

E.A. Jackson (Jack) Morris and Douglas Woolley

Transcript of the oral interview with E.A. Jackson (Jack) Morris and Douglas Woolley conducted by Emily Salvette. The interview took place on June 8, 2003 at a meeting of the Pittsfield Township Historical Society held at the Pittsfield Recreation Center, 701 W. Ellsworth Rd., Ann Arbor. Both men reviewed the transcript in the summer of 2003. The transcript reflects their corrections.



Interview Summary

Jack Morris and Doug Woolley were both Pittsfield Township Supervisors. Jack served on the Pittsfield Township planning commission from 1969 to 1983. Then he was appointed to fill Robert Lillie's unexpired term as Supervisor. He ran for election in his own right the next November, and served as Supervisor until February 1995, when he was succeeded by Doug Woolley. Doug, who had served as a Township Trustee for 20 years, was Supervisor until November 2000. They were involved in the governance of Township during years of incredible growth. Both emphasized the importance of good land-use planning, which they describe in detail. This interview documents their challenges and successes as they managed the Township.

Transcript Contents -- Outline

- Arriving in the Township
- Getting involved in Township politics
- Sexual harassment suit and other bad days
- Mid-decade census
- Challenges and success of land-use planning
- Future direction of the Township
- Public Safety Department
- Training for job
- Rainy Day fund
- Ann Arbor Landfill expansion
- Improvements to US 12
- Manufactured homes and other development issues
- Wrap up

E.A. Jackson (Jack) Morris and Douglas Woolley

MT:

Marcia Ticknor

I:

Interviewer: Emily Salvette

D:

Doug Woolley

J:

E.A. Jackson (Jack) Morris

DL: Don LeClair
X: Unknown
F: Unidentified female
M: Unidentified male

Side 1:

MT: I'd like to welcome you all for Sunday afternoon meeting, and today we're going to have Emily Salvette doing oral history, our two former supervisors for the Pittsfield Township. And I'd like to introduce Doug Woolley and Jack Morris.

I: Thank you, Marcia. We start all of our histories by saying, it is June 8, 2003. We're at the Pittsfield Township Recreation Center on Ellsworth Road doing an interview with Jack Morris and Doug Woolley, two former supervisors of the Township. And I want to thank you for being here, and thank you for sending me your biographical data sheets in advance. One of the things we always go through at first is how long everybody has been here. But both of you came in the 60's to the Township.

D: Moved into this...

I: Yeah.

D: ...moved into the Township, yes.

I: Yeah. And it was pretty quiet at that time, wasn't it? You...Jack, you said you're...

J: Very pastoral setting out where I was.

I: Right. Explain a little bit about where you were, and what it looked like when you got there.

J: Yeah. Well, when I moved out to the Township on Textile Road, we were the only house between Crane and Munger. And across the street was a dairy herd. And I figured that dairy herd wasn't going to be there forever and it was finally sold off and then the farmer sold off the topsoil to the highway department I think when they were putting US-23 in. But then eventually they still rented it out to other farmers who tried to grow corn there, but eventually it became Ashford Village.

I: How many houses are in Ashford Village? Do you know?

J: No. I've forgotten.

I: Is there like hundreds? I mean, it's a hugely developed area now.

J:

Yeah, it is. It's about six different phases they're still building on it. Building off of Yeah, I think they're no, let's see. Yeah, they're still building. They, they bought the Williams Farm eventually and tore that down, so they're still expanding. It must be on probably the last phase now. It's been going on for some time.

I:

Did you and Doug, did you move into Dayton-Driver area or...?

D:

In fact, we moved onto Dalton. We rented a home there for a year and a half. A lot was built on Dayton Drive.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

And Dalton is just two blocks over, east of Dayton Drive.

I:

What's...?

D:

We moved in 60...1963.

I:

Was that area around Carpenter School already subdivisions and...?

D:

It pretty much, it was pretty much a subdivision, yes, at that time. But there wasn't all...all lots weren't built on it. But you could see the outline of what they call the footprint of where it was going to be. It was actually called Washtenaw Heights and Clubview...not Clubview...

J:

No.

D:

Washtenaw Heights and Oak Park...

J:

Oak Park.

D:

...Subvisions. And it starts with Carpenter and goes down to where the apartments are now, about eight or ten blocks.

I:

Um-hum. Um-hum. Were either of you on the school board? I can't remember. No. Okay.

D:

I was president of the School Board for a year, and was on in the early 70's and late 60's.

I:

Um-hum.

J:

That would be the Carpenter School.

D:

The Carpenter School Board I was on.

I:

Well, just in general. Um, because one of the questions is about...I know you were active in education areas, Jack, and I went to school with both your daughters at Carpenter...

J:

Hm.

I:

...old country school. So the concept of education in the early 60's in Pittsfield Township, it was changing from the rural schools to a more formalized administrative type...

D:

Well, actually Jeri and I, we moved into town, to study on where we would like to build a home. And of course the school system was very much a priority. And at that time, Carpenter had the lowest student-to-teacher ratio in the area, so that's one of the reasons we decided on there. You have the next one, be Dickens school on the west side of Ann Arbor.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

But when I, as I said, I was in the school before I was actually the PTO at Carpenter.

I:

All right. I'm familiar. What was...both of you are here because you were very active in the government of Pittsfield Township. What first got you interested, Jack, in perhaps getting involved in how Pittsfield Township was managed? Can you go through that decision process?

J:

Ah, you want the short version or the long?

I:

Well (laughs). I'll leave that to you.

J:

I...I had a moonlighting job and worked part-time as the executive director of an educational association and I worked out of the Bureau of School Services [at] the University of Michigan. And I did that for twelve years. And I finally resigned in 1969 because the job was just expanding, and I'd either have to do this full time or quit my teaching job or quit this and...do other things. And that was about the time when a new supervisor was being appointed in the Township. And I threw my hat in the ring and of course, rightly so, Bob Lillie got the job. And a year or so later...oh, I don't know if it was a year or so, but in 1969 he asked me if I wanted to be on the Planning Commission. ♦Great, yeah. I'd love to do that.♦ This is my community service. I can be on the planning commission. And I did that for the next 14 years and I loved it. And that's how I got started with the Township. And then that brings us up to 1983, and I was retired from teaching and I resigned from the Planning Commission. I said I'm going south. And said my resignation's effective whenever you replace me or I leave town, whichever comes first. And so I did that. And of course that final year Bob was resigning the supervisor's job. And of course the Township sent out letters, you know, saying, you know, if you're interested And finally, they sent a second letter. I guess they only had one or two or three people signing up. And so I attended my last Planning Commission meeting and Carl Schmult and Mike Schroer grabbed me after the meeting and says, ♦You got to make yourself available for this supervising job.♦ ♦Well, I'm leaving town, boys,♦ you know, ♦I'm....♦ And so, I don't know, I guess after a few beers, I... ♦Okay, I'll, I'll, you know, I'll write and say I'm...but I'm going down south. If you're interested, why call me.♦ And about two months later, they said, ♦Come on back and do a public interview.♦ So that was about November, I think, think there. And so I came back and public interviews were two nights. I was, I guess I was on the second night. And Jerry Peer called me. He says, after the meeting, ♦You're it♦...So then I started following Bob around like a shadow. I know, I had a month to learn the job. And so January 1st I took the oath as a supervisor. And some days were more fun than others, but it was an interesting experience.

