

RULS - AD - 1963-50

5/27/63

Bedminster Planning Board regular meeting notes

pgs 3

210
Regular Monthly Meeting, May 27, 1963

The Planning Board of the Township of Bedminster met in regular session at 8:00 P.M. on this date. Members present were Chairman Fales, Messrs. Brady, Smith, Winkler, Kean and Slater. Others present were Counsel Bowlby, Planning Consultant Agle and the Secretary.

On motion, the minutes of the previous meeting of April, 22, 1963 were approved as submitted, no one in attendance desiring said minutes read.

Chairman Fales explained the function of the Planning Board and read the following list of appointments to the Citizens' Advisory Committee, said appointments having been made by Mayor Kean.

MAYOR'S CITIZENS PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ashmun, Mrs. Charles
Ballantine, John
Barnes, Edward
Bourne, Donald
Brady, Charles E.
Bucini, John
Ewing, John H.
Gavin, Paul
King, Mrs. Gene
Look, David T.
Pollack, Walter
Smith, Philip W.
Spivack, Sidney

Chairman Fales informed those present that the work on the Master Plan is a "work of love and devotion".

Mrs. Irene Downey of Fluckemin asked that the Board explain why Mr. Agle recommended the "slip on - slip off" ramps at Fluckemin.

Chairman Fales informed those present that, if the Board has to make explanations for every action, it will be extremely difficult to get any work done. The Chairman further remarked that, if any fault is to be found with the recommendation regarding the ramps, perhaps, it should be found with the Planning Board since that body made the recommendation to the Township Committee. He further stated that the Board must have some support if the machinery is to work properly.

Mr. Agle advised that he could not state reasons for the ramp recommendation in a few words but could do so by referring to the map and commenting on various factors which led to his recommendation to the Planning Board. Mr. Agle exhibited a map prepared by the U.S. Geodetic Survey Agency. Mr. Agle stated that, in studying the map, it is easy to see why the interstate roads have been located where they are currently being constructed. He advised that the mountains and natural passes have materially affected location. The Fluckemin area in question is in a corner of Bedminster Township which will be cut off by mountains and highways. Mr. Agle stated that he was in sympathy with the anxiety of the people of Fluckemin who are interested in the preservation of the village. He further stated that he had advised the Township Committee and the Planning Board that a discussion with officials of the New Jersey State Highway Department had indicated the chances of obtaining the ramp facility are rather slim. Whether anything will come of the request of the Township Committee remains to be seen. Mr. Agle showed those in attendance an overlay on the Geodetic Survey map, which overlay shows major highway alignments and access and egress roads as presently being constructed. He explained that I-287 is an outer circumferential road while I-78 is a road which is going to tie us to the New York Metropolitan area in the future. He stated that the point of access presently proposed at Fluckemin is unattractive to Township residents. The entire traffic area, he stated, is going to have to use Main Street in Fluckemin. Mr. Agle stated that the resultant "door mat" action would be intercepted by the installation of the proposed ramps at Fluckemin. Mr. Agle mentioned another recommendation involving the building of a relief road parallel to the Main Street in Fluckemin since the present main thoroughfare will not be able to handle future traffic without widening. He stated that the only way heavy traffic can be kept out of Fluckemin is to resort to the ramps which have been requested.

Chairman Fales reminded those in attendance that the Master Plan program was finally initiated last September and that questions as to the present action are moot. He stated that the Board is willing to answer any reasonable question.

Mr. McKiernan of Fluckemin questioned as to whether any traffic survey has been made of the Fluckemin area.

Mr. Agle advised that a spot destination survey would not be very conclusive since future changes will be a more determining factor.

Regular Monthly Meeting, May 27, 1963

Mrs. Wilson of Bedminster stated that the Planning Consultant seems to be under the impression that most of the people in this area commute to New York by car, while, in fact, most of the commuting public travels to the metropolitan area by train. She further stated that the proposed ramps would effect no change in traffic to the lakes.

Mr. Robert Zimmerman of Pluckemin advised that the State Highway Department had originally planned the same "slip on - slip off" facility for Pluckemin when the construction of I-78 was to precede Route 287. These ramps, however, would have been of a temporary nature until such time as Route 287 was completed. He stated that anyone living from Foothill Road north would find it more convenient to use the River Road interchange. The real danger, Mr. Zimmerman said, is that this action is going to completely change the character of Pluckemin.

Chairman Fales stated that no conclusions have been reached by the Planning Board as to the residential and other requirements of Pluckemin. This recommendation, he said, has nothing to do with the zoning of Pluckemin.

Mr. Agle stated that it is his belief that the ramp facility will get traffic out of Pluckemin as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Shirley Burd of Pluckemin questioned as to what percentage of people in Bridgewater Township would be using Route 78 to travel to New York.

Mr. Agle stated that he could not give a definite answer but that the population of Bridgewater Township will be greater than that of Bedminster Township and that it is predicted that the population in the area surrounding metropolitan sections will be about 2,000 to 2,500 people per square mile within the next 25 years.

Mrs. Burd then stated that population percentages are not now a matter of fact.

