

Board of County Commissioners' MeetingTuesday, April 20, 1971

Present: George R. Aud, President  
J. Wilmer Bowles, Commissioner  
J. S. Guy, Jr., Commissioner  
Robert E. Wigginton, County Attorney  
Paul R. Raley, Administrative Officer  
Viola M. Gardner (Mrs.), Secretary (Recording)

The meeting came to order at 10:10 A.M.

Misses Sandra Gibson and Patricia Bowling, students at Chopticon High School, sat in.

There was a short discussion regarding the lease of the Old Jail to the Historical Society. Mr. Bowles requested the County Commissioners not be liable for injury, death, etc., and that a clause be properly inserted in the lease. He further suggested that the County Commissioners require a Landlord-Tenant insurance policy for \$100,000-\$300,000.

Pension-Claude Johnson

Mr. Robert E. Wigginton, County Attorney, submitted a copy of a Petition to the Court, filed by William O. E. Sterling and Joseph E. Bell, II, for J. Claude Johnson, stipulating his earnings of less than \$200 per month. Mr. Wigginton will check out monies received from the Property Review Board. Mr. Aud signed the Answer to the Petition.

Leasing of Grounds Adjacent to the Old Alms House

Mr. Raley stated that he had received a request from Mr. Dick Franklin, in behalf of Ed Swecker and Jim Estep, of Chopticon High School, for use of the corner property between the Old Alms House and Route 244. The reason for the request was for a school demonstration of agricultural products. The Commissioners approved this request, and further requested a thirty-day cancellation clause on the part of the County Commissioners. Mr. Guy suggested that they write to Mr. Ernest Bell, lessee, stating that the use of the land has been requested by the Board of Education, and the County Commissioners have complied with their wishes.

St. Mary's River Watershed  
PL 566 Watershed Loan-\$250,000

Mr. George R. Aud signed copies of the letter of Intent containing the conditions stipulated by the FHA. It is our intention that all of these conditions will be met no later than May 12, 1971. Mr. William B. Groome had stipulated in his letter that the requested loan would bear an interest rate of 3.463% instead of 3.342%.

Courthouse Telephone System

Mr. Paul R. Raley stated he had signed an agreement with the C and P Telephone Company for the Series 300 Communications System to replace our present switchboard system. Mr. Bowles suggested the possibility of having an information service and operate in the center of the corridor in the main hall. Discussion was had with reference to the location of the new system. The telephone number 475-9121 belonging to Bill Raley's Sales Center will be changed in July and given to the Courthouse. We informed the local C and P Telephone Company that we would be responsible for all incoming calls made to this number prior to the distribution of the 1972 telephone book. This will then give us ten (10) numbers in succession, which we have not had prior to this time.

Courthouse-Allocation of Office Space

Mr. Guy suggested that perhaps Margaret Brent could be used for office space. Mr. Bowles added that Banneker School might have space available and it would be possible that the Board of Education can move some of their offices to either of the two locations, thereby freeing some of the offices in the Board of Education Building for County or State Offices such as Juvenile Services or other services not specifically related to the Court. The Board of County Commissioners will approach Dr. King for the feasibility of this venture. This would also eliminate some of our parking problems. Mr. Bowles suggested that the parking lot adjacent to the east side of the Health Department be constructed immediately. Mr. Robert Dean was asked to meet with the Commissioners before noon to discuss this.

Airport Bill

Comment was made that the Airport Bill that was passed by the Legislature is not what was proposed by the County Commissioners. Discussion was held as to the legality of expanding the Airport under the new Legislation. The County Attorney was requested to study this legislation.

Maypole Road Agreement

Mr. Raley was requested to contact Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lee Miles and ask that they sign said agreement.

Fresh Pond Neck Road

Mr. Guy stated that he had been requested to include the Fresh Pond Neck Road, located in the First Election District, on the oiling schedule this year. It was requested that a letter be sent to Mr. Douglas Bond of the local State Roads Commission to include in the oiling schedule the extension of the Hewitt Road in the Second Election District, the Dave Bailey Road in the Seventh Election District, the Joy Chapel Road in the Sixth Election District and Mrs. Graves' Road in the Fifth Election District and Fresh Pond Neck Road in the First Election District.