I:

So the supervisor's position wasn't an elected one.

J: Yes.

I: It was elected.

J: But I was appointed to fill the rest of Bob's [term].

I: I see.

J: And then I had to run on my own the following November.

I: The following November, you ran. And then you ran as a Republican?

J: Um-hum.

I: Was, is Pittsfield Township at that time was it a pretty Republican township?

J: Well, the administration was. I don't know that we had more Republicans in the community, but it was a...in fact, they didn't have much...Democrats didn't...

DL: If you wanted to get elected, you had to be.

I: That was my question. What did you have to be to get elected.

J: Well, you know...

DL: You could be a Democratic but you had to run on the Republican...The primary to get in.

J: Very interesting story about that though. Mike Schroer, who was a Democrat, said that Gary Owen...now said, ♦Why don't you guys run a slate over there?♦ He said, ♦Why? We're happy with what's going on.♦ That was then, this is now. But I mean...

DL: I think about this time, as far as Democrats it's been about 35 years.

I: Okay.

DL: Over 35 years. Back when I was on.

J: But did anybody run?

DL: Oh, yeah.

J: Really?

DL: But they never got in.

I: Hm. Well, let's...I'll ask you the same question, Doug...

D:

Well, I...

I:

Got you started on this.

D:

I blame it all on Jim Reader, former Treasurer.

I:

Okay.

D:

He lived next-door to us and we were talking over the fence one day, and he'll tell you the story so, it's nothing that you have to worry about. Ah, he said, ♦We got to have...we're looking for somebody to serve as Trustee. And it's only two nights a month.♦ [laughter] Those were his exact words. And I wasn't really looking for any, any extra business. I was at the University of Michigan at the time. But I said, ♦All right. I'll, I'll do it. And so once I got involved, it was very interesting and I was pleased to serve on the Planning Commission as liaison to the Board and the Planning Commission two different times. And I think Jack will agree, it's the Planning Commission where the action is. The Board is pretty cut and dried. But we had a good administration at that time from Bob Lillie on, I think we had a pretty good administration, and I think that's the reason that people weren't trying to replace us. They...I think they looked at us and felt we had some good government. Everything was well run, the taxes were low, we were starting a police department, a fire department. Everything was evolving into a pretty responsible township. So I think that's one of the reasons they...they didn't try to run opposition against us. We did have some once in a while with the trustees. And Jim Reader had opposition one time as treasurer, but he managed to take care of that. So everything went very well. I became supervisor January 4, 1995.

J:

February

D:

That's right, sorry, February. And I was supervisor till November 17th, the year 2000. It's almost six years. And during that time, a real time for development in the township. It was the fastest growing township in southeastern Michigan for a while. At least it ranked right up there with the top five. And so there were pressures we all had to worry about and take up, but all in all, like Jack says, there were some good days and bad days. But mostly it was a very good experience and I enjoyed it most of the time.

I:

Can I ask you what your worst bad day was and what it was related to? Do you remember?

J:

Well, probably the day I was sued.

I:

Okay.

J:

That's a long story. I don't want to get into all that, but...

I:

Oh, yeah. The day you were sued.

J:

Yeah. No. As Doug said, you know, fun a lot of times and sometimes you wish that you hadn't even gotten up. But one thing I will say on the positive side, in all the years I was supervisor I think I can count on one hand the number of times I was ever called at home. People respected the fact that I had office hours Monday through Friday here and they saw me here. So I

appreciated that because I expected, oh, my phone's going to be ringing all the time and...But I was going on vacation, Tuesday night Board meeting, a lawyer shows up, serves me with papers, and serves Jerry Peer as the clerk. The Township was named too. And what it was is a disgruntled employee who I had to discipline on a couple occasions because she was, brought grievance -- I'm trying to think of the word in the union -- a grievance on two different occasions by other employees, she being responsible most of the time for personnel matters. And she was in the wrong and I had to... discipline is only a letter, you know, nothing, no suspension, no...And she was kind of put out. So she decided...it was creating a -- what do they call it? -- a hostile working place, and I got sued for sexual harassment.

I:

Oh dear.

J:

Ah, and of course it hit the front page of the paper, and I was already out of town. I was leaving and the next day's paper it...of course my kids went berserk. But there was nothing to the lawsuit. And of course I think she thought she was going to get me financially. They wanted to know, you know, what my net worth, and all that kind of stuff and it was depositions. Year and a half later it was thrown out of court, but it took all that time. And of course, I was represented by the Township attorneys, [the Township's] insurance. I think that was my worst day.

I:

I can see why. Doug, do I dare ask you, Doug (laughs)?

D:

Well, I don't know there was really a really bad day, but, you know, thinking back when you were charged, before he was charged, I guess I was charged with violating the Open Meetings Act. Because one of the applicants for the Township Clerk decided that we held a meeting and decided to determine who the Clerk would be. We didn't determine at the meeting, but we looked over the resumes of the six candidates, and then at the board meeting afterwards, we determined who would be the clerk and they found the present Prosecuting Attorney for the County made a big deal out of this. And it was all part of a plan I think for this one group to become active in the politics of the Township. But Mr. Mackey continued this process for about three months until his re-election. And it was, it was difficult meeting the state police officers who were investigating the police and trying to support the Board members.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

And he found no, no problems at all. But he said, better do it differently in the future, or something. He had to say something. So I...there was other things, but...I think some of the times, the worst times were when residents would have a problem and it was just something I couldn't reconcile because it was not in my...was made against an ordinance or something. I...you really would like to help somebody and it just was not possible.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

Those are the kinds of things that I think I that I felt bad about, mostly.

I:

Well, what were...there were so many changes. I know it's hard to pick one or two during the course of the years that you were in planning and then on as supervisor. But can you highlight some of the really big deals, like I know you had mentioned the referendum on Charter

Township was a big thing. And you had mentioned, Jack that...or Doug, that there was a mid-decade special census. What was that about?

D:

Well, you are permitted to have special census to determine the population if the population has increased more than 15 percent during the decade. And ours was up quite a bit more than that actually. So in 1997...I tried to do it in 1996 but there was a picture between January and March that you had to do this, and I missed it by a couple of months. So we did it in 1997. And as a result of that, we were able to get an additional in three years, \$1,800,000 dollars extra in state revenues, which was...I think was a good thing for the Township, and only cost us \$51,000 for the census that was taking place. And so that was kind of a nice thing to do.

I:

Um-hum. Yeah.

J:

Yeah, it's very important because so much of your revenue sharing and sales tax, all this stuff, I mean, it comes back to you, based on your population, so...And that population only changes every ten years as a census. So you can make a difference in that it pays, pays off.

D:

I think between Jack's tenure and my tenure, we've seen three prisons built in this township. The state prison's on Bemis Road, and then the County Service Center on Washtenaw. I mean, they've expanded that now to include the juvenile prison there. Detention home, I guess they call it. But they've got some pretty bad folks in there. And those I guess are things that we really didn't want to have happen. So we have about 11 hundred to 14 hundred prisoners in the, in the township.

