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Bedminster Planning Board Special meeting notes

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Special Meeting, April 12, 1965

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A Special Meeting of the Planning Board was held at the Bedminster School at 8:30 P.M. on this date for the purpose of holding an informal hearing on the Proposed Master Plan for the Township of Bedminster.

Members present were Chairman, Fales, Messrs. Slater, Winkler, Mayor Kean, Field, P.U. Smith and R.E. Smith. Others present were Planning Consultant Agle, Counsel Bowlby, the Secretary and the following members of the Mayor's Citizens' Advisory Committee: Mrs. Charles Ashmun, Messrs. Pollock, Gavin, Ballentine and Ten Eyck.

Approximately 125 residents were present during the course of the meeting.

Chairman Fales opened the meeting with introductory remarks pertinent to the work done on the Proposed Master Plan.

Mayor Kean made further introductory remarks and advised those in attendance that the Master Plan can be changed. He then read a short definition of a Master Plan. He further advised that a Master Plan is not a Zoning Ordinance. The Mayor stated that the maximum population estimate under present zoning is approximately 18,000 people. He then stated that three basic groups have worked on the Master Plan, namely, the Community Facilities Committee, the Land Use Committee and the Road Committee.

The Mayor introduced Mrs. Charles Ashmun who then reported on the work of the Community Facilities Committee. Mrs. Ashmun advised those present that she is also a member of the Long Range Planning Committee of the Board of Education. Mrs. Ashmun discussed the school needs through the year 2,000 and advised that the estimated student total for grades K through 12 will be 3,600 by the year 2,000. Mrs. Ashmun stated that a proper total student body for a neighborhood school is about 500. This would involve 30 pupils per class in 2 sections. She further advised that a minimum 25 acre tract might be involved for each of four school sites shown on the proposed Master Plan. The sites shown on the map would be an average distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the students attending. Mrs. Ashmun also mentioned the possibility of a 50 acre tract being required at a later date for a future high school. She further made note of the fact that municipal facilities are currently inadequate and listed various offices which require space in a Municipal Building. She also mentioned additional space requirements for Fire Houses, a Library, Public Works building, etc. She stated that it is impossible to expand the present municipal building. Mrs. Ashmun stated that the logical place for a Civic Center is on land owned by the Board of Education and the Township now.

Mr. Philip W. Smith, Jr. reported for the Land Use Committee. He explained the various reasons for the proposed land uses indicated on the Land Use Map and Master Plan.

Mr. Nelson Slater reported for the Road Committee and advised that the other members of that Committee were Mr. Ten Eyck and Counsel Bowlby. Mr. Slater noted that the present number of automobiles housed in Bedminster Township is approximately 700. He stated that, according to this plan, Bedminster Township has a possible automobile population of about 7,000. He explained the "Mile Square" plan for roads. He stated that a house on every 5 acres will require additional roads and additional facilities. He noted that these roads (proposed) will never appear again until property comes up for development. Mr. Slater noted that, in the future, the Lemington Road will be the main road from Oldwick to Bedminster, Bernardsville, etc. and that the Rattlesnake Bridge Road will be the main road from certain Morris County locations to Pottersville and then to Route 78. Mr. Slater also noted that Route 206 is scheduled for dualization and that, since this is a State Highway, the Township will have little or nothing to say about it. Mr. Slater also noted that the Pottersville Road will be a major thoroughfare from Pottersville to Feapack and Gladstone. Mr. Slater explained that the proposed straightening of certain curves in various roads applies only in the event of future development.

Mayor Kean summarized the reports of the three committees and quoted several paragraphs from Planning Consultant Agle's reports.

Chairman Fales then asked the Secretary to read the names of the members of the Mayor's Citizen's Advisory Committee. The list of members was read by the Secretary.

Chairman Fales then opened the meeting for public comment on the Proposed Master Plan.

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Mr. William Bassett of Pottersville noted that the land owned by him and known as the "South Forty" had been rezoned from $\frac{1}{2}$ acre to 1 acre several years ago and that he now finds that Mr. Agle and the Planning Board have rezoned that area for a five acre minimum lot. He questioned as to why there are not 50 acre zones to reduce expenses and school and road problems. He voiced objection to the reduction of business and residential zones in Pottersville and the upgrading of certain lands across the North Branch of the Raritan River in Bedminster. He stated that a greater study is warranted where values are destroyed.

Mr. Agle stated that the major considerations in zoning are availability of transportation, sewage facilities, etc.; whether or not there is a need for concentration; treatment of similar land in a similar fashion. Mr. Agle explained that his job is to point out various alternatives and that it is then up to the people in the Township to decide about land use. He expressed his appreciation to the Township Committee, the Planning Board and the Mayor's Citizen's Advisory Committee for the cooperation received in the formation of the proposed Master Plan.

Mr. Donald Bourne noted that the Master Plan places emphasis on the retention of the present atmosphere of the community. He then questioned as to the advisability of Cluster Zoning.

Mr. Agle stated that the matter of Cluster Zoning was considered at length. He then explained the color designations on the Existing Land Use Map. Mr. Agle stated that this community is not quite ready for Cluster Zoning since it was only in the development stages last year.

Col. Thomas Stevenson of Deerhaven Road noted that the Proposed Master Plan does not indicate or make mention of a Sewage Disposal System.

Mr. Agle noted that a Sewage Disposal System causes detracton from the Water Table and that sparse population justifies sparse zoning. He noted that 5 acre lots can do well with a septic tank arrangement but that lots of below 2 acres make a septic system a "dubious affair". He further noted that you can almost read on the map those areas which would be subject to the installation of sewer plants.