North Gate of the Naval Air Station Road

Mr. Aud stated that he had requested Mr. Beavin of the Beavin Company to see if he could find Federal money to bring the North Gate Road out of the Naval Air Station to Town Creek.

Chaptico-Mechancisville Road

Mr. Guy stated that he had requested Mr. Junior Raley to survey and stake out the Chaptico-Mechanicsville Road within the property line of Myrna McFallon, et. al.

Proposed Landfills

Mr. Guy inquired as to the status of the Raymond Tennyson property to be used as a proposed landfill. Mr. Bowles stated that the Compton Dump will have to close in the very near future and suggested that we open a dump on the Tennyson property and then convert it into a landfill as soon as it is feasible. Mr. Guy stated that Federal funding is available and inquired whether or not the County could spend the money then collect from the F.H.A. Mr. Wigginton will check this out with Mr. William Groome.

Parking Lot at Health Department

At this point, Mr. Robert Dean entered the meeting and the Commissioners proceeded to the parking lot adjacent to the Health Department. Mr. Dean is to draw up an acceptable plan for the Commissioners, showing the entrance and exit. It was requested that the area in the front of the Health Department be extended for the benefit of parking to permit double passing with parking on both sides of the street.

Rev. Daniel G. Stone and his Committee

Present: Rev. Daniel G. Stone, Chairman  
 Mr. Theodore Newkirk, Pres. St. Mary's County NAACP  
 Mr. Benjamin Jordon  
 Mr. John Dysollive  
 Mrs. Virginia Newkirk  
 Mrs. Marie Goldsmith  
 Miss Nancy Murray  
 Mrs. Mary H. Woodland and others  
 Mr. Jack Kershaw

At the request of Rev. Daniel G. Stone, Chairman, he and his Ad Hoc Committee appeared to discuss with the Board of County Commissioners the proposed increase in rents for dwellings at the Carver Heights project. They presented the facts of their case in a typed statement, containing a list of priorities for consideration by the Commissioners, which statement is on file.

Rev. Stone stated that tenants in these dwellings had received notices in the mail that the rents would be increased on the first of May as follows:

	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
4 Bedroom Apartments	\$85.00	\$100.00
3     "           "	77.00	90.00
2     "           "	70.00	80.00
1     "           "	65.00	72.50

He was approached by the tenants about the seriousness of the situation. Approximately 90% of the people living in the dwellings are Social Service clients and only receive \$37.00 per month for housing, which does not include utilities. This means the rents they are now paying will have to be supplemented. He met with a few interested people to see if they could get a meeting with some of the renters, which meeting was held last Thursday, April 15, 1971. There was a good turn out and the people meeting here today formed the committee, who were then asked to present the seriousness of the situation to the County Commissioners, and to call a meeting with Messrs. Weiner and Blair and other concerned citizens.

The priorities for consideration are:

1. To try to obtain a delay in the rent increase until a more satisfactory solution can be worked out.

2. Rescheduling of rent payment time from the 7th to the 17th of the month, since the majority of the renters do not receive their checks until the 16th. The date of the 4th would automatically build in a penalty of \$5.00.
3. Complaints about lack of trash collection and general conditions of housing. Their greatest concern is lack of general maintenance. At the present time the most critical thing is not being able to meet the payments now asked. There is no justification for the increase, as nothing has been expended for improvements.
4. Support legislation to get a Building Code and some type of Housing Authority.

MR. BOWLES: Is it my understanding that you are asking for a specific time of delay -- one month or more?

REV. STONE: It has to be an indefinite delay, until some solution is reached. As I see it, these people cannot pay these rents. It will have to be a time until we can get some "feedback".

MR. AUD: Mr. Weiner told me there was a sewerage and water increase and that an increase would be effective May 1st.