J:

Now, I think one of the things that we can all be proud of is the growth is going to be there. I mean, this township is uniquely situated where you've got three major highways cross within the borders. And that's going to bring pressures for development. And so you can't stop it, but you can control it, and...hopefully. And, what kind of growth, and what kind of power? And this where your comprehensive land use plan comes into play, where you pre-plan where you're going to have different kinds of development. You don't want to be strictly a bedroom community because a bedroom community never pays for itself and your expenses are always more...higher than revenues can be associated with that, so you want to have also industrial and commercial and plan for that. And also the industrial and commercial also provide jobs. So we tried to be very balanced in our growth within the township. And I think through good planning I know that our zoning ordinance in Pittsfield Township became the model for all the townships in the county in developing their zoning ordinances. So Pittsfield Township was the spearhead along the idea of land use planning. And I think it shows. I've always said that you drive down Washtenaw Avenue, you can tell when you leave Ann Arbor and when you leave Pittsfield Township. I mean, it's just development standards are such that you see green ways and trees and good development. The Charter Township Referendum was important because that established that we would be, and it happened before my time as a supervisor. But it's very important because we set the boundaries for that. I mean, you were not going to be encroached on by the cities anymore. I mean, we can stand alone as your own entity. And of course, you had to be able to provide certain things with the police department, water and sewer, those things. And then from that, you direct your development. It was the first [sewer] trunk line I think went down Michigan Avenue, if I'm not mistaken, and that, that set the pattern.

D:

And you could just, after that, I think, Jack, was the fact that the...Ann Arbor annexed 15 percent of our tax base when they annexed the property for Briarwood. And so they...you know, we couldn't stop it because we didn't have the services at that time. But that pretty much made us move ahead with our own, providing our own service of sewer, water, fire and police.

J:

And if I remember that was in 1972, wasn't it?

D:

I think so.

I:

Well, how much of that then do you think was chicken and how much was egg? I mean, once you provide the sewer and the water out there, does that encourage people to go and come out because the services are there?

D:

Well, the sewer and water district never really went farther than probably, what?, Lohr Road, until the...

J:

Until whatever that thing is over there.

D:

Yeah, what (laughs) that is. If you look at our 1975 land use plan, the west side of the township, because it raised, it was higher...

I:

Um-hum.

D:

...than the rest of it, so it was cause...it would cause problems for a sewer system. That was going to be our open area over there. That was going to be the farmland and...And then when Ann Arbor kind of fell into Pittsfield over there, you know, and reached their borders and we started getting pressures, I think you were on the Planning Commission, weren't you, when they decided to...Meijers wanted to come in there, they had a...

J:

Yeah.

D:

Yeah. And they held Meijers off for 15 months while they did a study called the Westside Study, I believe it was. And they were planning...

J:

It was something like that.

D:

...15 hundred acres. And the development over there has followed that plan pretty well.

J:

But we were also innovators in getting developers to pay for our infrastructure. You want to build over here? We don't have sewer and water, we don't have roads? We can't have that kind of development on a gravel road. And of course developers are only required to provide these things within the development themselves. And, and we would require them to...they had to pay their own...well, like when the first Meijers went in, Meijers paved Ellsworth Road from Carpenter Road all way over to here. That's how we got it paved. Meijers paid for it.

D:

Didn't they widen Carpenter too?

J:

Oh, yeah. When I came on and then it was quite beyond that too. But we initiated a perfectly legal procedure, and if you require the developer to do this and then once he agrees to it, he can sue within 30 days and say, "I'm not... you know, I was coerced into doing that." Well, so if you get a consent judgment where the courts and the developers and the township all agree this is what it's going to be, they agree to it, we want the development, we're going to have to do this. We're going to have to have a sewer line. We're going to have to pave that road, whatever it needs to be. And they agree to it. And, boy, the Road Commission loved us. I mean, we were getting all these roads paved, but they didn't have to use their sparse income for. And it's also what, you know, water tower, all those things were paid for by developers. There's not a bit of taxpayer money in any of those things.

I:

So...

J:

In fact, the whole water and sewer department is a...what do you call it?

D:

Self supporting.

J:

Yeah, a self supporting, but it's a...it's an entity in itself [an enterprise fund]. There's not one penny of taxes go into that. Nor does the township go in and take money out of there for operations. It's a separate entity.

I:

So it's just...it does it's own thing.

J:

That's right.

I:

And funds itself.

D:

Right.

I:

Is the...so the water tower was paid for by the Briarwood people?

D:

No. No.

I:

Somebody mentioned...

X:

Not Briarwood.

I:

...the water tower the water tower.

D:

Well, the water tower was a result of this consortium, the Westside Consortium of Developers who wanted to develop over there. They have 15 hundred acres we were talking about.

I:

Yeah.

D:

And they put in 8.2 million dollars into utilities. And that included the pump stations over there.

J:

Right by Meijers.

D:

The pump station and the, the tower, the water tower.

I:
Oh, okay.

J:
And all of the infrastructure below the ground too.

I:
Yeah, I want to make sure I have the dates listed in here. When did you start on Planning Commission, Jack?

J:
1969.

I:
'69. And you started...

D:
A trustee was...

I:
Trustee spot...

D:
1974.

I:
In '74. Okay. Now, in that late 60's, early 70's period, did you see this all coming? I mean, could you...were you talking already about the growth and that this population is really going to explode and you really have to be careful about planning? Or was it just that this was a new and innovative thing kind of being talked about in governmental circles and so you decided to try it out.

J:
Well, there was a land use plan in 1965.

D:
Well, then it was updated they thought that...Bob brought in a consulting firm from St. Louis and they took, what?, three years to develop this plan, and in 1975 it was approved and it was the first...I don't know if it was the first plan, but it was the first professional plan I think. And I, I think that Bob Lillie had in his mind what was going to happen in Pittsfield Township.

I:
Yeah.

D:
Because at that time they were talking about where should the commercial lots, development be, where should the industrial be, and where should the residential be. And I think that that plan was changed quite a bit over the years as things developed But I think it was the basis, basis for where we are now. I mean, it was decided that Carpenter Road from about Ellsworth to the US 12 would be industrial. Also Platt Road down there would be industrial.

I:
Yeah.

D:
And then State Street from Ellsworth all the way down to Michigan Avenue was designated as industrial too.

I:
Um-hum.

D:

So and if...if you look around the Township, that's exactly how it's been done. And if you look at Avis Farms and across the way, that is all quality development. There's nothing in there that we should not be proud of.

I:

Well, speaking of which, I mean, how much flak was there created by all this development? I mean, was...I know we weren't as vocal maybe as they are nowadays, but was there already the concern about we're losing green space, we're losing farmlands? And did you hear a lot of that in the controversy?