Mayor Kean advised that, many years ago the Township Committee bought land for that purpose and it will be used for that purpose.

Mr. William Sperry of Deerhaven Road voiced his appreciation for the many hours of hard work done by the various committees in preparation of the Proposed Master Plan. He then questioned as to what effect the perimeter of our Township would have on us.

Mr. Fales advised that Bridgewater Township which adjoins a portion of our boundary contemplates an industrial and research zone in the area. The Chairman noted that consideration must be given to the uses proposed by adjoining municipalities.

Mr. Agle reviewed the available information as to uses proposed by municipalities which adjoin Bedminster Township.

Mr. Peter Gareth of Main Street, Bedminster noted that he lives on a $\frac{1}{2}$ acre lot in a proposed 1 acre zone. He advised that since the lots in the area are $\frac{1}{2}$ acre lots, they could be left that way.

Mr. Agle advised that the 1 acre restriction would apply to new building and not to Mr. Gareth's particular lot.

Mr. Gareth questioned as to whether he would be able to rebuild if his home were completely destroyed.

Mr. Agle advised that the Board of Adjustment would be required to work out a way for the owner, in such a case, to use his land.

Mr. Peter Detwiler of Pottersville Road commended the Planning Board for the long hours of careful study expended in the production of the Proposed Master Plan. He then noted that an adjustment should be made of the intersection of Pottersville Road and Larser Cross Road because of the many accidents caused by the sharp curve at this intersection. He also noted that the proposed school site adjacent to his property detracts from the value of his property. He stated that this site is one of the most desirable along Route 512. He requested a further opportunity to discuss this

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Mr. Slater advised Mr. Detwiler that the road plan calls for a much gentler curve at the intersection of Larger Cross Road and the Pottersville Road than that which currently exists.

Mrs. Ashmun noted that, obviously, there must, in the future, be a school in the northern section of the Township and that any information on any possible site in that area would be welcome. She further stated that the proposed site shown on the map does not indicate that this will be the specific location of the school.

Mr. Robert McCurdy commented that for the past year and a half the First Aid Squad has been attempting to obtain a piece of land and that Mrs. Ashmun had made no mention of quarters for the First Aid Squad, although she had mentioned fire houses. Mr. McCurdy questioned as to whether a piece of land can be made available to the First Aid Squad and, if so, when and where.

Mrs. Ashmun stated that the quarters for the First Aid Squad would, obviously, be included as part of the Civic Center quartering community facilities.

Mr. Kenneth B. Schley questioned as to the land shown in green on the plan and asked whether there would be a change in the tax situation on such land and whether houses could be built on this land.

Mr. P.W. Smith advised Mr. Schley that the area designated in green is now in the 5 acre zone (residence) and that the Master Plan has not changed that zone.

Mr. Agle informed Mr. Schley that the Planning Board would either have to approve the issuance of a building permit or buy the land in question from the owner.

Mr. Bensley Field noted that a great deal of open space and flood plain area is shown on the plan. He then questioned as to the possibility of certain flood plain area to the north of that so indicated which is not shown as such on the plan.

Mr. Agle explained that the area shown in dark green is for Civic Center use and that, if, in fact, that area is in the flood plain, the plan will be corrected to show it as flood plain area.

Mr. John Munro questioned as to what is actually known about the dualization of Route # 206.

Mr. Slater advised that the State Highway Department has in mind to dualize Route # 206 all the way to Netcong and that it has been intended to do so within a 5 to 10 year period.

Mr. Agle noted that, although the State Highway Department has such a project in mind, no time schedule has, as yet, been set.

Mr. Russell Wood noted that there is no increase in the size of the business zone; questioned as to how the Main Street of Bedminster can be made beautiful and advised that Main Street is not suitable for business.

John Fritz, Esq., representing Messrs. Ernest Rodenbach and John F. Stephenson, noted that the Mayor had stated that the population of the Township could expand to 18,000 people under present zoning and questioned as follows: (1) Will ratables, irrespective of space for 18,000 people, support the municipal government without a change in taxes? (2) Will ratables support service facilities for 18,000 people? (3) Is not the control of zoning by the Township limited by two exceptions--The construction of State Highways and the use of broad areas of undeveloped land by the Federal Government for defense purposes?

Mayor Kean noted that the question of ratables is an interesting one. He further noted that, last week, the tax rates for the 21 municipalities in Somerset County were published and that Bedminster enjoys the second lowest tax rate in the county. He further noted that present school costs are from \$600.00 to \$650.00 per pupil and that the Township is receiving sufficient taxes to provide the services required today. The Mayor further noted that the parochial schools have helped the school cost problem considerably. The Mayor stated that, should the zoning change, the demand for services would increase and the ratables would decrease. If the Township maintains the 5 acre zone, the ratables will grow with the increase in housing. The Mayor referred to Mr. Goodenough's article which states that large acre zoning is the answer to the tax problem.

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Mr. Agle noted that increased land use creates a greater demand for services. The opportunities for Bedminster in the way of research and development type occupancies are from 10 to 15 years away.

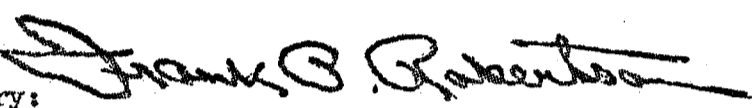
Mr. Russell Wood questioned as to why a central site has not been proposed for a 30 acre shopping center.

Mr. Agle advised that there is no need for commercial expansion at the present time.

Mr. Peter Gareth questioned as to the problems of water supply and sewage disposal.

Mr. Fales reminded Mr. Gareth that the water supply for his area is controlled by a private water utility and not by the Township.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 P.M.

Attest: 
Secretary: