

MINUTES
Of The
Meeting Of The
ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION

May 3, 1956

The members of the Advisory Planning Commission met in the offices of Commissioner Joseph E. McLean, of the Department of Conservation and Economic Development. The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Mr. Fred G. Stickel, III, Chairman.

Those present were:

Fred G. Stickel, III, Chairman
Herbert H. Smith, Vice Chairman
H. Thomas Carr, Secretary

William A. Bloom
Louis Danzig
C. Rexford Davis
Alexander Feinberg
Joseph M. Healey
William Holster
Robert Shaw (representing Dr. Bergsma)
Edward B. Wilkens

Theodore J. Langan, Director of the Division of
Planning and Development

B. Budd Chavooshian, Chief, Bureau of Planning

Absent: William A. Sutherland

Upon motion made and seconded, the Commission approved the minutes of April 10, 1956, as submitted.

The Chairman then opened the meeting for a general discussion and asked each member present to make comments concerning planning in New Jersey.

It was stated that publicity regarding the newly created Commission was being circulated by the way of news releases and an article was published in the League of Municipalities' magazine.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Secretary, material was gathered from the files of the Planning Bureau on the former

Legislative Advisory Committee in the nature of comments, suggestions and criticisms in relation to planning legislation. Each member was presented with a summary of these comments for his study and review, and was advised to read the comments thoroughly and report on them at the next meeting.

It was suggested that a letter be written to all county planning boards requesting them to forward information about their problems and also suggestions in relation to the County and Regional Planning Enabling Act, so that the Commission might study these problems and suggestions.

The Chairman requested that members of the Commission submit reports, of a general nature, in connection with planning as it affects the organizations represented by each member. Mr. Louis Danzig, representative of the New Jersey Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, submitted recommendations and comments previously prepared, and a copy was given to each member of the Commission.

It was planned to have a series of public hearings in the fall, and Director Langan suggested that these be held sufficiently far apart to get the complete coverage and to keep the Commission in the public mind. It was also suggested that persons representing organizations from other states, such as experts in the various fields of planning, be invited to participate.

An appeal was made, through the Central Jersey Area of the New Jersey Federation of Official Planning Boards, to approximately 150 planning boards to send in suggestions and comments concerning the present planning legislation.

A comment was made in regard to excessive building permit fees as a means of raising revenue in certain communities. The Chairman stated that a case of that nature is now pending in court which will be used as a test case. However, it was the concensus of the Commission that that particular problem

- 3 -

is outside the province of the Commission.

The question of educational representation on planning boards was raised, as to whether or not a planning board should have as one of its members a representative from a local Board of Education. It was stated that those in the field of education are not adequately informed about planning as it affects education. The Commission felt that the greatest problem in planning is the matter of educating people to the value and need of planning. In short, it was agreed that a greater and more effective effort must be made along the educational line and that the Commission would give serious consideration to the various possibilities to increase the educational program. After much discussion on this subject, it was recommended that a pamphlet be compiled, published and distributed to all interested organizations and laymen, setting forth the workings of this Commission.

The subject of a master plan for each community was discussed. It was pointed out that by having a master plan previous to the adoption of a zoning ordinance many controversial issues could be avoided. It was suggested that the law be amended in this respect. The members agreed that before any decision be taken in that direction, much thought should be given to this matter, keeping in mind "home-rule." It was recommended that instead of amending the law in order to make the adoption of a master plan mandatory prior to adoption of a zoning ordinance, it might be more reasonable and less objectionable if only a Land-Use Plan were required before adoption of a zoning ordinance. It was agreed that this seemed feasible and sound in view of the fact that zoning should be based upon a future-use-of-land plan.

The topic of planning board membership was discussed, and it was suggested that there should be some representation in the technical fields, such as architects, et al, thus enabling the board to make wise decisions

- 4 -

when confronted with various problems.

With regard to the above matter, Mayor Healey, of Kearny, stated that they have no difficulty in resolving all their problems inasmuch as they have some technicians in various fields serving on their planning board and suggested that all planning boards have at least one or two technicians on their boards in order to handle all problems adequately. The Chairman concurred. The Mayor also stated that a planning board must be approached from a non-partisan standpoint in order to be successful.

The question was raised as to whether an engineer should serve on a planning board. It was stated that the law prohibits an engineer of a community to serve on its planning board which, if he were a member, would enable him to pass upon his own plan. The question of planning board membership is to be considered further at subsequent meetings.

It was said that there now exists a lack of cooperation among governing bodies, municipal engineers and local Boards of Health, the result being poor enforcement of the laws with which the Department of Health is concerned. Chapter 199 is of major concern to the Department of Health. It was urged upon each member to obtain a copy of this bill.

It was recommended that the present enabling act be studied and a report submitted, after which a committee of three or four would review the comments and classify them for discussion.

The Chairman said that it should be kept in mind that it is the responsibility of this Commission, initially, to review and analyze the existing planning legislation and to make the necessary changes in order to resolve problems now existing.

It was suggested that every effort be made to arouse interest of citizen-participation in planning matters. It was mentioned that the Chamber

- 5 -

of commerce would be very helpful in promoting planning activity.

Two letters were received by the Commission from individuals commenting on various phases of the present legislation. The letters were read and comments and suggestions noted. The Chairman will write suitable replies to these individuals.

Director Langan suggested that all correspondence received from individuals and/or organizations in connection with specific problems coming under the jurisdiction of the Department of Conservation and Economic Development be handled by the Department, through its particular Bureau handling such matters.

The Chairman remarked that if any member of the individual organizations of which this Commission is composed would like to appear before the Commission to make a statement setting forth the view of that particular organization, he is welcome to do so.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m. The next meeting is to be held on Thursday, June 7, 1956, in the conference-room (third floor No. 307) at 520 East State Street, Trenton, New Jersey.