D:

Well, when...in the planning part of this whole thing, when they developed the residential area, the subdivisions and so on, they were required to leave certain areas open space. And so if you were to go through some of the, even the earlier subdivisions, you'll find that there is quite a bit of open space, and, you know, it's...there...if you take Stonebridge, you know, they have a golf course there. But they came in first of all with something like 15 hundred homes they were going to build there. But the time they were finished negotiation with the bank [planning commission], they were permitted 711 houses. And this is way it went with all of these various developers. They'd come in and they want to put a house on every lot and so on, and there was...they were just not able to do that.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

And if you look around, you'll find some very quality developments in the Township. But actually, there was I think about in 1997, '98, there was a group that started and stayed on there, against growth. And so they, they were attacking about every development that was made, and even the economic development which you have to have, as Jack said, to support the tax base, they were against even that. So it was a no growth...it wasn't a slow growth type of thing I think it was a no growth type of attack on the Township. And so that became a very political thing and there isn't...the result was the Republican group that was running for election in the year 2000 didn't make it, the others did, the Democrats that ran on a no growth.. But I think I won't go into that. But...there was a couple years there that the...were pretty difficult for the Board of Trustees, because no matter what they did, good or bad, it was attacked by this group and things were said that were not necessarily true.

J:

And it's all a matter of perspective too. I remember on the Planning Commission, that depending on who you were talking to, because some people thought I was pro- business and [other] people thought I was anti-commercial and...(laughs) depending on because, you know, we generally kept the feet to the fire from the developers. And we had to, You want to develop here, you've got to do this. And we would...not be arbitrary because we set up the development standards. Printed them out. This is it. You're going to have trees this size and you're going to only deal with certain species and plants, and so on. They'll like come in and see what it was.

D:

Just one ordinance that I have always been proud of in this Township, I mean, most people aren't even aware that every one of the parking spaces are...that the majority of parking spaces in Pittsfield Township are ten feet wide, and other places are nine feet...and you can't believe the difference that makes when you go from one parking lot to another. But it's...that's one thing I've always been assured that we would continue with this ten-foot wide parking space.

Now it's just one of the ordinances. It doesn't mean much to people, but when you start banging doors, and, you know, the car doors, then you're aware of it.

J:

Then you'll find some parking lots elsewhere that are eight feet wide.

D:

Yeah. But both Jack and I, I think, took a regional approach to this Township. We thought that what's good for the Township is good for Washtenaw County. And the Township joined SEMCOG in 1976. And both Jack and I have served as chair of that organization, and have been two other Washtenaw County people...Judge Shelton served and Nancy Davis who was treasurer [supervisor] of Ann Arbor Township served as chairs. But, you know, if you look at the planning guidelines, they say that you should develop close within the city, surrounding the city, before you start jumping into the others to stop this urban sprawl. Well, that's one of the reasons I think that we have not stopped the develop...stopped development completely. I mean, we're trying to develop in the right way, the quality way. And I think that we're doing that. I think we had a good planning commission to achieve those goals. And it depends on whether you're interested in stopping the sprawl, or stopping development within a certain period.

I:

Did you have a question.

X:

No.

I:

Okay.

X:

Sorry.

I:

What, what would you like...take that a little further. I mean, what, what would you say...not that there is, but what should the Township do next? I mean, where would you think a good place for Pittsfield Township to go would be?

D:

Well, I think the big thing right now in the Township is active recreation. We have started developing some parks. We own a lot of land now apparently, but it's going to be held in undeveloped areas, apparently. And I...and it's all centrally located. There's nothing over on the West Side for those folks over there, now that it's been populated over that end, there's no parks over there. It's almost all around Platt Road or over on the east side. It's just too bad we couldn't have purchased some property over there to develop as parks. But we did...we did acquire 24 acres, 22 plus acres on Platt Road and that's been developed into soccer fields and baseball fields.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

And that is too long in coming. We should have done that sooner. And then we also...received funds. I guess we've received almost \$800,000 now in the last five years from the DNR to develop the parks. And that money was...I think we got about six hundred and eighty thousand to develop the lake area down there, which is called Lillie Park North.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

And I was very much interested in that because I thought that was a diamond in the rough, and it's come along pretty nice now. And then we picked up another 13, 14 acres from the state that adjoins the 57 acres I think we got back in the early 70's from the State Department of Transportation. So the Township right now has finished parks of over a hundred acres, over...oh, over 150 acres. It'd be the 55 acres at Montebeller.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

Hundred or some acres over there on Platt Road.

J:

Things can change with changing administrations. But in our plan, the southern half of the township would remain rural. I mean, there's no plans for sewer and water down below Michigan Avenue and Textile, that...

I:

Um-hum.

J:

...area out there. When you get pressures for development, one shouldn't be afraid to be open to new suggestions, you know. I was not around when this New Market, was that what it's called? And I never studied it, don't know anything about it, whether it was good or bad or indifferent. But the concept of trying something new and, and doing something where you mix uses and have some commercial and residential and neighborhood plots, and I go back to thinking about, what are called new towns. And I visited one, Columbia, Maryland years ago when I was very interesting in planning. Where you start looking for 14,000 acres of nothing and you build a community.

I:

Um-hum.

J:

And you do it where you would do it for pedestrians, or you have a school within walking distance. You have a shopping area. And over here you have another one and they are connected with main trunks. You do planning like that, there's...that makes sense. Now this one here, I have to say, I don't know if it's big enough for the school. The idea was just that, to try to apply...

I:

Live, work, school, everything in one area.

J:

Right. Rather than take the same kind of area and just do...

I:

Houses.

J:

...subdivisions that...

I:

Um-hum.

J:

...cookie cutter kinds of things. I think that we need to broaden our vision about what can happen. As I say, I'm not commenting on that particular one because I purposely didn't investigate it.

I:

But that's, that's the one that got run out of town basically.

J: That's right.

I: That, that idea.

J: They were bought out of town.

I: Okay.

J: We're still paying for it.

D: Will be paying for it for some time.

J: What was it? Fourteen million dollars?

D: Fourteen million with interest.

I: Uh-huh. I want...I just want to make sure that, that the...that they...okay.

D: Well, you know, the people didn't seem to realize that the 535 acres were involved the developer had said that 200 acres would be underdeveloped. They would not be developed at all. And so the township really bought 300 acres to stop development for that fourteen million dollars. And what that developer had planned on would have been done over 15 years. Now what you're going to see are these others that do come in and one developer would build 60 homes, another developer would build so many homes, and it'll be not done in the same kind of a plan as you would have, the 500 acres. It's difficult.

I: Yes.

D: There's still a lot of open land that will probably be developed in Pittsfield Township before we're finished. I had...before I left office, we had negotiated an increase in our sewer capacity. It was at 2.17. And we were...were stopped from issuing permit because the Ypsilanti Utilities Authority had indicated we had...we were using more than that allotment. So we negotiated up to a 4.5. And I was basing our population at build out at 48,000, and that was, that's a personal thing. I think that this township can stand a population of 48,000. That's just about what...less, so 4,000 less than what Ypsilanti has now, Ypsilanti Township. And they're growing like crazy. They'll go up to 60 - 70,000 in not too long. And they're the ones that used to say that we were developing too fast, too much.

J: They were jealous.

D: Maybe they were. I know they were jealous about our economic development.

J: Yeah. They weren't getting any investment.

D: None. And by the way, I think one of the things that we are proud of in this township we have kept the millage down. The total when I left I think all three millages -- the park, the public

safety and the general fund was 5.3 at the most. I don't know what it is now, but it couldn't be much more than that, because of Headlee...

I:

Um-hum.

D:

But in these other areas around here, it's twice as much. And Ypsilanti Township is up to about 10 mills. And so I think we've done a pretty good job in the past in keeping the cost down. And we never had complaints about not providing services. We have one of the best equipped fire departments in the state.

