

December 17, 1963

Present: All commissioners, Mr. W. S. Donaldson, Mr. Oliver Guyther.

Saratoga Drive

Mr. Guyther informed the commissioners that Mr. Hewitt, Sr., will not sign the deed unless something in the deed states that the commissioners will construct the road within a certain period of time, such as in 1964. Letter will be sent to Mr. Hewitt concerning this matter.

Center Gardens

Mr. Guyther reported that he and Mr. Donaldson talked with Mr. Baringer, the accountant from the Verona Construction Co. He is representing Mr. Cestone in this matter of taxes. Mr. Guyther advised the commissioners not to pass the resolution to abate these taxes for 1964. The federal government has paid about \$40,000 to the county, and will still make the contribution set forth in their letter, as they are committed to pay this money to the county in 1964. Mr. Guyther does not think passing the resolution will change the fact of the government paying this money.

If the tax bill is \$49,000 and the government pays \$50,000 the county will not have gained or lost anything. There are 120 buildings, with 1100 units, and if the assessor's method appraisal is used, the assessment would be \$4,400,000.00. Personal property would be \$500,000. This would total around \$5,000,000, and the county could pick up an additional \$50,000 revenue if the taxes are levied. Too, there is the possibility that the federal government will give up this property. Mr. Guyther has heard nothing from Mr. Childs of the FHA concerning this, and feels that either Mr. Childs or Mr. Donaldson should speak with Mr. Riley, State Supervisor of Assessments, about this. If this property is closed by the government and bought by private property owners, the county would be better off in the long run.

Mr. Baringer said that the furniture in 700 units was owned by the people living in them. Some of the furniture was rented from the navy, and the navy would remove it as it wore out. According to Mr. Baringer, all of the navy furniture was to be out by November 1962, and would have Mr. Donaldson believe that none of the old furniture was owned by anyone but the navy. Center Gardens would replace some furniture as it was taken out by the navy, and Mr. Baringer said the Patuxent Company owned this furniture.

Mr. Doolittle of the State Tax Commission made an arbitrary assessment on this, and said they had never filed a schedule. Also said this was a foreign corporation and they could not do business in this state. Mr. Doolittle said that someone had told them that there was a great deal of furniture there and his office made the arbitrary assessment, and sent this to St. George Avenue, New Jersey, and these were received, as they were not returned to the state office. Mr. Cestone said the New Jersey address was a Mr. Zerman's address and he did not receive them.

Verona took over this company when bills and taxes were not paid. FHA owns the preferred stock, and Verona has the common stock. The navy owned the land and the improvements were owned by Eagle. When the mortgage is paid off the property goes back to the navy. Tentative value placed on this property is \$7,500.00. Mr. Guyther feels that the stoves and refrigerators would be valued at \$700 per unit.

400 of the 1000 units are furnished, and 10 of the 100 units in Officers Court. The personal property assessment would be \$280,000. The commissioners should have Mr. Herbert and Mr. Cero give them an estimate of what the assessment would be on the Center Gardens Housing, and also if the personal property could be assessed. Mr. Donaldson feels that the commissioners will have to grant the present abatement according to the Wherry Act which states we must give them credit against any tax that they owe. At the present time, our base times the tax rate is less than the credit they have due.

Mr. Herbert was asked about this and stated that Center Gardens was assessed about three years ago, and this was an actual physical assessment, but just on the real estate. Total assessment is a little over \$2,000,000 and this is all of the four sections. It is too late in the year now to do anything that would be effective for the 1964 taxes. We cannot increase it for the tax year of 1964, and they cannot protest it to have this figure reduced, as it is too late in the year. Such action must be taken 20 days before the first of the year.

Mr. Donaldson said he would like to know how the navy arrived at the figures they use and Mr. Guyther said this information could probably be obtained from Capt. Thompson, Area Public Works Office in Washington. The figures are based on the number of children in the Center Gardens area attending public schools.

Mr. Guyther suggested a new appraisal be made, and the notice be sent out now for next year, and if they want to appeal, they will have plenty of time. Must also find out how many children are in this area. Mr. Riley and Mr. Cero can be requested to make the appraisal of the property, and make an actual physical assessment. Then in 1965 the commissioners could look forward to some revenue from this project. Mr. Herbert said this assessment could be made after January 15th, as his office can go back and re-assess any area in any district if they so desire. He said he will inform Mr. Guyther as to when Mr. Cero can come down. Prior to this Mr. Donaldson will get all of the required information concerning amounts paid by the government for the expenses of Center Gardens. This will give the commissioners a complete picture of the entire matter. Mr. Guyther has made it clear to Mr. Baringer that the personal property taxes must be paid before anything can be done. Mr. Guyther will check the law to see if the commissioners have the power to abate personal property taxes.

Mr. Donaldson asked if the \$2,000,000 assessment is in the books, but not carried in the base, and Mr. Herbert said it is carried in the base as this is what he sends to the state. Mr. Donaldson said he felt that in some way this was eliminated from the base, and he will check this with Mr. Gruber.

Assessor's Office Help and Record Keeping

Letter from Mr. Riley read concerning the fact that the books in this office are deteriorating. Mr. Herbert said that Mr. Riley was present at the conference which set up the present system, and the former feels his office has generally improved and does not agree with Mr. Riley. Mr. Riley has stated he wants a deed reference of every piece of property on the books, and the only help this would offer would be to trace property records. He said we are not complying with the law, and when Mr. Herbert asked what county had the proper system so he could exam it, he received no answer. According to Mr. Herbert there is no other county with a better system than St. Mary's County.