Mr. Agle stated that within the next 20 to 25 years there is no doubt that we will have population growth outside the New York metropolitan area. He stated that he would predict a population growth to 2,000 people per square mile within that time. This, he said, is a potential body of fact. He further stated that the people will predominantly depend upon employment in the metropolitan area.

Mr. John Buccini of Bedminster stated that we must look to the Planning Board for its reasons as to why the recommendation relative to the ramps was made under somewhat peculiar circumstances. He thanked the Board for the hearing and stated that he regretted that it was not held before the recommendation was made. He questioned as to whether this hearing would lead to reconsideration of the recommendation by the Planning Board and the Township Committee. He stated that the Planning Board owes a moral obligation to the residents to reconsider the recommendation. He further stated that the merit or demerit of the ramps is a matter of speculation. Mr. Buccini stated that the residents were not previously afforded an opportunity to be heard since the recommendation was made at a special meeting. He stated that this is a tremendous opportunity for the Planning Board and the Township Committee to win back the confidence of the Township's residents. He stated that he appreciates all of the work done by the Township Committee and the Planning Board but feel that, in this instance, an obligation was overlooked. He asked if the Planning Board would consider "holding back on the recommendation until all of the votes are in".

Chairman Fales stated that this was a recommendation from the Planning Board to the Township Committee. He stated that the Board and the Township Committee knew what they were doing and that they know the growth pattern in the area. He stated that there is no doubt as far as the road question is concerned; the Board must do the most intelligent thing it can do under the circumstances. He stated that, after considerable study, the recommendation was made to the Township Committee. It was not to the Planning Board's interest or to the Township's interest to hold a public hearing. There were three choices afforded the Township Committee, namely, to do nothing, to modify the plan or to hold a public hearing. The Chairman stated that, "if you are going to put a pin in this Board, you will not get very many people to serve on this Board in this capacity". He stated that "a child that has been born cannot be sent back to the doctor". He further stated that the Township Committee has acted upon the recommendation and that it is out of the hands of the Planning Board. He stated that he did not think that what Mr. Buccini had asked for would be practical or intelligent.

Mr. Fales explained the action of the Planning Board on the recommendation.

Mr. Buccini stated that he was just asking that the matter be brought out in the open before the matter is closed.

Regular Monthly Meeting, May 27, 1963
(Continued)

Mr. John Ballentine of Pluckemin stated that the Pluckemin residents are very serious about this problem. They want to know how the ramps work and decided to come to this meeting to learn more about the proposed ramps. He questioned as to whether traffic could gain access going to New York and whether traffic would have access going west. He also questioned as to how much additional property would be taken to build this facility. He asked whether a study has been made to determine the number of local people who travel to the city and questioned as to how anyone could predict what would occur 25 years into the future. Mr. Ballentine made mention of the petition which he has filed with the Township Committee signed by 78 residents protesting the Township Committee's request for the ramps. He stated that the people of Pluckemin "don't want to be written off the map; they want to know what's going on!"

At the request of the Chairman, Mr. Slater explained the design of the proposed ramps. He showed a drawing of the ramps previously recommended by the Somerset County Planning Board. He stated that the location of the ramps would be adjacent to I-78 and would be one-way ramps.

Mr. Ballentine questioned as to whether an exit ramp would require a wider strip for "slow down" of vehicles.

Mr. Slater advised that the ramps would require sufficient length for acceleration and deceleration. Mr. Slater stated that this plan has been envisioned by the Planning Board to give access to the east and egress from the east only.

Mr. Agle then broadened on the comments made by Mr. Slater.

Mr. Ballentine questioned as to the possibility of a by-pass parallel to the Main Street of Pluckemin.

Mr. Agle advised that this item was included in his recommendations.

Mr. George Ray of Pluckemin referred to the new highways as "rivers of concrete". He stated that he would like to be comforted by a statement to the effect that this is not a commitment and that we have not arrived at the point of a commitment as yet.

Mr. James Brady stated that it is his belief that the Chairman has said that the Advisory Committee would be asked to advise as well as to attend meetings of the Planning Board.

Mrs. Wilson of Bedminster questioned as to the Water Table in this area.

Chairman Fales advised that the Board could not give a definite answer as to the Water Table.

Mr. Robert Zimmerman of Pluckemin suggested that the Advisory Committee meet with residents of the various areas to advise as to action taken and to hear recommendations of the residents. He stated that such a plan would be valuable and would be working toward a methodical and orderly process.

Mrs. Millard questioned as to the possibility of an additional road being built.

Chairman Fales advised that Mr. Agle has recommended such a road to by-pass Pluckemin.

Mr. Agle advised that the construction of a by-pass would be contingent upon the installation of the proposed ramps. He advised that he had urged prompt action by the Planning Board in recommending the ramps.

Mr. Charles Durlach commented on the small percentage of traffic that would use the eastbound ramp.

When questioned as to whether the ramps would affect zoning in the area, Mr. Agle stated that there is not necessarily a relation between the highways and zoning.

Chairman Fales summarized the information discussed at this meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Attest:

Secretary:

