

RULS-AD-1960-10

7/25/10

Bedminster Planning Board Regular meeting - Notes

Pgs. 3

Regular Meeting, July 25, 1960

P-3 2d
8/2/60
11/2/71

The Planning Board of the Township of Bedminster met in regular session on this date. Members present were Chairman Fales, Messrs. Brady, Field, Smith, Ten Eyck and Winkler. Also present were Township Engineer Apgar, Counsel Bowlby and the Secretary.

On motion, the minutes of the previous meeting of March 28, 1960 were approved as submitted, no one in attendance desiring said minutes read.

The following items of correspondence were read by the Secretary and referred to the Board for further consideration:

1. Letter from the Somerset County Planning Board dated May 23, 1960 enclosing copies of the Annual Report for the year 1959.
2. Letter from the Somerset County Planning Board dated May 19, 1960 enclosing a copy of a brochure covering the water resources of the Delaware River Basin.
3. Letter from the Township Committee of the Township of Bedminster dated July 14, 1960 requesting that the Planning Board make a study of the present Zoning Ordinance with particular reference to regulations governing the business zone.

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Secretary be directed to write to the Somerset County Planning Board relative to the possibility of a study being made to determine the feasibility of using salt water, after proper conversion, as a source of supplementary water supply.

The Board then opened a discussion on the letter from the Township Committee dated July 14, 1960 relative to a study of business zone regulations.

Messrs. Paul Gavin and Henry Beekman, representing the Bedminster Civic Group stated that the intent of the Zoning Ordinance was to permit the operation of small businesses for the use of local residents.

Mr. Beekman stated that, in his opinion, it is very fortunate that a business such as the Stavid Corporation has come into the Township since it could have been a much worse situation. He further stated that a concentration of industry, even light industry, creates higher taxes. He further stated that industry soon takes control of municipal government. This building, Mr. Beekman stated, is in reality a light industry occupancy. He further stated that, if the Board plans wisely and carefully, Bedminster Township can be kept a nice place to live. Mr. Beekman further stated that, if the Board allows this type of building to continue, Bedminster Township will become another Branchburg or Bridgewater Township and the economy will fold "like a pack of cards".

Chairman Fales advised Mr. Beekman that, although the Bell Labs are located at Murray Hill, a number of the personnel from Bell Labs live in Bedminster Township.

Mr. Beekman stated that no one is naive enough not to think that this Township is not going to grow but let's not do things prematurely. He further stated that now is not the time to bring light industry into the Township. Mr. Beekman stated that now is the time for the Planning Board to take immediate cognizance of the situation before us.

Mr. Fales suggested that Mr. Beekman write a memorandum to the Planning Board giving his thoughts and suggestions in the matter in question.

Mr. Field agreed that Mr. Fales' idea of a memorandum was an excellent one and stated that the Board would study such a memorandum and would not release it for publication.

Mr. Fales stated that the Board needs the help of the public in such a study as the one recommended by the Township Committee.

Mr. William Smalley stated that the Board should consider the possibility of small businesses creating a larger tax load than

Regular Meeting, July 25, 1960
(Continued)

than larger business occupancies.

Mr. Paul Gavin stated that the Civic Group feels that the present Zoning Ordinance is a good one. He further stated that the purpose of the ordinance is to control the development of the community and that growth can't be stopped but can be controlled. Mr. Gavin stated that, although the building is an attractive building, the Civic Group feels that there is no need for a building of this size in Bedminster Township. Mr. Gavin stated that residents were told that local people were clamoring to get into this building and that two years later a business with offices in Burbank, California took occupancy. Mr. Gavin further stated that the building occupied by Mr. John Dillon is still partially vacant after two years and that ads still appear relative to office space rental at that location. Mr. Gavin stated that the large building is not meeting any need but is creating a demand. He then read from the Zoning Ordinance that section which describes the types of businesses permitted. He stated that the types of business mentioned seemed to indicate small business occupancies.

