The Livonian were circulated within a single township.

These weeklies, in Southfield and Livonia Township,



were very active in behalf of incorporation. Immediately upon the initiation of the incorporation proposal in Livonia Township The Livonian came out in support of township incorporation and continued to endorse township incorporation, both with news stories and editorials until the issue was resolved. The editor of The Livonian constantly repeated in editorials that if the citizens were interested in the welfare of the community, they had no choice but to vote in favor of incorporation. In Southfield, The Four Corner Press repeatedly urged the voters to endorse township incorporation as against incorporating small segments of the township. On every occasion in Southfield, when the issue of a small area incorporation was being discussed and voted upon, the editor ran articles demonstrating that segmented incorporation was too costly and uneconomical. The editor of The Livonian consistently wrote that township incorporation would be a protection of what already existed-- "a fine residential community" and a method of self determination and self government. In both Livonia and Southfield the local newspapers viewed the incorporation issue as a must for community welfare.

It would be difficult to assess what influence the newspaper had on the outcome of the incorporation issue without a survey or interview with the newspaper readers. In Warren the issue passed without any significant newspaper support or coverage of the issue. In Southfield and Warren the incorporation issue was also approved, but there was strong newspaper coverage. In the previous chapter covering the incorporation of Southfield, especially the section on the newspaper, it

appears that the newspaper may have had some influence on the small area incorporation attempts. Kenneth Verberg investigated the role of the newspaper in considerable depth in his study of incorporation in Wyoming Township and his conclusion was " . . . that a community newspaper . . . can be an effective mold of public issues, particularly on public issues of a local nature."¹⁵

It is not surprising that the local newspapers supported incorporation. A newspaper covering a number of small cities would invite competition against the "foreigner." But if the whole township were incorporated it would become the official paper for the new city. But one author who has made a study of community newspapers also argues that "The community newspaper publisher is not merely a common agent attempting to increase his profits without regard to the social consequences of his newspaper content. He is in too close contact with his clientele to be able to accomplish this; and he is aligned with the local community leaders who have a vested interest in promoting the respectability of the local community."¹⁶

Since the local community leaders strongly came out in support of incorporation, then from Janowitz's analysis one would expect the newspapers to also support incorporation.

In summary, various organizations including service clubs, citizen committees, the newspapers and neighborhood

¹⁵Kenneth Verberg, "A Case Study of Incorporation, Wyoming, Michigan" (unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1960), p. 265.

¹⁶Morris Janowitz, "The Community Press in an Urban Setting," The Free Press, 1952, p. 103.

associations each played various roles in the incorporation campaign. Certain interest groups, including the press, neighborhood association, citizen committees played much more important roles in the incorporation issue than others which included the political parties, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, and Kiwanis Clubs. Probably the most important interest groups in township affairs would be the various neighborhood associations and civic groups. It is from these organizations that incorporation received its strongest support and opposition.

It appears that the ad hoc Citizens Committees were the primary organizational channels for both the support and opposition of township incorporation. Although there is not much evidence of an active role either for or against incorporation by business organizations this is not true when it comes to the final acceptance of the proposed charters of the new cities.

III. CHARTER COMMISSIONS AND ELECTED CITY OFFICIALS

Charter Commissions

The transition from township to home rule city was relatively quiet compared to the bitter wrangling and discussions concerning the decision of form and organization of the governmental structure for the new cities. Under state law, the voters must not only approve the issue of incorporation but they must also elect a nine member Charter Commission whose duties are to draw up a charter for the new city. In Livonia, the editor of the Livonian stated that the decision on the form of government was " . . . the most bitter factional dispute

in the history of Livonia Township."¹⁷

Of the three townships, only in Southfield was there little bitter fighting over the form of government.

In Warren and Livonia Townships the most controversial decision was whether the new city government was to be organized under the "Council-Manager" or the "Strong Mayor" form. In both Warren and Livonia Township the Charter Commission decided for the "Strong Mayor" while in Southfield the decision was a modified "Strong Mayor" with a city administrator.

