

January 7, 1969

Present: F. Elliott Burch
J. Wilmer Bowles
George R. Aud

Outdoor Drama

Mr. B. Johnson, President, Mrs. T. Ostertag, representing her husband who is Vice-president, Mrs. M. Ricketts, Secretary and Mrs. Betty Giberson representing the Enterprise met with the Commissioners to discuss the possibility of the establishment of an Outdoor Drama in St. Mary's County.

Mr. Johnson stated that the first meeting of November 11, 1968 drew 40 people. Five organizations have promised support and the Margaret Brent Business Women's Association pledged to use this as their project this year. The Constitution is being worked out for legal terminology. The Association plans to use up to 200 actors. The plays will be historical in nature but not based on one individual man in history. Mr. Johnson explained that the purpose of this meeting was to explain the reason for the Association and the idea of the drama and to determine if the Commissioners feel it would be a worthy pursuit for the County to invest money for a feasibility study on the drama. The objectives outlined by Mr. Johnson were: 1. Increase of a desirable type of tourist to the county with a corresponding increase in business that cater to tourists (motels, marinas, restaurants); 2. Possible encouragement of other desirable types of economic establishments to help secure the future of the County's excellent natural environment; 3. Summer employment of many youths, skilled and semi-skilled workers in an occupation that is enjoyable and learningful; 4. Permanent relating to generations of the rich historical story of St. Mary's County; 5. Development of community pride and solidarity through this cooperative effort.

Mr. Johnson stated that he had attended several outdoor dramas including UNTO THESE HILLS, HORN IN THE WEST, THE COMMON GLORY AND THE LOST COLONY. He had met with Mr. Mark Sumner, Director of the Institute of Outdoor Drama and also with Dr. Kermit Hunter, Dean of the School of Arts from Southern Methodist. These gentlemen visited St. Mary's City and met with Gen. Hogaboom and Mr. Jansson to discuss the availability of St. Mary's City as the possible background need for the dramas. Some of the significant factors recognized by the Association were that St. Mary's City has a wealth in historical data to justify a drama and that attractions in addition to the drama will be needed in order to assure the continued self-support in future years. He also pointed out that the support of the whole county was needed for its success. It was noted that the drama will bring appreciable returns to the County and State in sales taxes. The project, he stated, must be looked upon as a long-term one which must make use of research and experience of others. He suggested that a feasibility study be made by the Institute of Outdoor Drama at Chapel Hill to determine if our area will and can support a drama is essential. Regarding the cost, he estimated that based on an

average size theatre of 1500 seats, the cost is approximately \$150,000 (Theatre \$100,000; production \$50,000.)

Mr. Johnson went on to explain that there are several possible sources for money; local fund raising, State grant, Federal projects, County funds and also a good possibility of \$25,000 from Old Dominion Foundation. Mrs. Ostertag remarked that many organizations are interested and enthused with this because all groups can support it as it is not a controversial organization. Mrs. Ricketts said it would be wonderful for the teenagers because there are so few places and things for them to do and this is a form of family entertainment. Mr. Johnson stated that only 4% of the local people would attend a drama and that would be from the \$5,000 a year bracket. It was also pointed out that the drama would run for ten weeks and they would prefer local participation if possible. Otherwise outside actors would have to be brought in. Mr. Johnson made a request for \$175 for the formation and incorporation of this group and Mr. Burch suggested that possibly membership fees should be set up within the association and dues charged. Mr. Johnson stated that they would need a maximum of \$2,000 for the study. Mr. Burch explained that legislative authority would be needed for this. Mr. Bowles asked if this project could be worked out with the EDC. Mr. Burch also suggested that they get in touch with Mr. John Mills of the Tri-County Council and said he would bring this up at the next meeting with the Council. Mr. Bowles suggested that the Drama Association meet with Mr. Mills prior to the meeting so he would have a better knowledge of the project. Mr. Aud inquired as to the amount of land this would require. Mr. Johnson stated that it would take about 25 acres for parking and the theatre. Mr. Johnson said they would first have to form a nonprofit organization to manage the study, then secure the funds for the feasibility study and the theatre. After this they would pursue the site and the author and director.

Hopewell Manor Lodge Trailer Park

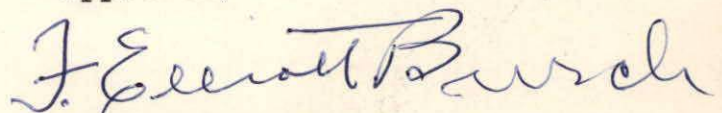
Mr. Jack Daugherty's application for addition to his trailer park was unanimously approved upon request from the Planning and Zoning Commission. All plats were signed by the various departments.

Assessors School

The Commissioners unanimously approved a request from the Assessment Office for their winter meeting at the University of Maryland in the amount of \$270 to be held in January.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m. to attend the Annual Winter Meeting in Baltimore.

Approved,



F. Elliott Burch