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Scotch Plains Tomorrow - As Ad Hoc Committee Members Visualize It

Last January, the Scotch Plains Planning Board invited approximately 40 citizens, representing a cross-section of the community, to serve on the Master Plan Ad Hoc Citizens' Committee. Their charge was to study five survey reports prepared by Planning Consultant Dean Boorman and, using information gleaned from the five reports in conjunction with their own personal knowledge and areas of particular strength, to make recommendations to the Planning Board concerning proposals for revision of the Master Plan.

Last week, within these pages, Mr. Boorman's ideas for changes to be incorporated in the Master Plan were presented. In some cases, the Ad Hoc Citizens' Committee agrees wholeheartedly with Boorman, and with each other. In other situations concerning zoning, the Ad Hoc Committee disagreed. Their thoughts on Master Plan revisions have been combined in a six-page report, which will be considered by the Planning Board in conjunction with Boorman's recommendations.

The Citizens Committee first set goals. Among them is provision of a greater variety of housing alternatives to develop a more balanced community in age and income. Another goal is provision of intra-township transportation so that all recreational, commercial, and township facilities are accessible to all residents; to create a bikeway network; and to keep major traffic patterns flowing around the perimeters of the community, thereby keeping the town intact.

As further goals, the Ad Hoc Committee favors more recreation facilities, particularly for teenagers; an emphasis on preservation of residential character; development of a cohesive shopping area to draw people to a focal point in town; reassessment of Route 22 zoning; to strengthen the tax base; and maintenance of presently developed industrial zones, with a reassessment of undeveloped industrially zoned land on the south side in light of surrounding area.

Boorman, in his proposals for land use, recommended that multi-family dwellings be a directly permitted use in the B-1 zone. The Ad Hoc Committee concurs, favoring apartments in B-1 only on lots of an acre or more with a density of 12 bedrooms per acre. The Ad Hoc members were not of a common opinion on the Boorman idea of creation of a new zone - R-1A - a zone for low density luxury townhouses on undeveloped land in the Rahway Road - Raritan Road area. Some committee members thought this area should remain as it is - zoned for one-family homes on one acre lots, others thought there should be a variety of housing alternatives and agreed with Boorman.

At present, there is a large area adjoining the Lehigh Valley Railroad and Lake Avenue zoned for industry, and long looked upon as the future site of an industrial park. Boorman recommended this be changed to B-1A, permitting multi-family dwellings and research and office facilities instead. The committee concurred, finding it no longer feasible to zone the land for industry. Zoning this undeveloped land B-1A would also help meet any court requirements on restrictive zoning, the Committee felt.

There is a strong moral obligation for the town to provide housing suitable in all respects for senior citizens. Now there are apartments in the B-1 zone along Front Street which can house some seniors, but the Ad Hoc Committee notes these are unsubsidized. The Ad Hoc Committee strongly recommended the acquisition of School One for subsidized senior citizen housing - an idea also recommended by Boorman. This would take close communication between Board of Education and Township Council, the Committee report points out, since the Board of Education must legally sell to the highest bidder once the property is advertised for sale, while the Council has underway a study of senior citizen housing needs and will need time to study returns of a survey.

The Ad Hoc Committee had high praise for Boorman's plans for downtown Scotch Plains. He suggested combining separate parking areas into one main municipal parking plaza between Park Avenue and Bartle Avenue, with new buildings to face into the plaza. Boorman also suggested using upstairs of commercial buildings for apartments, with apartment entrances facing out into residential areas of Forest Road.

Boorman favored a new B-5 zone, on the south side, near the intersection of Lake and Martine Avenue extension, for development of a shopping center to serve the south side residents. Some Committee members liked the idea, feeling it would provide a convenient shopping spot for south side residents. Others thought there was no such need, feeling that people can drive just as readily to Fanwood, Clark or Edison.

Traffic and Transportation

The majority of the Ad Hoc Committee favored prohibition of parking at peak hours on Park Avenue to ease traffic flow. A few felt that even this concession to county pressure to increase traffic flow would result in eventual designation of Park Avenue as Route 1-78 interconnector. Boorman recommends that the 1-78 interconnector should run along Terrill, not Park - a suggestion in keeping with the Ad Hoc Committee's views on perimeter-of-town traffic patterns.

The Ad Hoc Committee was almost unanimous in support of some realignment of the Terrill-Raritan hairpin turn intersection to eliminate danger. Four alternatives were offered as possible approaches to road change.