Mr. Fales advised Mr. Gavin that his proposition to the Planning Board that a recommendation be made to the Township Committee to guide them in the ultimate decision as to this matter would be fair if Mr. Gavin would submit a summary of his comments and recommendations in writing.

Mr. Gavin stated that there are serious loopholes in the Zoning Ordinance. He further stated that, it is the feeling of the Civic Group that the Zoning Ordinance precludes the erection of a building of this size. He further stated that the town never needed this building and that people were living very well before they ever heard of Stavid and Lockheed.

Mr. Beekman stated that industries create a sewage problem and create higher taxes. He further stated that the 5 acre zone provision precludes small land occupancy.

Mr. Gavin stated that there is nothing to prevent another building of this size from being erected. He further stated that there is nothing to prevent a building from being erected across the street with occupancy provisions for 2,000 people. Mr. Gavin further stated that there is no reason why a restaurant or super-market cannot be erected at this location. He stated that, although we have a good zoning law, the Civic Group thinks that there are loopholes which should be plugged. He further stated that two members of the Township Committee who recently ran for election stated that they are in favor of keeping the Township rural. Mr. Gavin stated that, if the Board wants another building like the present one, it should be spelled out in the ordinance. He stated that the Civic Group feels that the majority of the people in this Township don't want it. Mr. Gavin suggested a change in size of building, occupancy permitted and depth of building zone area be considered. Mr. Gavin stated that he would be pleased to put his comments and recommendations in writing for the benefit of the Board.

Mr. Fales advised Mr. Gavin that all sorts of difficulties arise in considering a change in the zoning law among such difficulties being one involving equal application of the law. He further stated that the Board does not wish to do things that are unwise for the future.

Mr. Smalley stated that Mr. Gavin had just read off a list of small businesses. He advised that North Plainfield had the same type of ordinance as the one suggested by Mr. Gavin and they wound up with the mess which is now seen on State Highway # 22. Mr. Smalley advised that we should want buildings like the one occupied by Lockheed. Mr. Smalley stated that North Plainfield wanted a rural community and they are now going through an urban redevelopment program at tremendous expense to the taxpayers.

Mayor Ten Eyck stated that three of the four business corner properties at the intersection of Lamington Road and State Highway # 206 are presently occupied.

Mr. Gavin stated that the Zoning Ordinance was amended to create

Regular Meeting, July 25, 1960
(Continued)

additional business zone area in Pluckemin and that it has never been utilized.

Mr. Fales advised Mr. Gavin that the business zone makes up a very small percentage of the Township's total land area.

Mr. Gavin stated that the Civic Group understands that the building occupied by Lockheed will house 200 employees after the first of the year.

Mayor Ten Eyck advised Mr. Gavin that he is imagining things about the building which do not exist. The Mayor then stated that the Civic Group must have an idea and that said group should state their ideas and the method by which they might be carried out. The Mayor further stated that our present Zoning Ordinance is not one that was thrown together.

Mr. Fales directed that a copy of these minutes be made available to the members of the Township Committee as well as the members of the Planning Board.

Mr. Gavin stated that he hopes that we are not being taken in by the fallacy that light industry is helpful to the tax situation.

Mr. Apgar advised that a sewerage situation existed long before this building was erected.

Mayor Ten Eyck advised that the Township has adopted the Sanitary Code of the State of New Jersey and that any new installation must be planned by a Professional Engineer and approved by the Board of Health of the Township of Bedminster.

The Board generally discussed the statements heard at this meeting.

Chairman Fales directed that the Secretary write to the Clerk of Mendham Township requesting a copy of their official record as to the recent study involving the possible entry of light industry into their municipality.

Chairman Fales directed the Secretary to write to Mr. Gavin requesting fifteen copies of the memorandum that he has agreed to prepare for submission to the Planning Board.

It was agreed that the August meeting of the Planning Board should be cancelled since three of the members will be on vacation at the time of the regularly scheduled meeting. The next meeting of the Board is to be held on September 26, 1960.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Attest:

Secretary:

