

The School

that

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by

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Prophetstown Area Historical Society
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Introduction

Many years ago there was an attempt to establish here in Prophetstown a school for the “mentally retarded.” It never came to fruition and here are the details.

Residents Circulate Petition Against School

From the *Echo*, June 28, 1961.

Prospects for the establishment of a mentally retarded school at the location of the Roger Shine home were dimmed this week. Several residents in the immediate area have been voicing objections to Mayor Aubrey J. Scott this week on the location of the school.

Two residents in the area circulated petitions the early part of this week asking the city council to deny an application of certificate of occupancy for the establishment of a mentally retarded school in a residential area in the city.

One petition had 26 signatures Tuesday afternoon, the other was believed to have had 10 or 12.

The school is the concept of Lloyd E. Gandy of Sterling, former Asst. Administrator at the Community General Hospital. He has filed a request with the city council to grant him a certificate of occupancy to establish the school there, a legal requirement that must be approved by the council.

The *Echo* stated last week that Gandy told the City Council he had talked to several residents in the area and had their approval. Actually, this statement was in error somewhat. Gandy meant he had talked to three nearby residents and no objections were given him at that time.

The present city ordinance would probably permit the establishment of such school, since it states nursing homes and boarding houses will be allowed in residential areas. A school of this nature, Gandy says, is one of custodial care and would come under this jurisdiction.

Should the council not approve his request for a certificate of occupancy, Gandy could take the case to court and ask that one be granted him under the city zoning ordinance.

However, Gandy told the city council he wanted to start his school with their approval and also that of people in the residential area. He said if there were serious objections to the school he would forget the idea.

Gandy was also the speaker at the Lions Club meeting Tuesday noon. He was unaware that any residents were objecting to his plan until he arrived in the city Tuesday. He told the *Echo* he would make every effort to explain his position to the people of the area at the Council meeting Monday night.

Residents signing the petitions have listed three objections to Gandy's proposal; that it will cause a disturbance in the area, that property value will be decreased and that it should not be located in a residential area.

At the Lions Club meeting Tuesday, some of these objections were offered Gandy. He said the children will be attending school the same hours as other children. They will not be allowed off the premises unless attended by personnel of the school. He said he had no opinion as to the depreciation or increase of property value in the area.

He said his long range plans would include building a school at the edge of the city and keeping the house at 509 Washington as his family residence. He said his family planned to live in the same house with the children of the school at the start.



Lloyd E. Gandy



509 Washington St.

School Fails Again

From the *Echo*, July, 1961.

Renewed efforts to revive the plans for a mentally retarded school to be operated by Lloyd E, Gandy failed again this week.

Harold Plautz, who has acted as Gandy's realtor in Prophetstown didn't give up on the idea of finding property for Gandy after his first proposal met defeat last week. and attempted to find another location that would be suitable.

This led to the former Lutheran Church and Gandy was called to look at it last weekend. Gandy thought the building would be suitable, but additional property would be needed. His plans were to buy two more houses in the immediate vicinity.

However, the plan hit a snag before it got off the ground.

Some residents immediately began objecting again. And one of the principal objectors in Gandy's first proposal, which was to locate at the Roger Shine home, also voiced opposition. Another petition was circulated in the area it ended up with signatures of people who had originally expressed an interest in selling their property to Gandy.

By Monday morning, Plautz had given up the idea and called Gandy to tell him.

According to Plautz, Gandy. after last week's proposal died, went home with the feeling that Prophetstown was not necessarily against his school, but the location. He decided to give Plautz another chance to find him property, mainly because he was impressed with the town and wanted his family to live here.

He has now given up any consideration of locating in Prophetstown. Plautz's firm has found two other pieces of property located miles from Prophetstown which Gandy is now considering. Gandy has also said another town, which he has refused to reveal, has made him an attractive offer to locate there.

Plautz said Gandy expects to make his decision soon because he wants to get the school in operation yet this summer or early fall.



217 Douglas Street,
The former Lutheran Church.