I:

What about the Department of Public Safety? That was, during your administration, wasn't it?, that it got coordinated?

J:

Well, it got started before I came on board. We changed some things administratively, and that the growth of the Township has had to expand, and of course, new facilities. And we're very proud of the professionalism of our police department, and the administration being a nominal public safety. We have a public safety director who is over both the police and fire. But people often forget that other than the few things we were mandated to do at the local level, like provide voter registrations rolls, and some other things, the only purpose [of local government] is the protection of life and property.

I:

Hm.

J:

And so public safety is uppermost. And it is the biggest bill in the budget. Rightly so and I'm very proud of the professionalism we've had. And we've kept it a volunteer fire department, because we think that's very important, yet we have ----- what do you have, up to now? about 12 a full time professional, yeah.

D:

Twelve, thirteen, around there...

J:

But we've got three stations now. The Township is well served, and when I left I think there were 23 police officers. There's many more than that now.

D:

There's an allocation of 37 now. At least there was in the budget when I left.

J:

Um-hum.

D:

And that's pretty yeah, that was serving...30...30,000 people.

J:

It was still dealing with the same budget.

D:

Well, every cent...

J:

I mean millage.

D:

Every cent that we get in the taxes from the Township, from the Township residents, the taxpayers, goes into public safety. And I tried to keep it below that level. I didn't want to over into other funds. But it was 90,000...We had to take \$90,000 out of the general fund and put it

into that, that account more than what you got in taxes. So it's an expensive operation, but it's well worth it for what the residents get from the Township.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

I just don't think you can match it.

J:

You know, I used to say, and I forget what the exact thing was, but we put in 110 percent of our millage...

D:

That's what it was.

J:

...into public safety. You know, how do you do that and still survive? They don't realize we have other incomes. I mean, state revenue sharing and...

I:

Um-hum.

J:

...other that...also brings in money and that's what runs the rest of the Township on.

D:

And we do have a point-5...no, it's 1 mill for the public safety, that we really just voted two years ago, I believe it was. And that was renewed ...and so people have I think appreciate the level of service they get and we have...we have no...any trouble in getting that passed at all.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

And then you have a point-five mill Parks and Recreation package that's for 10 years, and that passed with the first attempt, which was almost unknown as far as I'm concerned. As far as I understand. For the department to pass it on the first time through. I think people understood we needed more parks, more development in the parks and so on. That brings in about \$600,000 a year.

I:

Um-hum. You know, it seems like an awfully complicated job. I mean, was it hard to get up to speed?

D:

Well...

I:

I mean, did it slowly work your way into it? I mean, how did you learn of...how did you learn the skill of being the administrator of a township that's changing all the time?

J:

Well, I think in both our cases, we didn't come into it cold. I mean, I had 14 years on the Planning Commission and you were a Trustee for...

D:

Twenty.

J:

...20 years before, you know, so you begin to know what's going on. But the day-to-day job is something you get up to speed fast. That compared to somebody just being elected...

I:

There you are.

D: State law requires that the township supervisor and trustees, the treasurer, the clerk to do certain things. But then when you come to doing the utilities and the planning, we had very good consultants and they helped a great deal.

I: Um-hum.

D: But I thought, Jeez, having 20 years, as Trustee I could come in and I'd have a good head start. Well, I...I started in December when Jack said he was leaving, and I worked with him for until he left. And then I'll tell you, it was a brand...you just don't...you can't prepare for that job. There's something new coming up all the time. And you get people from both sides coming after you -- residents and the developers and so on. But you just ride with the times and things go along and you _____. I think we had some good help, a necessity in the planning departments. Bob Skrobola was a good treasurer.

I: Yeah.

D: There's help with that, those kind of people.

I: Is there a lot of peer networking? I mean, do you call up your pals in Ypsi Township or Westland and..

J: Well, you have organizations too.

I: Somewhere.

J: And you have the MTA, the Michigan Township Association.

I: Um-hum.

J: They have publications and they have seminars and annual meetings and so on. You network, and we also have a county-wide township association. You get to know who they are...actually most of the calls came to us, you know. ♦How'd you do this? And what are you doing?♦

I: Yeah. Hm. Questions?

X: _____

D: Well, we established a...it's got a proper name. But it is called a rainy day fund, but a stabilization fund, yeah. And we started that a couple...two years before I left office. And we had...you can have up to 15 percent of your budget in that. I think we had over \$800 some thousand dollars. Now that was supposed to go up to a million- two. But I'm not so sure it did. I know the Board voted to have go up to million-two, but I'm not sure it went that far...But that's something we really need to keep track of, is the stabilization fund, which is meant to help the township in case the expenditures exceed the revenues in any one year and there's a crisis situation, it's supposed to help you out of a crisis situation. But when I left there was about seven million dollars in the general fund. We just picked it up from where Jack had left off and kept adding to it. And the state funds were there and we were making with the taxes on the

development, economic development, it helped a great deal to have that money there. And the...there was a good size fund in utilities also.

J:

Well, we always managed to squirrel...you know, if you got to the end of the year and different departments had not spent all their money, great.

D:

By law it comes back to the general fund.

J:

Well, but, you know, you then budget the next year and. So we did build up a little reserve and that's how you...that's how built the fire station, you know, paid cash for those things, and people couldn't believe it. ❖You didn't bond?❖

D:

But there was certain things that...

I:

Um-hum.

D:

...we looked at and said, you know, these are things we want to do. For instance, Ann Arbor came to us about two years before I left office and said that ❖We want to...❖, they wanted to build a maintenance facility on the landfill. Now, the land...when they...I guess I'll back up a little bit. The...they owned the property -- It's in Ann Arbor -- that the landfill site one is on, the one that's at the corner of Ellsworth and Platt. They...that's actually in the Township. They...that area filled up with the trash and so on. So they wanted to expand the landfill and have a phase 2 and a phase 3. So they actually bought the property on...that went over to Stone School Road and down to...

J:

Morgan?

D:

But it was...they have a total of about 1500 acres. Well, the understanding was they were given a limited, what do you call it?, a kind of permit -- special use permit, by the Planning Department that when that landfill is full they would turn it into a park. Okay: And that was the agreement. And then the DNR made it so difficult for them to come up to the required standards for a landfill that they couldn't afford it, so they built the materials recovery building there.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

Well then, about a year before, about the year of 1998, or something, they decided, ❖Well, they're going to build the park there. So they actually hired a consultant firm, a very expensive kind of thing, and they were putting together a plan. Well, then the city manager and the associate city...the deputy city manger came out and talked to Bob, Bob Skrobola and myself, about the fact they wanted to put a maintenance facility...a 30,000 square foot maintenance facility out there that would bring out all of their departments except pretty much the police and the government. And there'd be welding, their trash pick up. And I learned there'd be almost 800 vehicles on that site. And so we kept saying no, you can't do this.

Side 2:

D:

Well, [they said] we've studied five sites, three in Ann Arbor and two in Pittsfield Township. The two in Pittsfield Township was the landfill and the Airport. Well, they knew we didn't want to do it in the Airport. And anyway, the other...naturally the three in Ann Arbor wouldn't serve well at all. And so...