Charles Adrian in his book, Governing Urban America, writes that "The Council-Manager plan is often launched and supported by good-government and business groups, chambers of commerce, property owners' associations, taxpayers associations, civic associations, citizen action groups, women's clubs, and very often newspapers."¹⁸

The support for the "Council-Manager" form of government in both Livonia and Warren came from these groups mentioned by Adrian while support for the "Strong Mayor" came from the Charter Commissioners. In Livonia Township as soon as the Charter Commission had decided on the "Strong Mayor" form of government, a Good Government League was organized to oppose the "Strong Mayor" system of government and to promote the "Council Manager" form of government. Also, strongly endorsing the goals of the Good Government League were other community organizations, including Rosedale Gardens Civic Association, the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, the Taxpayers Association,

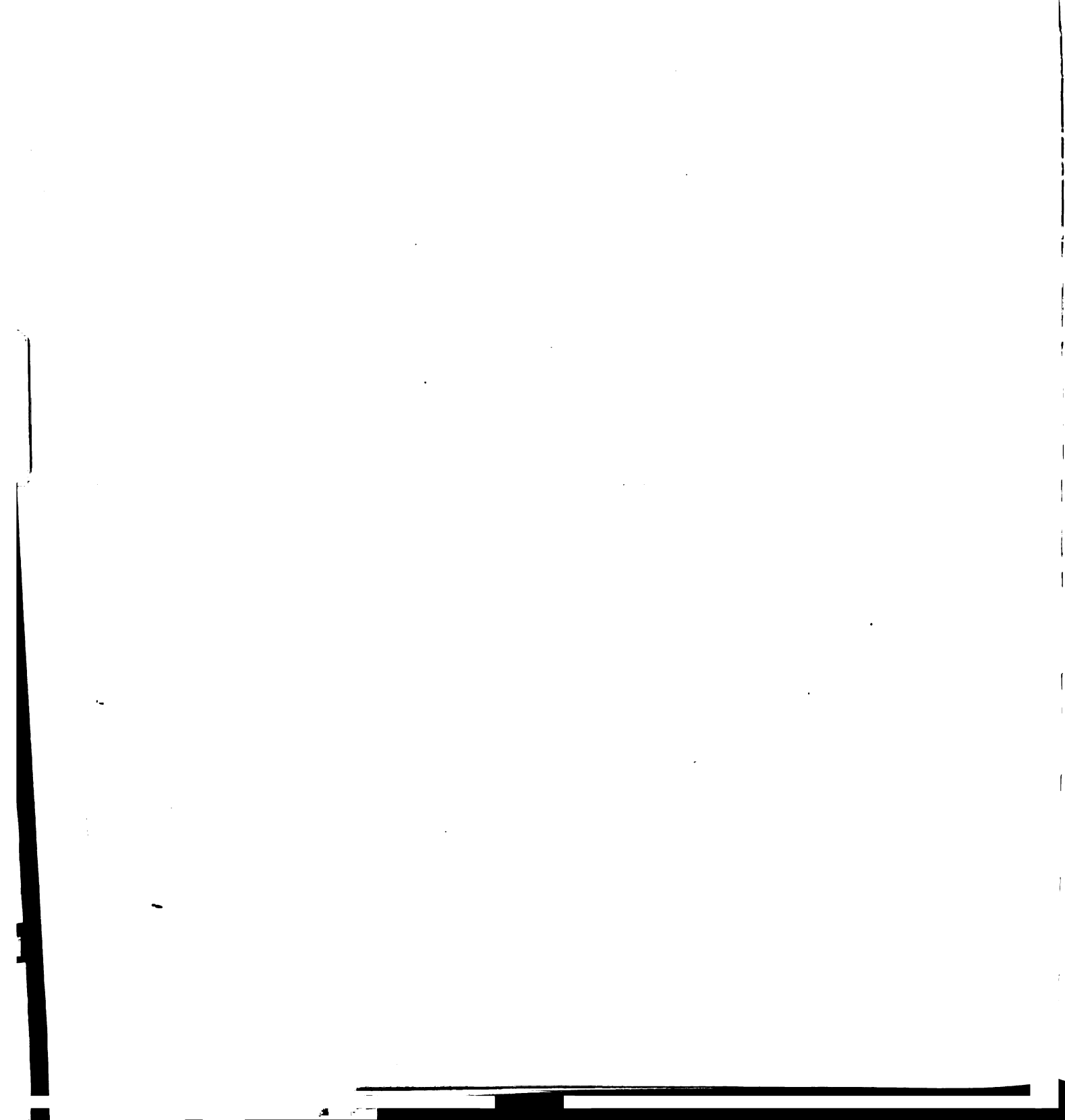
¹⁷Livonian, May 26, 1950. Editorial.

¹⁸Adrian, op. cit., p. 205.

and two charter commissioners. The Good Government League ran full-page advertisements in the Livonian for five consecutive weeks as well as organizing and sponsoring a number of "town-hall" type of meetings. Backing the "Strong Mayor" form of government were the Citizens for Livonia Committee, many township officials and five Charter Commissioners. Although the Good Government League built up strong support for the "Council Manager" form of government, the Charter Commission refused to reconsider their decision.