REV. STONE: This group would like to meet with the Commissioners and other County officials as soon as possible. (After a short discussion the date April 27, 1971 at 3:00 P.M. was set). A number of petitions have been circulated and will be brought to this meeting.

MR. AUD: You want us to invite the Senator?

REV. STONE: Yes -- Mr. Weiner, Mr. Blair, Mr. J. Frank Raley, and as many of this Committee as you see this morning.

MR. BOWLES: Perhaps you could advise this office on Monday the number of persons who will be attending.

REV. STONE: Since these people have been selected by the majority of the people, I would not like to exclude anyone.

MRS.

GOLDSMITH: I have done a lot of research on this housing problem. Many of these houses are not safe. The increases range from 12% to 17%. Even if the houses were sound and safe, this is a steep increase.

- MR. AUD: How much time would you like for this meeting?
- REV. STONE: It is hard to determine. Approximately an hour or an hour and one-half. Is there any suggestion from this group.
- MR. NEWKIRK: There is one thing I would like to add from the standpoint of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People -- it is past the critical stage -- it is rather explosive. The people of Carver Heights have been robbed. We are trying to explain to you that the time is past for talking. We feel that you, as County Commissioners, are not concerned, and we would like to know what you can do.
- MR. AUD: We are concerned, but we are limited in what we can do legally and financially.
- REV. STONE: Mr. Raley is concerned with the legality of what we are asking. Baltimore County has a Leasing Authority.
- MR. AUD: Mr. Raley said he would do some research on it.
- REV. STONE: What would you as County Commissioners like to have us do.
- MR. AUD: Our lawyer will be available to you.
- MR. WIGGINTON: What are these alternatives?
- REV. STONE: Repeated four priorities as listed previously in these minutes.
- MR. WIGGINTON: Do you think the rents are too high?
- REV. STONE: The amount of rent paid for the type of housing is over-priced; (He showed a picture of a low-priced, three-bedroom home with ample air conditioning at \$105.00 per month).
- MR. NEWKIRK: Maybe the County Commissioners could give us some insight on the kind of financing and prices that these persons should be paying for these homes.

- MR. WIGGINTON: What would be the price of one of these units?
- MR. JORDAN: They range from about \$12,000. There is some sort of problem the way the houses were erected. The Veteran's Administration won't approve them.
- MR. BOWLES: Do they meet the approved appraisal by the Federal Housing Authority?
- MR. JORDAN: If you wanted to buy the house, it had to be renovated in order to get the Government to approve it.
- MR. BOWLES: Those who have purchased, how did they buy them? What are they paying? Was it approved by the Federal Government?
- MR. JORDAN: It was through the Federal Government, but the people continued to pay rent and were not getting any service.
- REV. STONE: The representative of the Housing Project, who was showing the house to some white clients stated, "We are trying to fix up some of these houses and the better houses will go to those with better incomes. We are trying to put all the blacks in the back of the project.
- MR. BOWLES: When you are using Federal financing, this cannot be done to you.
- MR. WIGGINTON: Have you talked to the owners? Maybe they would be receptive to a delay.
- MR. NEWKIRK: We have not, because we have tried to talk with them previously.
- REV. STONE: This isn't an individual renters problem. It is a County problem. What can we do with our poor? I would like to add the name of Mr. Michael McCauley, since he is Director of SATAV.
- MR. NEWKIRK: The gas and electricity in Carver Heights is extremely high. I lived there, and for a four bedroom apartment for cooking and hot water, during the months of July and August, I paid \$25.00 per month.

