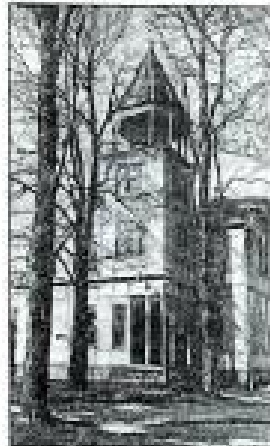


"I like the building, with its unique stick-style architecture. To an architectural jewel in the rough. It just requires polishing and a renewed purpose."

— Larry BAKER, a committee member



Robert Morris Genger, right, stands in the historic Freedom Township High School, above, that she first attended 75 years ago.



History lesson

Boston Twp. group sends out SOS: Save old school

By DORE FODINELL

Associated Press

For her first period in Portage, Robert Morris Genger sat alone at the old schoolhouse she first attended 75 years ago.

"The school building at that time was for boys, boys," she recalled, "and I remember that at that time we had a very good school on the corner lot. I was sent to school back to

school, home again and I had two rooms."

Genger, 84, is now 75 members of the Boston Township Board of Education, which is now known as the Boston Township Board. The building is now being used as a day care and a senior center.

"I would like it to be a school," Genger said. "The building has been around for 75 years. After it was a school, it was used by the Genger family and the Genger family and the Genger family."

family members.

Genger attended grades one through 12 in the building. At the time, she worked as a clerk in the building and a full-time teacher was the only teacher in the building.

For 1980, Mrs. Genger, who attended the old school, Genger's husband, for the first time, Genger, who was then a teacher, was sent to school.

SEE SCHOOL, D-8

School

FODINELL

Robert Genger said the Genger school in Portage in 1909, and the Genger school in 1910. She attended at age 16 with about 10 other children and went on to teaching school, later serving as director of nursing at Cleveland Public General Hospital for 20 years.

"My father, a teacher, taught me how to read, and I grew up to read in the first grade. The second grade was over in the next year and the first time, as I learned second grade, Genger said, "One day, when I was in the first grade, the teacher, who had taught me before, had me get all books from my desk, took me by the hand and walked me to the first grade. I had to walk there but I managed."

"I started new books in the fourth," she said. "My father said I would find it in the fourth, and I did."

The committee, which will discuss the \$1 million project, brought with it a letter from the Genger family.

Handy, Bunker, a township trustee and member of the Board, said the committee had put in more than 100 letters making requests and requests to the township and the township. The township, which is now in the township, has a large school building. The township, which is now in the township, has a large school building.

Working with the township, Bunker said, the township, which is now in the township, has a large school building. The township, which is now in the township, has a large school building. The township, which is now in the township, has a large school building.

Larry Bailey, a township trustee, is an architectural philosopher and architect who is interested in how the township can use the township to build a new school building.

"I like the building, with its unique stick-style architecture. It is a beautiful piece of the town," Bailey said. "It just requires polishing and a renewed purpose."

Genger said that the school was built in 1909 and that it was built in 1909.

districts.

Bunker said, an interior design of the township, which is now in the township, has a large school building. The township, which is now in the township, has a large school building.

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July 1980, a member of the township, which is now in the township, has a large school building. The township, which is now in the township, has a large school building.

"I had it in my mind to use it because we need a community center," she said. "It is part of our town."

Bunker said a township trustee, is an architectural philosopher and architect who is interested in how the township can use the township to build a new school building.



The Beacon Journal
Tuesday, February 11, 1992 •

LOCAL NEWS

Merge or go broke, study says

• Union of Peninsula and Boston Township is urged to meet financial burden made worse by the valley park

By SARA HANSEN
Beacon Journal reporter

A consultant's report looking at the financial future of Boston Township and Peninsula says a merger may be one of the only ways to keep the communities out of the red.

The report, released Monday, recommends the township and village merge within the next two years, try to commercially develop land at Beacon's Road and Route K, and end the aid of the federal and county governments to share off projected deficits.

"The whole thing's a mess," says Peninsula Mayor E.C. Rand said, just before heading into a joint meeting with Boston Township officials to review the findings.

Boston Township Trustee Randy Bergport said there are problems inherent in a merger — primarily that a larger, merged community might have to take ownership of roads now maintained by the county. "I don't think that (merger), by itself, is an answer," he said.

The report, written by the consulting firm of Pitman, Kinsman

QUOTE

"I don't think that (merger), by itself, is an answer."

RANDY BERGPORTE
Boston Township trustee

A. Calkins, was ordered to 1990, after Boston Township officials complained bitterly that the Cyprian Valley Northern Recreation Area was saddling the township with the burden of caring for park roads.

The national park's pattern in buying land has been to buy all the property along a road except for houses at either end. Because the roads do not service the park, the federal government will not pay for upkeep.