In Warren Township a similar pattern occurred. After the Charter Commission voted in favor of the "Strong Mayor" form of government, the Chamber of Commerce came out strongly for a "Council Manager" government.

During a five month period the Chamber of Commerce led the fight to mobilize public opinion to influence the Charter Commission to reverse its decision and adopt a "Council Manager" government. At one time the Chamber of Commerce sent out 14,000 post-card questionnaires asking the residents to state their preference. With a response of only 1,756 post-cards, the questionnaire indicated 1,002 votes in favor of the "Council Manager" form of government. The Charter Commission strongly criticized the Chamber of Commerce for their action and stated that the Charter Commission would make the decision. Also supporting the Chamber of Commerce in their campaign for the "Council Manager" form of government were the Warren Community Council, Warren Village and the McKinley Home Owners Association. The Warren Community Council was organized expressly for promoting the "Council-Manager" form of government and consisted



of representatives from various churches, civic and service clubs of Warren Township. As in Livonia, the Warren Charter Commission stood firm and refused to change their decision. In Southfield, the form of government never appeared to be any real issue. As outlined in the Southfield Chapter, the people had an opportunity to vote on charter three different times. The first charter was the "Strong Mayor" form; the second charter the "City Manager" form; and the third charter, which was approved, was a compromise between the "Strong Mayor" and the "Council Manager." In Southfield the big issue was not over the form of government but rather the establishment of tax limit for the city.

Another controversial issue usually facing the charter commission in the three townships concerned the election or appointment of the clerk and treasurer. In all cases but one it was decided to have the clerk and treasurer elected. The exception was in Livonia, where the clerk was to be appointed and the treasurer elected. On this particular issue the Good Government League and other associations in Livonia and Warren who opposed the "Strong Mayor" form of government supported the election of the clerk and treasurer.

The decision for the "Strong Mayor" form of government in Warren and Livonia and also in the first attempt in Southfield can probably be understood by looking at the make-up of the charter commissioners. Table 4 indicates whether the men elected to the charter commission were township officials or not. As Table 4 reveals, township officials constituted the majority on each charter commission.