The Committee members favor retention of existing widths on several southside arteries - among them Raritan Road west of Terrill, Rahway, and Cooper. Terrill should be widened, sev-

Citizens Ask Action, Not Words On Remedy For Flood Problems

Would Ask Assembly Bill Amendments For Rahway And Greenbrook Flood Authority

Homeowners, hard hit by recent flooding, confronted council members Tuesday night with one resident blaming "management-created conditions rather than natural phenomena" for damage to his property and another calling for "action and not more words."

George Papp of 2250 Elizabeth Avenue, who estimated that his street floods three to four times a year after normal summer rainstorms, criticized an earlier township decision to cover over a natural drainage and install a pipe which Papp claims is inadequate to handle the flow of water.

"We have been patiently waiting for the town fathers to remedy this situation which has caused mental, physical and financial discomfort," Papp stated, adding "We are asking for services to which we are rightfully entitled."

Referring to a recent petition by a group of township residents for additional tennis courts, Papp urged council members to "consider human problems first."

A signer of that petition, Mrs. Grace Bischoff said that while she and others sympathized with flood victims she hoped that the tennis court request would not be overlooked. "These will not spring up overnight," Mrs. Bischoff added.

Mayor Robert E. Griffin said that the township Jaycees were willing to undertake an independent study of what recreational facilities taxpayers wanted. "I want to take this issue out of the political atmosphere. We have not and will not abandon

recreation," the mayor declared. Dominick DeCuollo of 2034 Grand Avenue told the mayor and council, "I have no faith in the Army Corps Engineers. I'm starting to get water in my cellar. I'm tired of words, I want action."

DeCuollo suggested that the township "go after the Union County Park Commission" to restore a dam at Seely's Pond in the Watchung Reservation. According to DeCuollo this would alleviate flooding in the community.

The mayor replied that according to the Park Commission replacement of the dam would not

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Flood Pics Are Wanted

The Township Manager is seeking photos of flood scenes taken during the July 14-15 storm in Scotch Plains. These will be used for the purpose of substantiating the severity of the flooding in filing claims with the Federal Government. Pictures should be marked to the attention of Township Manager, James Hauser, Municipal Building, Scotch Plains.

Local UNICO Chapter Elects New Officers

At a recent meeting of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Chapter of Unico National, new officers were elected and installed for the 1973-1974 year.

The following were elected to office: President, Frank DiNizo; Vice-President, Jasper Di Bella; Vice - President, Robert Santo; Corresponding Secretary, Peter Parisi; Recording Secretary, Joseph Triano; Treasurer, Dominick DiFrancesco.

The President, Frank Di Nizo, commended the members for their untiring efforts in making the preceding year a successful one.

The local Unico Chapter, during the course of the past year, involved itself in numerous projects including the distribution of funds to charitable causes; held its second annual dinner dance; named Rose Ann Scamardella, ABC-TV newscaster woman of the year; held its second annual Christmas party for orphaned and underprivileged children where-

in Christmas presents valued at \$5,000.00 were distributed to the children; awarded local athletic and scholarship awards; participated in Columbus Day

ceremonies; and participated in the Memorial Day Parade.

Ladies of Unico, an auxiliary of the Unico Chapter, sponsored a spaghetti dinner to raise funds for the high school band. Over five hundred dinners were served.

Board Of Ed. Plans Special Meeting

The Board of Education will be holding their monthly Committee of the Whole meeting on August 14th at the Administration Offices at 2630 Plainfield Avenue. This meeting, which is open to the public, will begin at 8:00 p.m. The regular public meeting of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education will be held on Thursday, August 21st at Terrill Junior High School.

ANNUAL SIDEWALK SALE

Thursday
Friday
Saturday

August
7 - 8 - 9

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eral dangerous intersections should be improved.

The Ad Hoc members addressed themselves to the possibility of PATH rail service coming through Fanwood. The members recommend that the Council and the Planning Board request a study to determine feasibility of replacing the Netherwood and the Fanwood stations with a single station at North and Terrill Road on the Plainfield side of Terrill.

Three new northside recreation areas are recommended. On the southside, more land to be added to Brookside Park, as well as development of baseball field behind the southside firehouse are recommended. The town should acquire the 29-acre site near Sleepy Hollow Lane for a park and a recreation area, it is recommended.

Master Plan Reports Are Available

The public may obtain access to Master Plan reports at the reference desk of the Public Library and at the office of the Secretary to the Planning Board.

Documents which are available for public viewing include the reports prepared by the professional planner with proposals for changes in the Master Plan and views of the Ad Hoc Citizens Committee.

To date, the Planning Board has not yet taken a formal position on proposals for Master Plan revisions. Citizens will have an opportunity for input at a workshop session slated for September 22.