I:

(laughs)

D:

...I figured out that if they took this and built this facility, it would mean there would be thirteen vehicles leaving that site between 7 and 7:30 [a.m.] -- that's when work goes -- every minute. And throwing that onto Ellsworth Road which brings it down to Ellsworth and to Packard where all our traffic is coming east and west. And they said, ♣Well, you know, we own this property, why should we go out and buy property someplace else? ♣ And I said, ♣Well, we will buy the property from you, so that you could go someplace else. ♣ And we had funds then, that's one of the reasons we had those funds -- that plus other reasons as well. But one day I'm in the office and our associate assessor comes in and says, ♣Have you released this property to Ann Arbor yet? ♣ And I said, ♣What are you talking about? ♣ ♣Well, these 35 acres on the landfill they have annexed. ♣ And I said, ♣How could they do that without us knowing? ♣ Well, they had called the Office of...the State Assessors Office or whatever that is, and told them that the Township and...and the city had agreed that this would happen. And the person that had took the phone call hadn't been on the job too long and had been dealing with this Public Act 425 which permitted townships and cities to do that type of thing, go into a cooperative agreement. So she approved it, and it was three months after the information came to the clerk's office that I found out about it, and right away we got our attorney to get involved, said, ♣No, we're not going to let this happen. ♣ I don't know what the situation is on that now. But I do understand that the current Township administration has made an agreement with Ann Arbor that they can build that maintenance facility out there...which I think is going to be too bad. Thirty-five-thousand-foot maintenance facility with all those vehicles and the traffic spilling to generate, it's just too bad for the Township. Because it all that stuff and all the Township south of that has pretty much zoned for commercial. Commercial, I mean, residential.

I:

It's already been going?

J:

Quid pro quo...

D:

Yeah.

J:

What do we get in exchange.

D:

Well, I'm...no, I'm told and negotiated that we can have our pathways butt up to their pathways, and our green spaces. Our green paths, green...

I:

We get a bike path of that, is that what you're saying?

D:

Bike path...well, no, we don't get a bike path out of it. We get the fact that we can put the bike path, butt it up to their bike paths.

I:

I see.

D:

Which I don't know why they would have to negotiate that. It would seem to be that that would be the logical thing to do anyway. But that's what I understand it is.

I:

I...I'm a resident of Ann Arbor, so I...I...I'm sorry (laughs), that's all I can say.

D:

Well, you know, I said, why don't you negotiate something like letting them have our sewer and water over to Lillie Park, because theirs come right across the street, you know, they have sewer and water right across the street from us. And we're not going to bring sewer and water up to that site at all.

I:

Um-hum.

D:

And I don't know that they would do that. That was my suggestion.

I:

Hm. Um-hum. Did you have a question?

F:

I did. Um-hum. What is, in your opinion, what do you think is going to happen with Michigan Avenue? Is it going to be broadened, or going to be relocated? Or can we even do anything? Isn't that a state-owned highway?

D:

Oh, sure. The most recent meetings about that road and Betty [LeClair] has been involved representing the Historical Commission, and you've been involved also, haven't you? So the latest things that the news we've attended, they had been doing an historical evaluation of it, and they've turn...they've been doing design work and what they want to do is identify those historical parts of that expressway, or the US 12, that they have to recognize as permanent and cannot touch. So that had a lot to do with the realignment of this US 12. They...there was money for the design work, but there's been no money allocated to actually do anything after the design work. In other words, to widen it, to develop it.

F:

Um-hum.

D:

Some of us pushed for a boulevard. I personally pushed for a boulevard. And the...the consultants didn't seem to have a problem with that. But the State Department of Transportation said, ♠ Oh, you...you know, it's going to be 80 feet wide. ♠ Well, you don't have to have an 80-foot wide boulevard along that area, because it's residential. And they said, ♠ But, you know, you got to have the wide road so semis can turn around and so on. ♠ I said, ♠ There's not going to be any semis...semis going in there. The largest trucks would probably be UPS and that. ♠ ♠ Well, then the school buses can't do it. ♠ Well, I talked to the folks in the school system in Saline, and they said they didn't have any problem with that. So it's wide open right now. They've had a lot of suggestions. They've had a lot of public hearings, and I think it'll come down really to money. And it'll probably be four lanes with a passing lane, not great. But, you know, if you...it's been proven by their own statistics that if you have a boulevard it reduces the number of accidents head on so by 50 percent. And it also has a calming effect on the traffic. And I just, you know, I just think that's so important to do those kinds of things. And of course there's an aesthetic value too. But that's where it stands right now. Wouldn't you agree, Betty, Marcia? You..Don?

DL:

Well, prior to these guys taking over, the state would come through many townships and said we need these right of ways. And they wanted us to pass 120-foot right of way on all major highways. And they came up with a booklet and in this booklet, which was handed out to any developer who came into the township, it said if you build within that right of way, they didn't have to pay to the state, so the state really has 120 feet out of it. But there's no reason why they can't do anything they want.

D:

But if they did...but if they did do 120 feet, Don, they'd be taking out, taking out our public safety department, all the houses along there.

DL:

They shouldn't have built it there.

D:

Well...

I:

(laughs) Uh-oh.

D:

I don't think they had to...

DL:

That would, that would...that would...you know, this...and this is not only in our town. This is, you know, the whole state. And this is a little...

J:

Those inner highway -- what do they call it?, inner highway...

DL:

It was highway...I don't know.

J:

Yeah. Yeah. And it set the right of ways for all streets. But I was supervisor when the first proposal came for the improvements of US 12. And certainly they're needed. I mean, the traffic there and the accidents we already have warrant something. And of course they always say that when you get a project manager and it's going to be probably...his swan song, he wants the biggest thing that ever the highway probably ever built, and so they get grandiose ideas. And so the first plans that came down here was one of the possibilities right beyond half of Warner Creek, take over that area and probably some of the township buildings there and of course, Warner Creek was really up in arms and I said, Well, it ain't going to happen. I mean, the township is not going to give up their, their buildings, and well, something. But we just went from meeting to meeting to meeting and nothing ever got done, and there are problems with, as Doug mentioned, historical buildings. Also mitigation and wetlands. They've got to provide. If they take over a wetland, they got to do a double wetland someplace else. And all this stuff has to be documented and...all the time. And of course there were, you know, local debates, if you want a boulevard or you want four lanes with a turning lane in the middle. And one thing I kept thinking about, talking about the future is the intersection of Platt, Michigan and Textile. And I said, while there's very little development in that intersection, why don't you people start thinking about a traffic circle there, where you don't have a light; its traffic stops. They're working have you ever been to a place where the traffic circles are there? They work. And while you've got area, which you can pick up cheaply, there is a bank and the bank is ever...I think they would sell that cheaply and go tear that down. But I maybe won't see the time when it is really terrible, but that three-way intersection, somebody should be thinking about it now. And I have mentioned traffic circles and it's like I'm a voice crying in the wilderness. But believe me it's going to a problem some day if they don't engineer it now.

I:
Yes?

F:
Did you ever have an experience with manufactured homes?

D:
Yes.

F:
Well, was your experience...?

D:
Well, you want to talk about the one down at Carpenter and between Michigan Avenue and Textile? Our experience with that?

J:
Well, the experience, I mean...first off, there was a mobile home park there before that had a failing local sewer system. And so the developer came in, he wanted to buy that up and improve it, and expand it, and was willing to, rather than have his own failing sewer system, be, at that time be able to hook onto a public sewer. So we agreed to listen to that proposal and finally approved it for, I don't know, probably 300...

D:
Well, 311. But as I remember that, they were going to build residential at the south end, and then mobile home parks on this side. And the idea was they were going to build residential homes -- is that what I said? -- residential homes along Textile and back. And what happened, they...they were supposed to build the mobile home park first. Well, they didn't. They built all of the other nice homes around it, and then they said, ♠Okay, now we're going to...we're now we're going to put the mobile home park in there. ♠ And man, those people who owned those nice houses were really upset, and that's what I remember about it. The gentleman was just not fair in what he did to those people. Because he didn't tell them it was going to be a mobile home park right in the center of that whole facility there. Not that it's not a bad looking mobile home site, it just...it was just too bad that he was not honest about the way it was going to happen.

J:
Well, I remember also, in the original engineering, the mobile home park was to drain south. It would be pumped out of the pump that's down there for the condominium section. And the mobile home park backs up to all the single family residences along Crane Road. Well, when they finally got to building that, they brought in fill, and what they did was change the flow north to Michigan Avenue. And so people would come out of the backyard, up at Crane, and they're looking up at these mobile homes up in here. And I don't know how that ever got past us.

D:
And it just created a lot of problems for the homeowner, for the property owners along Michigan Avenue. At least one gentleman was going to build that log cabin...place there's a sign, log cabin, he was going to develop that. Well, he brought in dirt and filled out the back, which pushes the property, the water over onto this other gentleman's property, and they can't do anything with that property, that water, they can't take it down south...So I don't know what's going to happen, but I wouldn't be surprised if that gentleman ends up suing somebody sometime. And it's just a terrible situation.

J:
And we've always had a storm sewer drainage problem at that Michigan and Carpenter area, and Ellsworth there.

F: You mean there's not an ordinance restricting the height that you can bring up where _____ full of water on a piece of property?

D: What, what you can do in developing a site, the ordinance says you cannot let the water run off any faster than it did before you developed. The trouble is, you can have more water going down there. And, but it just can't go as fast. And we've had trouble over at...Lod I can't remember the name of the subdivision now. It's over off of Lohr Road and they've had a lot of run-off problems over there with flooding. Stonebridge and Lake Forest, that's it, yes. And there's been some interesting things, and some that have been problems with this water drainage. It's one of the worst things that happens in development. Oh, there are some homes in Stonebridge, which I think was built on a...

I: [laughs / laughter].

D: Mswamp

D: ...that have two sump pumps in their basements that are operating almost full time. And we actually had to stop development over there, stop building permits, until they had done a study on the average height [of the water table], of the highest heights that the water underneath the earth. And they started with 1907 and went on through [the present]. And so they had to build up and a lot of that property over there before they could actually build a home there.

J: Well, some of the sewer lines are actually below the water table.

D: Yeah.

J: When they develop, they got to de-water the whole area...

D: That's right.

J: ...before they can...

D: Yeah.

J: Everything's possible with engineering they tell us, right?

D: Well, for a while, Jack, and, then, all off a sudden...

I: You say...

D: ...the developer's gone and township is held liable.

I: And Mother Nature always takes it course, doesn't it?

D: Uh-huh.

J:

Well, Stonebridge came in and they wanted to present their own sewer system. And one of the many things we changed about the initial submittal and what was actually approved. But we were not willing to accept a private...we had just gotten rid of two private sub...sewer systems in two mobile home [parks] and we didn't want another one started, we wanted a public one. So that's what was...started that. What we call it? The Northwest Sewer....The Western Whatever [West Side Water study].

D:

Yeah.

J:

That was the impetus there. But he wanted to start another private one and we knew eventually someday down the line, as a township, we'd be taking over that...

I:

Yeah.

J:

...sewer system. Might as well start out with...

F:

Even Ann Arbor's having sump pump problems, and they're requiring sump pump systems in any home that is sold, no matter how old it is. Do you think the Township we'll have to eventually go to that?

D:

Well, every home built now has a sump pump.

F:

Oh, it does?

D:

Oh, yeah. In Pittsfield. Within the Township. Sure.

DL:

Ann Arbor ♦ has ♦

F:

They're different though.

DL:

Yeah, well, it drains the ground water from the houses into their sewer systems.

D:

In your older homes. And it happens that...

DL:

And this creates a problem because on the other side of town...

F:

It's north western ♦ its in one of the sections, is _____.

DL:

Pittsfield Village is that way.

F:

Was it?

DL:

Yeah. They used to run that and every time it would rain, our sewer goes way out of whack.

D:

Some of the syst ♦ homes in the subdivision I live in have the same problem, and we had that real bad rain about five years ago, the homes over there just flooded something terrible.

F:

Hm.

M: Right now _____

D: Yeah.

M: _____.

I: And that's _____.

DL: Still ____ to 1929.

F: I do have a question about land use as well because townships in Michigan are, or planning commissions are, resisting them. South Lyon, for example. And then the developers are suing, and they're winning because the townships, well the law's on the side of the developer, but the townships don't want to spend that much money on attorney's fees. And I didn't know where that was going on here or not.

D: Well, the problem with mobile home parks is that they don't pay for the services that they need. They pay 36 dollars a year taxes.

J: School taxes.

D: School taxes. And...I thought that was total tax? But they...

J: Well, yeah. But see, they...the mobile home...

D: That goes to state...

J: ...park owns the land, they pay taxes on that. But the actual home that people live in.

D: But as... And one of the problems is they don't have to adhere to the ordinances of the township building ordinances and so on. And so we've had trouble with the utilities from that standpoint. They're using a different kind of utility conjunctions and so on that we, that we want them to use. And they, they come in with eight, nine hundred...some of the sites are getting, developments are getting almost to a thousand mobile homes. And if you look at Saline Township, they had a population of 1500 in the whole township. The new mobile home site there that's just outside of Saline in their township now has doubled the population. And they've got to...some...the school systems have got to account for all those students that increase students. And they don't pay anything for capital building in the school systems. It's causing real problems. And what, what the state does now, it says, you've got to have a site in your township that can adopt, that can handle a...or that will accept a mobile home park. So in your design and development, as Jack had mentioned, your land use plan of development, it is important to develop, you've got to include an area that you can put a mobile home park. If you don't have a site for a mobile home park, they can put it anywhere in their township they want to, and it's become a very...it's really a very hot potato to have, you know.

J: Yeah, and they have, what is known as Mobile Home Commission. And it's a very powerful lobby. Very powerful. And we were talking about whatever it's called at Michigan and Carpenter

-- I've forgotten the name of the development. When they developed, they actually did it planned unit development. Everything's agreed upon, signed and they had to develop that way. They resisted because after it was all signed and sealed, and they didn't want to do this, that and the other thing, and they wanted to have a meeting with the big boys in Lansing. So we brought them all down, came in, and we just said, ♦ This is planning unit development, they had to agree with these things. ♦ Mobile Home Commission said, ♦ It's out of our hands. ♦ That was one time we won. I don't know if we won, but we didn't have to adhere to what the Mobile Home Commission was going to strong-arm us into. But they are a very powerful lobby because I don't know how many times, and you can talk to your state representatives and state senators, why do we have them not paying school taxes? I mean, the 36 dollars does not support the school systems as it should. Can't get legislation to change that.