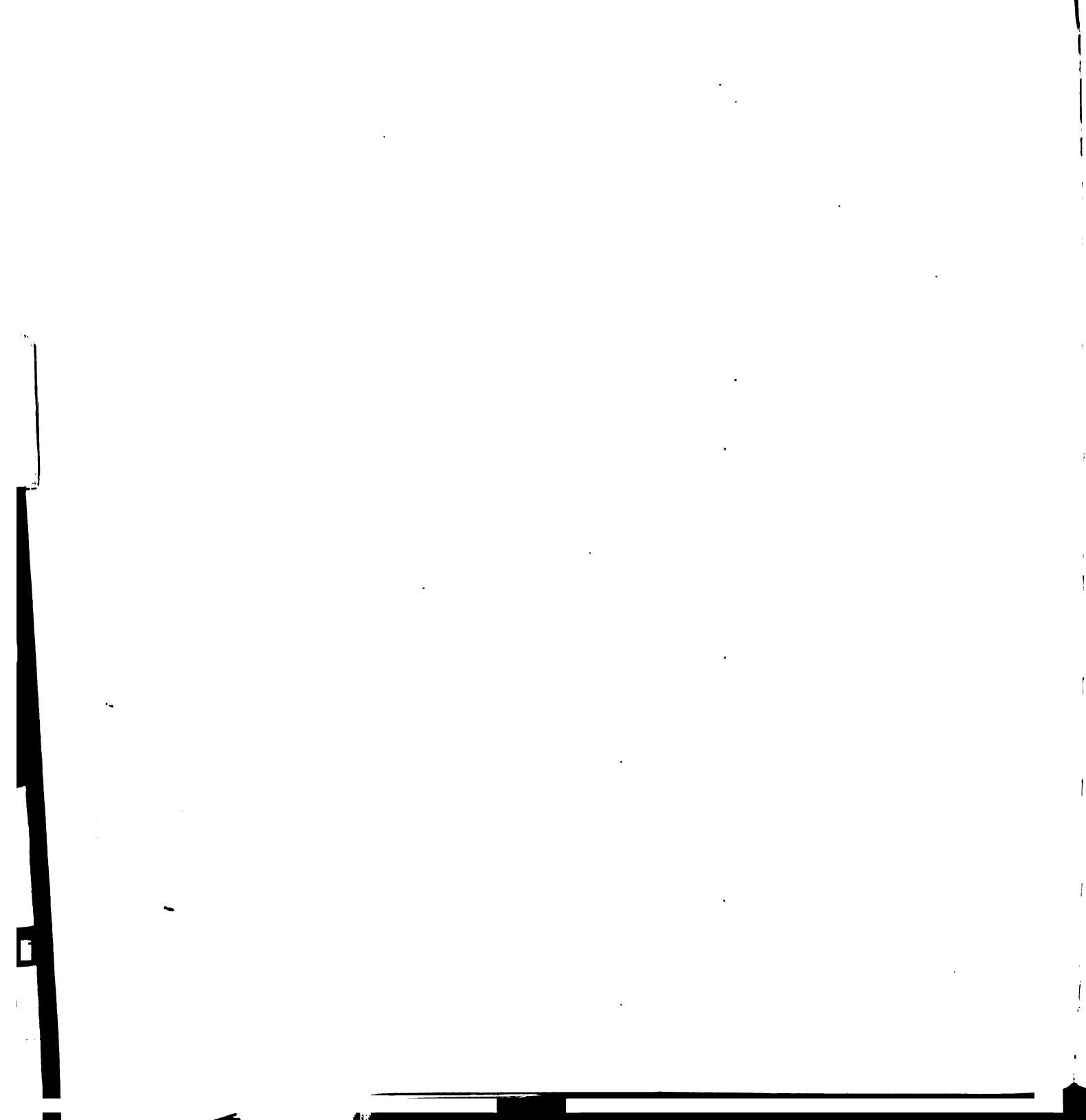


TABLE 4

NUMBER OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS AS TO NON-TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS
ELECTED TO CHARTER COMMISSIONS

Township	Township Officials			Non-Township Officials
	Elected	Appointed	Total	
Livonia	4	1	5	4 (All four active in Citizens Committee for Incorporation)
Warren	3	3	6	3 (Two former twp. trustees)
Southfield 1st Comm.	4	1	5	4
3rd Comm.	5	1	6	3

As the table indicates the township officials constitute the locus of power if they remained united. As was pointed out in the previous three chapters, the township supervisors were consistently elected to all the charter commissions. In addition, usually the township clerk and treasurer were also elected to the charter commission. In all three communities, if opposition arose on the charter commission, the township officials consistently voted as a bloc for the "Strong Mayor" form of government. In not one instance is there evidence that any of the township officials on the charter commission supported the "Council Manager" form of government. In all instances, those commissioners voting against the "Strong Mayor" form of

government were the non-township official members.

A probable explanation of why the township officials elected the "Strong Mayor" form of government is that another form of governmental structure would tend to lessen their control over community affairs. Under the township form of government the main administrative officers, the supervisor, clerk and treasurer were also members of township board, which was the policy making body of the township. Therefore, under the township form of government, administrative positions were closely fused with the policy decision making body. Under the "Council Manager" form of government, at least theoretically, policy decisions are separated from administration. Therefore, the "Strong Mayor" form of government more closely resembled the township form of government at least as far as the chief executive position was concerned. In other words, the Mayor would be in a comparable position to the supervisor. He would be both the chief executive and also have a strong voice on the policy making body. Therefore, the alignment was that the township officials favored the "Strong Mayor" form of government while the civic associations, civic clubs, service clubs and the Chamber of Commerce favored the "Council Manager" form of government. The decision on the "Strong Mayor" form of government probably can be viewed as evidence to support an earlier suggestion why township officials supported township incorporation. It was suggested that one reason why township officials endorsed township incorporation was to retain political control over the destiny of the township. The decision for the "Strong Mayor" form of government

is an example of how township officials retained control and shaped the new city government according to their satisfaction.

Table 5 shows the major aspects of organization of the new city governments in the three townships.

TABLE 5
BASIC DECISION CONCERNING CITY ORGANIZATION

City	Form of Government	Treasurer and Clerk	Type of Election	System of Representation	Tax Limit
Livonia	Strong Mayor	Treasurer elected; Clerk appointed	Non-Partisan	At Large	5 Mill
Southfield	Modified Strong Mayor and City Administrator	Elected	Non-Partisan	At Large	7 Mill
Warren	Strong Mayor	Elected	Non-Partisan	At Large	8 Mill

As indicated, there is a strong resemblance in form of governmental organization in all three communities. A low tax limitation, non-partisan election, representation at large, election of treasurer and clerk, and the "Strong Mayor" form of government (except for Southfield).