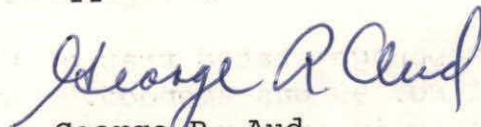
- MR. BOWLES: Did you have an individual tank?
- MR. NEWKIRK: There was one large tank with two outlets, which was metered. Finally, I secured my own tank. It's just amazing how high gas and electricity is for Carver Heights.
- MR. JORDAN: Mr. Taylor sells gas. I bought tanks from him and they lasted me three (3) months. Then they put in gas from Pargas and my gas bill jumped from that to \$25.00 per month. My wife just paid one bill yesterday for \$30.00. My electric bill runs \$17-\$22 a month just for lights.
- MR. BOWLES: Has the electric been checked? Have they checked the meter?
- MR. NEWKIRK: Yes, regardless of how they check, we at Carver Heights came up with a larger bill.
- MR. GUY: What sort of heat do you have?
- MR. JORDAN: I use oil. When we first moved there, we had to use the company they had, I believe it was Southern Maryland Oil Company. They said they were dealing with this Company and we could not get it from any other persons. We are using Pargas now. They have the contract with the owners.
- MR. AUD: We should have a representative from Pargas at this meeting. (At this point a list of County officials and others to attend the meeting was drawn up, as follows:)
- Rev. Daniel G. Stone and 15 from his group
  - Mr. Joseph D. Weiner and Mr. Walter Blair, Owners
  - Senator Paul J. Bailey
  - Delegate John Hanson Briscoe
  - Delegate James Manning McKay
  - Mr. Michael McCauley, Director SATAV
  - Mr. William B. Groome, County Supervisor, FHA
  - Dr. Alan Houser, Health Department
  - Mr. Joseph D. Carter, Director Social Services
  - Representatives from Pargas
  - Representatives from Southern Maryland Electric



- MR. GUY: Those buildings were built a long time ago, and they perhaps do not have insulation, and there are a lot of windows. Your bills are probably higher in the winter than in the summer, due to a loss of heat.
- MR. JORDAN: I have had one bill as low as \$8.00.
- MRS. WOODLAND: I have several questions I would like to have answered: Would you support the tenants of Carver Heights?
- MR. AUD: It would be pretty hard for us to make a judgment at this time. That question could come after the meeting. I have only heard one side.
- MRS. WOODLAND: Do you agree with the rent increases?
- MR. AUD: I again say, at this point, without making a study into it, and without making a study of rents around the County, I am unable to give an answer.
- MRS. WOODLAND: Would you be willing to work in support of a Public Housing Code in the County?
- MR. WIGGINTON: We are in the process of having a Committee study the entire form of County Government, and hope they would have a report ready by 1972.
- MISS MURRAY: I was checking the Maryland State Code and the Commissioners do have the authority to establish a Housing Code.
- MR. WIGGINTON: They do have the authority and are considering this. This whole thing was discussed with the Navy the other week.
- MRS. WOODLAND: Will you support and work towards getting a Housing (Building) Code within the County?
- MR. AUD: After this meeting we will be appointing an Ad Hoc Committee to look into the whole problem.
- MR. GUY: The Navy is pushing very hard for the same things.
- MR. P. RALEY: When you are renting and using many tanks, do you ever check each one to determine how much gas you are using?

- MR. NEWKIRK: I got my own tank.
- MR. P. RALEY: How often do you receive gas?
- MR. NEWKIRK: Once a month.
- MR. P. RALEY: Instead of him coming every month and putting in a new tank, I checked the meter and when it showed red, I knew the tank was out, and then called for a new tank.
- MR. AUD: They are working out of a large tank and cannot do that.
- MRS. NEWKIRK: I want to know about the housing part. If the County does not have a Housing Authority, you can get it.
- MR. BOWLES: Are you talking about a Housing Authority to secure low-cost rental housing or housing for purchasing?
- MISS MURRAY: Considering the homes when they were built as temporary housing for the Base, I feel we should have someone from the Health Department here.
- REV. STONE: Mr. Walter E. Raum, Environmental Hygiene Section, Health Department, is on this committee as an advisor. According to Mr. Raum, it does not meet the standards. We will not take up any more of your time. We have submitted our alternatives and will meet here on April 27th at 3:00 P.M.
- Meeting adjourned at 12:40 P.M.

Approved,



George R. Aud  
President