Mr. Burch suggested that the commissioners could have Mr. Herbert explain his system of keeping records and then Mr. Riley's letter could be answered. The commissioners adjourned to Mr. Herbert's office and were shown the old method of keeping records and the new system, for comparison. In the new system there is even more detail given than in the old system, which Mr. Riley seems to favor. Mr. Riley feels that besides the deed reference, a map and parcel number should be carried on the cards.

Mr. Herbert explained how the figures are handled and changed in case of property being bought and sold. These records are almost an exact copy of the information sent out on the tax bills, and a new book is compiled each year. Every change that is made in the books is an additional expense as a new card has to be cut showing the new information.

Mr. Gruber is going to check to see if a deed reference can be placed on each account and this would be a small extra cost to the county. To carry all the information that Mr. Riley wants on the records would be a great expense, and Mr. Herbert does not feel that all of this information is needed as the average person would not request it. Each piece of property has a number and the particular property can be identified by this number simply by calling the assessor's office or looking on the tax bill.

If a new clerk is hired, the first thing to be done would be to start a deed reference file and this would take about 2 years to complete. The person hired would also have to have some knowledge of the record room in order to do this work. Everything that has come in during the past 2 years has a deed reference, but the old records do not show this. If the deed references can be put in the books, this will probably satisfy Mr. Riley.

Mr. Donaldson explained that the method of figuring the amounts is done by machine and there are no mistakes made. The old method of keeping these records by hand is very liable to error. Under the present method, duplicate records are kept in Mr. Gruber's office in case our records were destroyed, and there is also a duplicate set in the treasurer's office.

Brucellosis Certificate

Dr. Hastings of the Department of Agriculture presented the certificate to the commissioners and explained this indicates that St. Mary's County livestock is free from this disease. Dr. Jasper, Federal Vet., said that this county is to be commended for their cooperation in this project, as this is a landmark. Dr. Jones was commended for his work while the tests were being made. New Hampshire

is the only other state to reach the entirely free status and they hoped Maryland would reach this point by 1965. Mr. Burch thanked these gentlemen for the work done on behalf of our county.

Audit Report

This report will be published for the year ending June 30, 1963. Exhibit C, the statement of revenues and expenditures will be published. This is required by law. Mr. Guyther said the commissioners are required to publish the summary of the audit report, and he will check as to how many papers must have this information.

Board of Appeals Salaries

Col. Sothoron, Mr. J. Cox, and Mr. L. Merchant will be paid \$50.00 each for service on this board.

Roads

Layout of Hollywood dump presented. Mr. Guyther is to draw up the lease. Mrs. Abell wants to sign the lease for one year at a time. Mr. Burch suggested that a five year lease be obtained and this should be negotiated if possible. This might cost from \$150 to \$200. A description of the dump will also have to be written.

Old Benedict Rd. - report that this is being used as a dumping area. Mr. Hall will check. Request for signs in this area stating "no dumping", and also clean up of existing debris. Courtney's Wharf has been built and charged to Dumps and Wharves account. Signs at dumps being replaced; new ones are black and white. Carver Heights Streets - some in good condition, some not. Some repair has been made by placing gravel in potholes. If these streets are taken over this would include the sidewalks and this would be an added expense to repair. Mr. Sterling is to call Mr. Hall about the roads in Golden Beach that the county is taking over. Camp Saysf Rd. will also be checked. Bowles Road will be done this week. The Clarence Gass Rd. will be finished this week. Nalley Rd. will have to be put on the gravelling list. Far Corner Rd. will be bushed and graded and this will be taken out of Account 514. Signs for Patuxent Park will be delivered about January 10, 1964.

Mr. Ridgell mentioned widening the wharf at St. George Island and asked if the Tidewater Fisheries would help to pay the cost. According to Mr. Hall, would have to have plans and put this out on contract. It was agreed that Mr. Manning of the Tidewater Fisheries Commission should be asked to come down to discuss financial matters concerning such structures in this county, as to where the money is.

Mr. Hall stated that a road improvement list must be made each year and signed by Mr. Burch for the county roads. This includes any roads taken into the system and any improvements of existing roads. Mr. Burch signed list presented by Mr. Hall.

Railroad Siding Rental

Mr. Briscoe will be instructed to return the check to Mr. Matthews covering this cost.

Fire Tax

Mr. R. Cecil asked about banks paying this tax, and feels they should, as the items in the bank could be destroyed in case of fire. Mr. Guyther said that the GAC Corporation would not be paying real estate tax as they do not own the real estate, but should pay \$1.00 on the regular rate, plus \$.10. The fire tax applies to all personal property and real estate, according to the law. Mr. Cecil said he has had no complaints from anyone about the fire tax, except the GAC Corporation. Mr. Guyther explained they are exempt from all of the county rate except \$1.00, but the law concerning the fire tax does not exempt anyone from paying this. There are no exceptions according to the law as interpreted by Mr. Guyther. Mr. Cecil will refund these people the difference between the \$1.00 and \$1.95, and will send them a new bill, including the amount of the fire tax.

Courthouse Painting

The commissioners agreed, after some investigation, that Duron Paint could be used to paint the interior of the courthouse.

Advance Pay Day

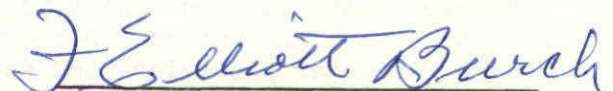
The commissioners agreed that the employees be paid on December 23rd, next pay day to be January 15, 1964.

Bus Transportation

Reported that several boys from Charles County are riding the bus to Ryken and causing crowded condition. Mr. Donaldson said he did not know of any arrangement between our county and Charles County for this. If so, there should be some charge made for this service. Mr. Waring is supposed to check this and call Mr. P. Raley, but has not done so as yet.

Meeting adjourned.

Approved,


F. Elliott Burch
President