It appears that while the former township officials secured a "Strong Mayor" form of government the voters gained a low tax rate. Even the non-partisan election-at-large and the election of the treasurer and clerk represent the values

of direct popular political participation held by residents of suburban municipalities. Although there was strong opposition to the "Strong Mayor" form of government, the township officials remained firm and refused to change their decision even though considerable pressure was applied. In all three townships the voters ratified the new charters. However, the charter was ratified in Southfield only after the opponents of incorporation were left out of the new city. Except for one precinct in Livonia, there is no evidence that the decision on the "Strong Mayor" form of government had any major effect on the vote for the adoption of the charter. In Livonia Township, the residents of Rosedale Civic Association, although approving incorporation, rejected the proposed charter as a protest against the form of government. Rosedale Gardens was the only precinct rejecting the charter in Livonia Township.

As far as the local weekly newspapers were concerned, both the Livonian and the Four Corner Press were silent on the proposed form of government. Although they gave the charter commission full news coverage, both editors were silent on the issue of "Strong Mayor" vs. "Council Manager."

There was no active campaign for the adoption of the charter in the three townships. After the bitter disputes over the form of government the election for the adoption of charter and election of new city officials was perhaps an anti-climax. The only organization which put up a slate of candidates for positions in the new city government was the Democratic organization in Warren and a group called Citizens for Southfield in

Southfield Township. The Democratic organization in Warren was successful in getting only two of its eleven candidates elected. These two successful candidates were the township clerk and treasurer, who were running for their respective positions in the new city government. But the Democratic Party's choice for mayor, Representative Romano, was defeated. In Southfield the Citizens Committee identified candidates for the council as "preferred," "well-qualified" and "qualified." Six candidates identified as "preferred" were elected.

All the candidates listed as "preferred" were former officials in township governments or had been active in promoting township incorporation, either as charter commissioners or members of organizations favoring incorporation.

Officials of the New Cities

In the three new cities, all former township officials who chose to run were successful in being elected to political offices. In Warren and Livonia the former township supervisors were elected to the Mayor's office. In Southfield, the supervisor chose not to run and a former township trustee who was also a charter commissioner was elected mayor.

Also, in Warren, the former township clerk and treasurer were elected to the same positions in the new City of Warren. In Livonia the township treasurer was returned to his position in the new city while the former clerk was elected to the City Council. In Southfield, the township clerk lived outside the city limits and was ineligible to run for city office. But the former township treasurer was successful in retaining the same position in the new City of Southfield.

Also successful in being elected to positions in the new cities, usually to the city council, were former charter commissioners. Except for those few charter commission members who chose not to run, or when two or three charter commissioners ran for the same office, all charter commissioners who chose to run for office were successful in their attempts.

There was no lack of candidates for office in any of the three cities.

One thing that stands out is the great number of candidates which sought election to positions on either the charter commission or for the new city offices. In Livonia, there were a total of 44 candidates for the nine member charter commission and 20 candidates for 11 elective positions in the new city government. In Southfield, candidates for the four separate charter commissions ranged from 36 candidates for the first charter commission to 13 candidates for the last charter commission. Seeking election to 12 elective positions in the new City of Southfield were 30 candidates. The only candidates without opposition was the former township treasurer who had held that position for 12 years.

In Warren Township a total of 27 residents ran for the nine member charter commission. There was a total of 72 candidates seeking election to 14 positions in the new city government. Fifty-eight of the 72 candidates ran for positions on the city council. One can conclude that it appears with a change of governmental organization, such as from a township to a municipality, the citizens assess their opportunity for election to the governmental office to be greater than when the

political patterns have been established.

But, the record indicates that the best avenue open to election to a position in the newly organized cities is to be either a former township official or a member of the charter commission. It is also evident that in a transition stage of governmental organization the citizens are very dependent on former public officials for leadership.

Summary of Study

1. Township incorporation usually has its beginning when tension and anxieties build up in areas of rapid population growth. These tensions are usually between neighborhood organizations and the township officials and are generally caused by problems of changing land uses. These tensions are increased when large industrial and commercial developments are concentrated in small areas of the township. State laws governing incorporation and annexation make it possible for and perhaps tempt small residential neighborhoods to "grab" the large part of the tax base of a township by incorporation as home rule cities. Thus, the governmental ties between neighborhood and the township government are severed. The township government is viewed by the segments as causing the problems. Prior to township incorporation each township included in this study had a record of attempts and threatened attempts to incorporate small areas which threatened the tax base of the township unit of government.

