

Board of County Commissioners' MeetingTuesday, April 28, 1971

Present: George R. Aud, President  
J. Wilmer Bowles, Commissioner  
J. S. Guy, Jr., Commissioner  
Robert E. Wigginton, County Attorney  
Cecelia B. Adams, Recording Secretary

The meeting came to order at 9:45 A.M.

Proclamation-Law Day U.S.A.

Present: Clarke Raley, Senator Paul J. Bailey, Neal P. Myerberg and Jack Kershaw

The Commissioners presented the above members of the Bar Association with a proclamation designating Saturday, May 1, 1971, as Law Day U.S.A., in St. Mary's County. This nationwide observance has been so designated so that every citizen can give thoughtful attention to the place of law in our society.

Lease-Old Jail Building

A lease between the St. Mary's County Historical Society and the County Commissioners for 99 years was signed by the President, George R. Aud.

Deed of Easement and Agreement-Sewer and Water lines

A deed of easement and agreement between the County Commissioners, the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission and Southern Maryland Electric Coop, Inc., was signed by the President, George R. Aud. This document grants an easement to the Metropolitan Commission for the sewer and water lines along the railroad right-of-way as shown on the plat.

Solid Waste Planning

Present: Mr. Reed W. McDonagh, Dr. John Mills

Mr. McDonagh stated that at the last legislative session, House Bill No. 99 was amended. This bill will have some impact on the County in so far as solid waste is concerned. The bill itself deals with litter being a part of the solid waste plan.

It would require Counties to adopt and submit a comprehensive plan for collection and disposal of litter. Environmental Services would be in a position to carry some of the cost incurred by the development of this plan to the County.

Mr. McDonagh stated that it is their hope to develop a regional plan. He suggested that various economic studies already compiled for the County be utilized rather than contracting a consultant to compose a plan in its entirety.

Mr. McDonagh felt that tires, junk automobiles, industrial wastes, etc. could probably be incorporated into a State wide rule. Mr. McDonagh stated that this plan should show how the present and anticipated solid waste disposal system can be provided in a manner that will best serve the people. It shall provide for the management of solid wastes from their points of generation, collection, transportation, transfer, handling and ultimate disposal. He suggested that representatives from St. Mary's County meet with a similar number from Charles and Calvert Counties, to arrive at an agreement as to how the Counties should proceed. The final decision of selecting a consultant to provide the final portion of this plan will require some technical assistance. Mr. McDonagh felt that the cost would be defrayed if the plan was compiled on a Tri-County basis.

Senate Bill 542, enacted in 1970, amends Section 386B of Article 43 to authorize the use of the Sanitary Facilities Fund for State assistance to the Counties and Baltimore City for the preparation of these plans. Under the requirements of Section 387C, it is stated that this law will assure that the County plans are compatible with one another. It requires that the County plans will be completed on or before January 1, 1974.

Mr. Bowles inquired as to whether Mr. McDonagh planned to speak with representatives of Charles and Calvert County also. He was concerned as to whether the Tri-County Council or the State was going to coordinate this plan. Dr. Mills stated that he felt that the Tri-County Council had a definite role to play in this plan. He stated that he thought the Council would perform the coordinating role. He went on to say that at present, the Council was gathering information to be listed on base maps as far as the soil, water, roads, etc. were concerned. He was very much interested in working with St. Mary's County.

Dr. Mills stated that he felt this was a rather expensive project unless there was enough cause to go this expense. He did not see why this could not be applied to the several different classifications of solid waste.

Mr. McDonagh inquired as to whether the Commissioners would be willing to participate in some of these matters and problems that may come up as a Board or would they want to use a representative. Dr. Mills inquired as to whether Mr. McDonagh was suggesting a working committee and Mr. McDonagh answered that he felt a committee would be very useful, with the understanding that information be brought back to the Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Bowles stated that since Mr. McDonagh planned to meet with the other Counties in the Tri-County area, possibly the Commissioners could receive a preliminary report from his meeting, so that they could talk this over within themselves and arrive at some decision. It was agreed that this would be done.

#### McKay's Beach Shore Erosion

Present: Mr. Jack Koegel and Mr. George Dankers

Mr. Koegel stated that the residents of the McKay's Beach area have been having difficulty in getting 100% participation from an area as large as they had contemplated. Mr. Koegel wondered if possibly by working with the Commissioners, if they could qualify under the 75% participation requirement. Mr. Koegel stated that if the County would request funds for the McKay's Beach residents, the residents themselves would maintain 75% of the cost.

Mr. Koegel stated that the law as it was written prior to the last assembly was based on a graduated scale. One of the Delegates had informed him that there was an amendment to this law, whereas an individual could borrow up to \$20,000 for a specific program. He was not certain as to whether the law was passed. The basic construction cost on record is listed at \$50,000, which would mean the residents would still have to raise the remaining money locally. With the new amendment, it would be possible to borrow it all, and pay it back within twenty-five years.