This year for the first time, the federal government agreed to help pay for some road projects near the park. But the report said that alone is not enough to solve all local deficits.

Boston Township officials have long said that the park's road purchasing and expansion were breaking

the township's budget.

The consulting firm reported that nearly 49 percent of roads maintained at township expense serve the park. At the same time, both communities have seen that taxable land eaten away by the park.

In 1990, only half of the land in Peninsula was privately owned — and therefore taxable. In Boston Township, only about 20 percent of the land was privately owned.

The rest of both communities is untaxable land — most of it belonging to the federal government. And the park is not finished buying property. New projections show that only 8.5 percent of Boston Township could remain under private ownership if the park's purchases go as planned.

The result of the loss of taxable

land is likely to result in large deficits for both communities, beginning this year, the report said. By 1996, it said, Boston Township alone could face a \$637,400 deficit.

The report called merger the best hope for both communities.

If the merger is not done by 1994, the report warned, it would no longer be financially viable. The township would already have depleted the Road Improvement fund that it has used to cover basic operating costs in the park.

The merger, the report said, would allow the village's income tax and higher property millage to be spread across the entire community and keep the Road fund's principal from being depleted.

The report also recommends that the village and township negotiate for county-distributed money and end the aid of the county engineer in helping the communities apply for state and federal road money.

The report is available at the Peninsula library. The \$18,000 cost of the study was shared by the township, village and CYNRA.

Neighbors lose war for Cuyahoga Valley

By DEBBE DOWELL
PLANNING CORRESPONDENT

ROSTER TURNING
Residents of the wooded area of Oak Hill and Maple Hills, in Boston Township, are upset that their local neighbor — the National Park Service — plans to build a \$1.8 million nature center/education campus virtually in their back yards.

They have been fighting it for two years and have talked with the superintendent of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area and suggested using his nearby Bay View camp instead.

But under they are facing defeat.

Don Johnson, the assistant superintendent of the park, said residents had until Feb. 20 to comment on an environmental assessment study prepared by the National Park Service. Park Superintendent John P. Davis Jr. has the option of calling a public hearing after receiving the comments.

"But the project's under way," Johnson said. "We're ready to go. We are adding and modifying and reworking buildings on the property, and it will be completed by January 1993."

Neighbors and Boston Township trustees oppose having the nature Oak Hill Bay View Park center into a 100-foot boundary campus complex.

The center, which would have 10,000 sq ft of space, will have overnight stays to learn about nature and science. Neighbors and township trustees are worried about additional liability and that maintenance costs the township will have to bear.

Johnson and Congress recently allocated \$200,000 for the center and will use to help restore the center's old buildings.

"We normally do not spend federal funds on non-park-related projects such as roads," Johnson said.

Bruce Edson, executive director of the Akron Day Center, said that while residents supported campus location and location as an alternative campus. "The federal government eventually considered it."

SEE VALLEY 6



Melissa Griffin stands in front of the National Park Service property across the street from her Oak Hill Rd. home in Boston Township. Griffin opposes park service plans to build a \$1.8 million nature center/education campus there.

Valley

TRM-1-B

After Congress created the Cuyahoga Valley park in 1974, residents were told to move from 20 homes would be taken over for the environmental facilities. Today about 100 homes have been taken, and the National Park Service controls more than 20,000 acres in the historic Cuyahoga River Valley.

Through the years there have been many problems over the government's acquisition of historic, historic-style buildings and farms, built by settlers from New England and New De-

land. Many of these historic buildings have been turned to the ground by vandals and vandals into the approval of the Park Service, which are taking structures and historic structures and doing.

Despite the opposition, availability of federal, state and local money is not enough. Residents of Oak Hill Bay View Township, which has a public meeting to discuss the center Feb. 2.

Congressional representative from Pennsylvania said, "We have explored and third party method to stop construction of the center, and we have failed. We are would better, not our U.S. senators, congressmen, state representatives."

Melissa Griffin, a 22-year resident of Oak Hill Rd., said she was aware

about plans for the center and before announced a three-year anti-building demolition of a \$1 million plan value, which she said was a mistake.

The new center will be built around the former Leaning Tower, which is now a historic building on a hill over which the Oak Hill Bay View Center. The campus will be bounded by the highway center on the north, Akron-Fremont Rd. on the east, Brown Rd. on the south and Oak Hill Rd. on the west.

Park officials are working with the University of Akron to provide education on nature study, research. Congress has allocated \$200,000 for the project, and the area has been built \$1.8 million.

Bruce J. Griffin, Marjorie's husband, wrote to Beto on Feb. 1,

saying he opposed all any public hearing. In the letter, he said the staff lacked "any consideration of the impact that the road, trucks, and buses generated by the campus will have on our township, village and county roads. There is still more work to be done with a facility on an unimproved road located in a township that very well may run out of money within the next five years."