2. In some instances, residential areas of the township which have a strong sense of self identity, usually based

on historic reasons for existence or because of different social and ethnic background than other township areas, decided to keep their own identity regardless of what it might mean to them in terms of a tax base to support "our community."

3. Incorporation of the entire township as a home rule city is usually initiated by ad hoc citizen organizations who are concerned over loss of a substantial tax base to another area. Thus, the Michigan Home Rule Act, which was enacted for areas to cope with service problems arising from rapid population growth, appears to have been used as a means of preserving community identification or preventing what the residents of most of the area would regard as selfish land grabs for the advantage of a few at the expense of many.

4. Generally, township officials endorsed and actively campaigned for township incorporation very early in the campaign. It appears that township officials perceived that the issue has a high probability of receiving voter approval. Also, by supporting the issue, township officials retained control over the decision making process and were able to shape the new municipal governmental structure to their ideals. Thus, they continued political control over the policy making body of the new city.

5. Neighborhood Associations were very important factors in suburban politics, particularly when an ideological value was in question such as residential vs. industrial or commercial development, zoning, "Strong Mayor" vs. "Council-Manager" boundaries and taxes.

6. Business interests, represented by the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, Exchange Clubs and others, although

endorsing incorporation preferred to channel their support through the ad hoc citizen committees, thus taking a "play-it-safe" position on the issue. But, when an ideological factor was involved such as the "Strong Mayor" vs. "Council-Manager" they became very vocal and active in supporting the "Council-Manager" form of government.

7. Local weekly newspapers in Livonia and Southfield played a very active role in support of township incorporation.

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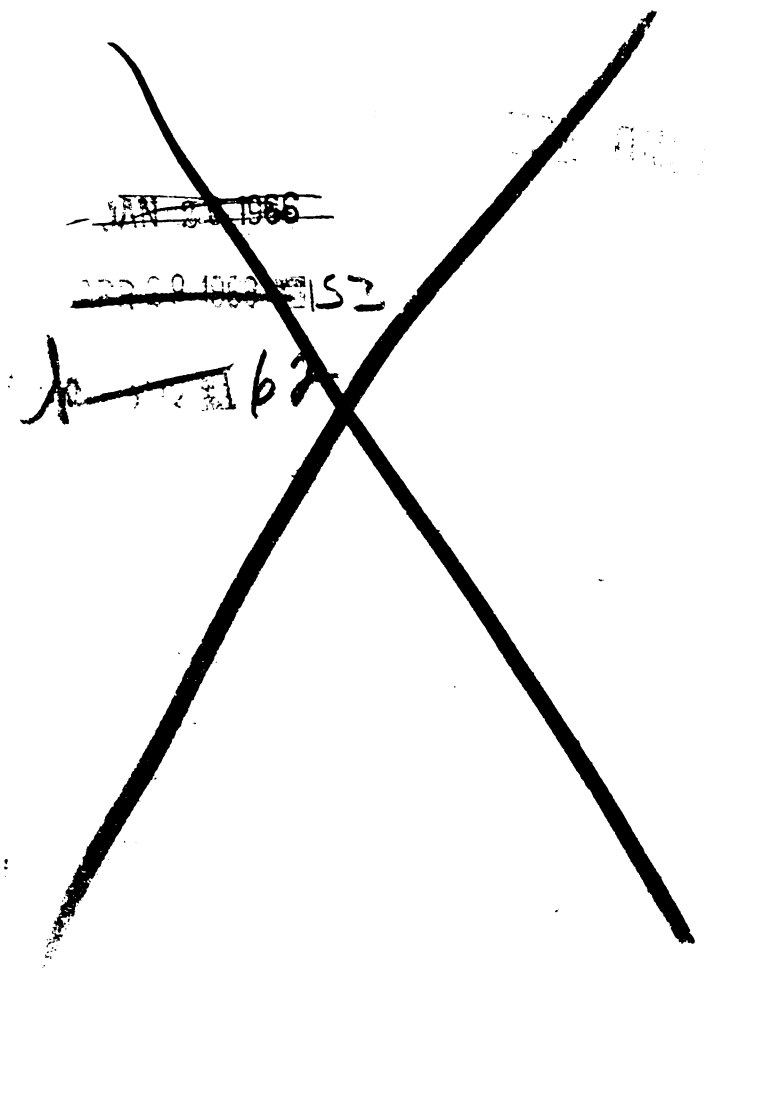
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