Mr. Dankers stated that he had determined the dimensions of the properties involved and had attempted to determine what portion of the cost would be assigned to each person based on his frontage. He stated that Mr. Ed Mohl of the Dept. of Chesapeake Bay Affairs, had stated that as far as the State was concerned, they do not care how a group assesses the benefits of this control, as long as everyone agrees to it.

Mr. Koegel stated that he did not know which way to proceed but naturally, they would want to go the least expensive way. He said that if they tried to work this on the basis of individual property owners, they have to have 100% participation. If the County will work with them, by setting up a shore erosion district, they will only need 75% participation to qualify.

Mr. Bowles asked if the County would have to readvertise for the bid on this project or if they would be able to accept the bid previously submitted. It was felt that the original bid could only be upheld if the contractor so agreed.

Mr. Aud suggested that these gentlemen have a meeting with the residents of McKay's Beach, to see exactly what percentage of people would be willing to participate.

Mr. Guy informed them that the Commissioners will find out the status of House Bill No. 1151.

Mr. Dankers stated that the residents were not well organized and it was generally felt that if the Commissioners would participate with them in this project, it would have more influence when approaching the Corps of Army Engineers. He inquired as to if their groin system delays or prevents sand spill around the end of the north jetty at the Herring Creek Channel entrance, couldn't the Army Engineers help pay their project. Mr. Paul Raley, Administrative Officer, will investigate this possibility.

Mr. Koegel stated that he would meet with the residents of McKay's Beach to find out what percentage of persons would be willing to participate and find out what route they should take in regard to taxation of the property owners.

#### Chairs for County Commissioners' Conference Room

The Commissioners requested that five additional chairs like the ones presently being used by the three County Commissioners, be ordered for their conference room. Mr. Paul Raley will be instructed to order these.

#### ROADS MEETING

Present: Mr. August H. Wagener and Mr. Douglas Bond

#### Bushwood Wharf

Mr. Guy stated that he had received a request to have some gravel dumped at the entrance to Bushwood Wharf. Mr. Bond stated that his men were scheduled to do that this week.

Woodland Drive

Mr. Aud stated that he had been contacted by Mr. Ralph Bailey, a resident along Woodland Drive, regarding a drop off along the road. Mr. Aud requested that this shoulder of the road be raised.

Mr. Aud stated that he had been contacted by Mr. Harry Buckley, a resident of California, Maryland, regarding the ditch that had been dug in front of his property. The ditch was dug extremely deep. Mr. Aud requested that something be done to eliminate this problem.

Preliminary Inspection, Re: Lower Patuxent River Bridge

Mr. Wagener informed the Commissioners that on May 6, 1971, at 10:00 A.M., a preliminary inspection for the State Roads Commission will be conducted at Patuxent Beach Road, in front of the Seven Gables Hotel, regarding the lower Patuxent River Bridge.

Bids on Railroad Track and Ties

The Commissioners instructed Mr. August Wagener, County Engineer, to work up the information needed to advertise the sale of the railroad ties and track owned by St. Mary's County. Mr. Wagener will work with Mr. Robert Wigginton, County Attorney.

Letter from Laura Courtney-Ridge Dump Site

The Commissioners reviewed a letter from Mrs. Laura Courtney, owner of the property leased for the County Dump. At present, the Commissioners have a lease with Mrs. Courtney to expire on June 30, 1971.

Mrs. Courtney stated that after June 30, 1971, she will no longer accept the terms in all respects of the previous agreement. She requested that she be given an increase in the sum paid for rental of this dump site.

Mr. Aud stated that he felt the Commissioners should speak with Mr. J. Dennis Raley, Jr., to find out if in his opinion, it would be to the County's benefit to continue using the present dump site.

BILLS APPROVED:

Delahay's Pile Driving Service for work on Tall Timbers Seawall  
 for week of April 5 to April 9, 1971 --- \$1,705.00  
 week of April 10 to April 16, 1971 -- \$1,705.00  
 week of April 19 to April 23, 1971 -- \$1,025.00

Lorenzi, Dodds and Gunnill for work done on Pegg's Lane -- \$225.00 and also work done on Watershed Project -- \$1,558.00

David M. Gruber and Company for Professional Services rendered for Board of Education -- \$9,500.00 and for Assessment and Taxation -- \$4,250.00

Hugh Wilkerson and Associates for determining the center line of St. Andrews Church Road -- \$2,472.00

Orin M. Bullock, Jr., for Tudor Hall Restoration -- \$7,025.65

Rev. Stone and Group, Re: Carver Heights Housing

(Because of the number of concerned residents and persons involved, this portion of the Commissioners' Meeting was held in the Trial Magistrate Room of the Courthouse).

Mr. Aud opened the meeting. At this time, the secretary read a letter from J. Irving Russell, Manager of Pargas in Leonardtown, addressed to the County Commissioners of St. Mary's County. Mr. Russell stated that due to a prior commitment, he nor any of his representatives would be able to attend this meeting. He went on to say that Pargas bills are due to be paid on or before the 17th of each month due to the fact that most of the tenants in the Carver Heights Development receive their Social Services check on the 16th. At present, seven tenants in the project use gas heat and are billed on their "All Gas Heating" rate which is much less. He stated that if either Rev. Stone or any of the Commissioners would care to know more about the rates, to feel free to stop by his office and speak with him.