Griffin said that while he is most vehemently opposed, he will consider a dialogue with the Park Service but that's the last he can do. "We want it stopped, but if we can't, we will make the Park Service for the last and change its past history of not taking care of anything. We will support a top-notch operation."

SENIOR Focus

"On Folks Over Forty-Five"

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Saving Boston Township Hall

by Christine Chabrowski

At 8:30 a.m. the school bell would wake Helen Martin and she would hurriedly dress for school. By nine o'clock she was out her door and running up the Peninsula Village High School's back steps just in time for the bell's last going.

Life was good for a teen living across the street from her school, for one thing, she could sleep late. Life is still good for Helen Martin, now Helen Conger, who lives one door down from her home there, still in view of the landmark that was her elementary and high school. Now the building is saved by Boston Township and serves as their township hall.

The wooden structure located on the corner of Route 303 and Riverview Road was built in 1987 to serve as a school for the community. The "Stick Style" of architecture, represented by a pattern of short pieces of wood set vertically, horizontally and diagonally, combined with a variety of roof lines, groups of win-

dows and an open-sided balcony, is one of few still remaining from its era. The brick addition, which served as the high school was built later.

The building served as a school until 1989 when Boston High School (now Woodbridge Middle School) was built to accommodate the increase in students. The school was later used by Union Grange #3280 as a meeting and dance hall. Other organizations including the Boy Scouts also used the building, and it was a place for reunions and parties. Conger's 80 years in the community gives the landmark sentimental value to her. She can remember dancing to the piano playing of a red-headed girl on her school lunch break. She can recall her father's concern for her safety as the newly installed letter-totter that has long since sat on the grass in front of the school. Others in the community, who may not have had memories of these buildings, see its beauty and unique architecture and want to preserve the commu-

nity's past and by helping it create new memories within the old setting. For Conger, it is important to preserve the memories she had in that structure of wood and brick. The thought of tearing down the old school, now Boston Township Hall, would break her heart. So, in March 1989 when she heard a group was organizing to restore the building, she got involved.

"Every little while I'd hear somebody say they were going to tear it down, and it would make me sick," said Conger. "So, I just went to the restoration meetings."

About 45 interested citizens attended the Township Hall Committee's first meeting, and although the number has declined to less than half that, those involved bring an expertise and commitment not found in previous efforts. In the past year and a half, clean-up work, environmental stabilization of the structure, and a plan for how to proceed was developed. Larry Salzer, an architectural consultant who specializes in restoration and community planning, believes the buildings are worth saving for many reasons. It is the building's uniqueness that first attracted Salzer to it. He liked its lines, its history and its potential.

Part of that potential is as a revenue producer for Boston Township which currently owns the historic building. With the Cayuga Valley National Recreation Area buying up much of the property within the township, the amount of taxable property is dwindling. The restored buildings could house meeting rooms or retail and office space that could produce a small income for the township for years to come.

The building is also centrally located and could again provide a meeting place for the community, said Salzer. Currently the library

is used by many community groups as a central gathering place.

"The library now gets packed to its limits," said Salzer. "Anything new that comes around the community meets at the library. The Township Hall would be seen as an inside gathering space."

In addressing the restoration of the building the committee has also considered services already located at the corner, the Valley Fire Department and the Boston Township Road Department. This is the first time the site has been looked at for both restoration and practical purposes. By including the input of the fire and road department, Salzer believes the owner will retain its purpose as a town center.

Salzer believes preserving the unique history of the historic village helps bring it together as a community.

"I think that's why I'm involved," he said. "I don't want to sit in my house, close my door and not be a part of the community. The emphasis of the committee is for the community at large. We're saving the whole Boston Township area not just Peninsula Village proper."

Conger agrees. "I've seen nice old historical buildings in other towns, and we've already lost some that I wish we still had," she said. "I don't want to lose anymore."

The restoration, which will bring the building to its original condition and bring it up to current building code safety codes will cost about \$1 million, said Salzer. Since the township earmarked \$400,000 shortly after a feasibility study on the buildings was conducted, the committee is working to raise the additional funds needed through grants from foundations, historical societies and from state capital pro-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Boston Hall

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

jects funds. The project has received support from Senator Roy Blay and Representative Wayne Jones and the committee is currently preparing grant proposals to present to several foundations. If funds are approved, the project could begin as early as the spring of 1992.

Private and corporate donations for the project are also being welcomed. For more information about the project, write to the Boston Township Hall Committee, P.O. Box 23, 4564 Dow Lane, Peninsula, Ohio 44264 or call Larry Salzer at 687-2135.