

COLLEGE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING

MAY 8, 1978

A special meeting of the College Township Council was held on Monday, May 8, 1978, at 7:30 p.m. in the Township Municipal Building, 1481 East College Avenue, State College, PA to consider the following: an I.D.A. Elderly Housing Proposal and a proposed change in the Rolling Ridge P.R.D. Plan.

Members present: John H. Ziegler, J. Carroll Dean, Donald E. Bailey, Dolores A. Taricani, and Clarence E. Trotter.

Also Present: Manager Elwood G. Williams, Sr.

Speaking at the Meeting.....: John C. Haas, Andrew Vita, Fred Psolka, Steven Cohen, Pat Casher, Dennis Elpern, Susan Tate, Margaret Marble, John Jameson, Elsie Wooding, Jay Witmer Hershey, and Mary Casanave.

To begin the meeting, Taricani noted three pertinent letters:

1. Letter to Ziegler from Andrew Vita 4/21/78 advising Council that his Corporation had given permission for John Haas, Agent for I.D.A., to request an appearance before Council on May 11, 1978.
2. Letter to Ziegler from Andrew Vita 5/3/78 stating Rolling Ridge intentions: request for rezoning of portions of Rolling Ridge premises to R-3 and approval of a change in the Corporation's P.R.D. plan.
3. Letter of Acknowledgement to Williams from Robert Donaldson, Centre County Planning, 4/25/78.

John Haas, agent for IDA - Altoona, gave a presentation of the proposed 150 Housing Units for the Elderly. The seven story, prefabricated building would meet HUD 202 Specifications. Provided in the open spaces near the proposed

one and two bedroom industrial-sized complex would be garden and flower plots. Carefully graded access to the Hills Shopping Center would also be accomplished.

Fred Psolka, Building Representative for the Forest City-Dillon Company of Cleveland, explained construction procedures for the proposed building. He assured Council that his Company had had experience with housing for the elderly. According to Mr. Psolka, the prefabricated method would insure high quality construction at every phase of building. Eight to ten months was his construction time estimate.

In answer to a question from Ziegler, John Jameson from Altoona IDA replied that the HUD 202 program Section 8 was specifically for elderly and handicapped people. Though a petition to HUD could waive income level requirements, this could only be done for people over age 62. No students could qualify.

Pat Casher, Executive Secretary of the Housing Authority, gave information concerning the proven need in other Pennsylvania communities for housing for the elderly.

Since it would require 95 per cent occupancy to remain "in the black", Trotter questioned the economic viability of such a building. Discussion followed concerning various studies that had been done for housing need for the elderly. Essential question: Are there enough elderly people in the Centre Region interested in living in such a proposed building? Quoted studies varied widely. Susan Tate, Director of the Senior Citizens Center and Mrs. Margaret Marble, questioned the validity of the random survey done in 1976 by the Centre Regional Planning Staff.

Dean questioned Mr. Psolka: "How did you arrive at the seven stories?" "Why not three or five?" Answer: Building costs, such as large excavation and foundations, more elevators for each building, landscaping—all raise the cost. "By how much?" was the next question. The following figures were quoted by Mr. Psolka: The estimated cost for seven stories is \$28,500.00 per unit. A five story building would be \$1,500 more CPU and three stories would be \$3,800.00 CPU. Nine stories would reduce the cost per unit by \$300.00. ^{JOAN} ~~Paul~~ Haas expressed the opinion that a five story complex, spread out over the intended lot, would be a "huge, brutal building".

Steven Cohen, Architect for Forest City-Dillon, assured Dean that costs would remain relatively constant despite a possible problem with excavation and foundation. Land shift was briefly mentioned.

Taricani expressed concern over the limited mobility of such an isolated area. "What about an in-town location that could provide a feeling of community?" Susan Tate mentioned that winter isolated the elderly no matter where they lived.

Several Council Members then expressed their various opinions about the proposed project. Dean welcomed the project. "Other than for some mechanical problems, it's a fine idea". Taricani concurred, but stressed the legal restrictions which governed the Council decision making. "Our deliberations are based not on ^{emotion} antagonism but on the need to work within the bounds of our ordinances", she said.

Jay Witmer Hershey questioned whether there was enough water in State College. Dean assured him there was.

Elsie Wooding expressed concern for the future: "We're looking ahead for all of those who follow", she remarked.

Trotter, though of a favorable disposition towards an elderly housing project, was concerned with the social, medical and religious isolation of this particular Center site. "Why is this the best site?", he asked. Mr. Psolka described the varied criteria weighed when a site is chosen; among them: needs of people, cost of land, noise factors. Andrew Vita expressed his belief in the growth potential of the area and John Jameson mentioned the need to consider the life style of the potential residents. "They will be more rural than urban", he said. Bailey expressed his favorable feelings about the project.

The next section of discussion was dense and complex: How did the project fit into the present Township PRD regulations? Mr. Vita requested that the seven acres of land required for the project be rezoned to R-3 and that the change in the PRD Plan be approved. Essentially, the change would consist of substituting ^{one} ~~six~~ buildings for ^{two} ~~one~~ buildings. "Compacting it", said Dean. Dennis Elpern was of the opinion that such a major change nullified the existing PRD. "You're not required to honor this plan", he said.

Above all, Council saw the need to avoid contractual zoning and felt that a request for rezoning (for an extra 30 units)—though seemingly more time consuming—would be more legally correct. Council felt the June 30th HUD deadline could be met if action was taken immediately.

Mary Casanave, Legal Representative-IDA, saw the need for legal interpretation of the PRD especially in relation to changes in population density.

At this point Council decided on a course of action: (1) Elpern was instructed to work with Representatives of Improved Dwellings of Altoona and Canadian Pacific Holding Company and work up a revised proposal

for the May 11th meeting, (2) Reed McCormick is to be contacted with questions concerning rezoning and the parking ordinance situation. (Mary Casanave would also be in touch with Mr. McCormick to discuss the status of the PRD.) Dean wanted the question asked: "What legal traps are we in when we manipulate rezoning?"

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elwood G. Williams, Sr.
Secretary

EGW:tr:hh