Rev. Stone stated that the purpose of this meeting was to state the problems they are currently faced with and to see what the immediate solutions might be for the entire County as well as Carver Heights. He went on to say that they are concerned with the proposed rate of increase to the rents in the project. He felt that if these rent increases do go into effect May 1, 1971, as scheduled, it would create a definite problem for the County.

At this time, Mr. Joseph Carter, Director of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services, addressed the group. He stated that his department estimates that from 120 to 149 persons now renting in Carver Heights receive Public Assistance. The people receiving Food Stamps and Medical Cards would push the figure up to 90%.

To give an idea of the amount of income they have, Mr. Carter used the table for family assistance for an adult and three children, and under this new rent increase there would be a sum of \$20.44 on hand after the rent, subsistence, food stamps and utilities were paid. He stated that his department had done a study of 500 cases of rent paid throughout the County and found the average rent paid was \$33.81.

Rev. Stone stated that one of the problems apparently has been with late charges imposed on the tenants. Mr. Walter Blair, co-owner of this housing development, stated that no one is charged a late charge unless it is in excess of 15 days or later. Currently the rent payments are due on either the 1st or 16th of the month, depending upon the tenants themselves. Most of the people on Public Assistance have their rent due on the 16th of the month. They are given a grace period of 15 days.

Rev. Stone stated that when he had met with a committee from the Carver Heights housing project, they found many problems of maintenance existing there. Mr. Paul Awkward stated that the three most pressing maintenance problems are (1) Neglect of maintenance on buildings and playgrounds, (2) Prompt action they receive for repair of unsafe conditions once they are reported and (3) Neglect of extermination of insects and rodents.

Rev. Stone stated that the County Commissioners have recognized the need for some action. Mrs. Mary Helen Woodland stated that she felt than an immediate committment should be made to the following: (1) Stop of rent increase, (2) Change of date from the 1st. or 10th. of the month to the 17th. and (3) Better maintenance services.

Mr. J. Frank Raley stated that for the record, he wanted to state some basic facts. He went on to say that as far as Carver Heights was concerned, the owners could charge whatever rent they would like to. Mr. Raley felt that as citizens we have an obligation to do something for persons who do not have proper housing. He stated that the Commissioners are indispensable in getting something going through Federal and State services that are available. He believed that much could be done without costing the taxpayers additional money. There is a definite housing problem throughout the County and from what he had detected from the 1970 Census figures, there are 920 houses that do not have plumbing alone.

He went on to say that property values are affected when you have a lot of sub-standard housing. It cost the County money as to what taxes they get while it costs the owner money in regard to money he receives from its value. We must find a

solution to the problem and if we did it on a comprehensive basis, we could make a real stride forward. The only rational approach to this would be working through County government. The Tri-County Council could provide the research.

At this time, Mr. Charles Wible from So. Md. Electric Coop, Inc., discussed the rates currently being charged by his company. He stated that their rates are established by the Public Service Commission. He did not feel as though they were high in the Patuxent Heights section. They do not use a large scale of utilities. It was generally known that of VEPCO, PEPCO and other electric companies, So. Md. Electric Coop, Inc., was cheaper.

Mr. Walter Blair asked Mr. Wible if he had any figures as to what the overall average for the County would be. Mr. Wible stated that it used to run about \$8.00, but with the constant development of new appliances and such, it was probably around \$12.00 at present.

Mr. Walter Blair stated that there was no question that there is a need for better and less expensive housing. There is no way that they can subsidize these houses. He presented various information to the Commissioners showing that in the last 12 months, Mr. Blair and Mr. Weiner have spent about \$97,000 in the project. Mr. Blair stated that his insurance bill is \$6,180.00 per year. He pays \$1,455.00 for trash pick-up and maintenance alone for one year cost him \$70.33 per unit based on 79 occupied units. Mr. Blair stated that he had negotiated with Pargas for a bulk rate for 100 pounds of gas and had been granted a price of \$9.50 per 100 pounds while it is \$10.60 throughout the rest of the County.

Mr. Blair stated that he knew there was a serious problem and it had reached crisis stage but there was no way that he could subsidize it. He was willing to work with the people in any way but he did not feel that the present ownership could continue renting to the present tenants.

Mr. Joseph Weiner did not see any other solution except home ownership. He stated that people can buy houses by going through F. H. A. and forming a corporation. He felt that if persons bought the houses themselves, they would take pride in them and take care of them themselves.

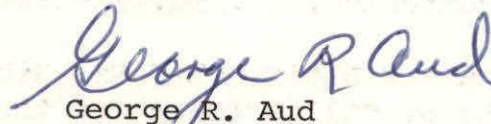


Mr. Aud stated that the Board would take matters under advisement since they would need time to gather facts and figures so they could arrive at a decision.

Messrs. Weiner and Blair agreed to postpone the new rate schedule for a one month period to become effective June 1, 1971.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 P.M.

Approved,

  
George R. Aud  
President