D:

Well, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments really got after the state for...the legislators, on them, for doing something about that. That lobby is so strong that what has happened is that now if a mobile home park can be taxed on anything that's built alongside the mobile home. If they have a garage, if they have a porch or a patio or something like that, they can be assessed on that. And that became effective about a year and a half ago. But it costs more for an assessor to go out to look at that and put it on the tax roll than any taxes you're going to get from that. And it's...it's just ridiculous what they've done.

I:

Is it so powerful because it's linked in with the affordable housing?

D:

No, it's powerful because all of the members have money in...either own mobile home parks, or the mobile home park builders themselves.

I:

Okay.

J:

I think ____ running and so...

I:

It's a coalition of the builders.

D:

Yeah. Yeah.

DL:

So they charge something like three...six hundred dollars a lot.

I:

Um-hum.

DL:

I think that's a...that's a bundle of money.

D:

Maybe we should...you had talked about planned unit development. That's a zoning...like a residential zoning. So in a planned unit development gave us the ability to work with developers instead of having a cookie cut type of subdivision, we could work with them and be able to give them some...I hate to use the word variances, but flexibility on what they could do that would make it a better looking subdivision. And we might be able to say, well, instead of having a house on every acre, you might have two houses on an acre and then have an open space. I think that's what Don has been...one of the reasons we have such good looking quality type of developments in the township.

I:

Any other questions? I thought I'd ask you both just to wrap up, if you want to take turns. You started. Why don't we close with you? Any final thoughts that we didn't cover, any important issues that...?

D:

Well, we covered an awful lot, between Jack and I...

I:

Okay.

D:

...I think...I think we...I think we covered some of the very big highlights in the township. But...

J:

And I tell you, you're taking a chance with a person my age that I remember anything at all.

D:

Yes. [laughter] I thought you...my, my memory is bad for five years. I won't...Jack goes back 20. But...I would like to say that I'm proud of what the Township has done in the last 35 years. And I think we've come a long way. I think we...we...I know during my tenure we had people from across the state coming down, asking us ♦How are you doing this?♦ In fact, the Ypsilanti Township called and said, ♦Well, how can you make these developers pay for these outside infrastructures?♦ And they didn't know how to do it. So...

I:

Um-hum.

D:

...we, we showed them how to do it. They also called and said, ♦Well, how do you go about giving this mid-census decade? And as a result of us doing it, Scio Township, the Saline...City of Saline did it. And I told ♦em, I said it doesn't make any difference now anyway, because of 1998 and you can't do it now. So, I mean, the...I think that in a lot of cases this Township has been in the front of a lot of things. And I would, in fact, our system of retention ponds was one of the first around requiring retention ponds brought up. And I think after we started it the City of Ann Arbor saw how useful it was, they started doing it. And...but we've been first in many areas and it's not just because of one person. It's been a continuing trend of the boards, the entire boards and so on, and I'm very proud of the board that I worked with at that time.

J:

I think it's been very helpful to the Township. I had it proven to me many times in my tenure, the fact that we had an engineering firm that had been with the Township I don't know how many years. I know I think the last engineer that was assigned here has been here for about 30 years, more than that now. And the firm has been with us, I don't know, it goes back to ancient history. And it's so important for the history to know you've got somebody there that bridges the gap from one administration to another and...

I:

Um-hum.

J:

...and they got the records. And the same with the planning consultant they had for many years: Carl Schmult. Ah, a piece of land that he developed and the one next to it and so on, and he's...he's kept all of these records and he knows what...and that history is just something you can't pay for. It's just important and the same with having an outside attorney firm. All these people...rather than being full time Township employees, the fact that you can hire a firm with all the resources the firm has...

I:

Um-hum.

J: ...rather than just hiring a engineer...

I: Right.

J: ...and that has been so helpful for the progress in this Township.

I: Um-hum.

D: And the two people we're talking about, or three, are as dedicated to this township as any resident or any person in the Township. It's unbelievable.

J: They became a part of it.

D: Yeah. Unbelievable.

D:: Well that was Don Swann.

J: That was before Roger [Gaugler], Don Swann, yeah, but the same firm: Ayers, Lewis [Norris & May].

DL: Oh, but he was the one that really came out on the...

D: Yeah.

I: He was a...didn't he come to one of our, our...one of our oral histories when Jim Reader or somebody was here, he came.

D: Yeah.

D: You know, one of the things we haven't mentioned is that Parks and Recreation Department, they have done a tremendous job with very few people...in terms of programs that they've developed for young people.

I: Hm.

D: And the Senior Citizen Center is one of the more respected in Washtenaw County. They have over 2,000 members now I guess.

I: Um-hum.

D: And I think we ought to give them credit what they've done.

I: It also sounds like we need to give credit to Bob Lillie.

J: Oh!

D: Oh, well, that's a given.

I:
I mean, he...he seemed like a visionary from what you were saying that...

J:
Well, that, yeah. Yeah.

DL:
Good fellow, there.

D:
Hm. Yeah.

I:
Yeah.

D:
Good school board person, yeah.

I:
Yeah.

D:
Well, he was very instrumental getting some of the laws passed that affect townships. He's been very active. In fact, had he not...

J:
Resigned.

D:
...resigned that year, he would have been president.

J:
Yeah

D:
Become president of the...

J:
He was on the ladder her to be the president of...

I:
Wow.

J:
...the Michigan Township Association, right. I'm lost in thought. Oh! In my desk -- and I don't have probably the Historical Society has it, there was a photograph of my five predecessors -- Bob Lillie, Noel Hartman, Rudy Schmerberg?, Sam Morgan -- and what was the fifth person's -- Heiniger, was that his name? Five former supervisors that got together at some function and they took a picture of these five. All the living. And those five stand 60 years of service in the Township, average 12 years apiece. Some short. Bob I think was 16 years, wasn't he in...? Yeah. But five supervisors over a 60-year period, all living at the same time, something.

I:
Hm.

J:
And Ray Ticknor provided me with the list of all the supervisors back to the beginning, who they were, what years they served.

I:
Really?

J:
Yeah.

I:
Oh, my.

D: I hope Marcia has the copy of that.

I: She...Marcia ran in to look for the pictures.

D: Oh.

I: So we'll have to ask her. There it is.

D: Marcia, do you have a list of all of the township supervisors from day one?

MT: Yeah.

D: Yeah.

MT: I think it's on our website.

D: It's on the website.

J: Okay. I'll get the names like...Heiniger? That's...that's...

I: Heiniger?

J: I got that from _____, yeah.

I: I better, I better write those names down.

J: Schmerberg.

I: Well, it sounds like...I want to thank you both for...for coming in and...and talking with us today. It sounds like we are very fortunate to have such a capable and competent governance for so many years, and thank you so much.

D&J: My pleasure.

Voices: Thank you [clapping].

D: Now I'll have a drink of beer. {There was just water in the glass!}

J: (laughs)

I: Wait. We didn't get that on...

The End