

RESIDENTS TO PETITION FOR NEW HEARING ON PROVINCE LANDS BILL

COMMITTEE BELIEVES CITIZENS NOT ADEQUATELY INFORMED ON PROS AND CONS OF SUBJECT

A petition requesting an additional public hearing in Provincetown on the bill now before the State Senate to acquire a section of the Province Lands for expansion of the Town will be presented to the Board of Selectmen, it was agreed, following a hastily called meeting on Friday evening of about thirty residents. The meeting was called as an extension of activities by a group of summer residents who recently met in New York

City where they formed the Emergency Committee for the Protection of Provincetown Property Owners. The local group, organized at the direction of Fritz Bultman of Miller Hill Road, who acted as temporary chairman, met in the Parish House of the Church of St. Mary of the Harbor.

Several documents detailing the history of the bill were read and discussed by the group at some length, after which a letter requesting the hearing was drawn up and signed by those present. Additional signatures were to be solicited later, and copies of the letter were to be sent to Senator Edward C. Stone, Representatives Albro and Jones and other officials concerned.

The importance of holding such a hearing was stressed since it was revealed that Sen. Stone had suggested the previous day at a meeting with town officials, that the matter be submitted to a Senate study committee, who would report on their findings in December for legislative action in the January session. The Senator had recommended this study since there had been different opinions and several revisions of the boundaries in the area defined in the bill.

Documents Read

Mr. Bultman read three documents to the assembled group; a memorandum from Van Ness Bates, which described the planning consultant's two day visit to Provincetown in late March; the first draft by Mr. Bates of an act to establish the proposed Provincelands Development Authority and the first draft of a proposed Congressional Memorial from Massachusetts petitioning the US Congress to change the boundaries of the National Seashore to enable a section of the Provincelands to be granted to the Town.

Also read were several letters from Sen. Stone written to individuals in town who had requested information regarding the land bill. The letters and

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Residents Petition

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documents elicited a great deal of discussion among those present. It was pointed out that several inconsistencies were to be found between the documents and the letters in statements regarding the bill, and this was given as the primary reason for holding a public hearing.

According to Mr. Bultman, Sen. Stone has written in a letter to S. Osborn Ball, secretary of the Provincetown Civic Association, that bill 3290 "does not take in any land which is supposed to be taken later on by the National Seashore Park," but that an examination of the proposed areas on a map indicates this is not so.

It was also noted that in the same letter Sen. Stone had written, "What likewise seemed to me at least as important was that there should be some real restrictions put on it so that the land could not be developed by the kind of development nobody really wants to see; we don't want it for 'honky tonks'; we don't want it for big hotel operations, either I should think . . ."

Several residents present noted that Town Manager Walter E. Lawrence has repeatedly and publicly announced that the area in question is of such a nature

that it would not be economically feasible for small operators to go in, but would need a large development corporation, and that he believes only a large operator should go into the area so that the Town could get some real tax revenue from the land.

In a conversation with Town Manager Lawrence on Tuesday afternoon, he noted that in saying the area was not suitable for small individual developers, that this was the case, but that numerous young couples were interested in purchasing plots of land, which could be developed by a large corporation and then sold to individuals..

Discussion at Town Meeting

At the May 2 special town meeting, a discussion on the article requesting \$1,500 for the Bates survey, Mr. Lawrence answered a question from the audience asking if it would be possible for a large corporation to acquire a major portion of the land, by saying that the land would be sold with restrictions, but that he would like to see large capital come here, so that the town could obtain more real taxable property. At the same time, Chairman of the Selectmen John C. Snow commented that determining the use of the land would be more in order once it is obtained, and he stressed, as did the Town Manager, the necessity of acting on the matter before Congress acts on the National Seashore bill.

The Town Manager also spoke at the May 2 meeting on the manner in which the acquired land would be disposed of; describing the creation of a three-man authority (one each appointed by the Governor, the County Commissioners and the Selectmen) who would sell the land and the money derived from the sale would be used for development within the town.

Development Authority

These ideas were incorporated by Mr. Bates in the draft of the proposed development authority, which he submitted according to the document read at the Friday meeting "by direction of the Town Manager to Senate and House Council for study and appropriate revisions on April 25." Containing seven sections, the draft covers the creation of the development authority and its organization, and goes on to specify how the Authority shall dispose of the land acquired.

According to the draft the authority shall dispose of the land "prudently" either to the town for municipal purposes including such purposes as a municipal golf course at which fees may be charged, or to private enterprise approved by the planning board and the selectmen under zoning ord-

nances approved by the attorney general.

The net proceeds of the sale or leases, accrues to the State who shall use the money towards the costs of public improvements within the town or on state lands or waters adjacent. Tax revenues from private enterprise holdings or developments of any parcels of lands sold or leased by the authority accrue 90% to the town and 10% to the county for the first five years and entirely to the town thereafter.

Bates Memo Read

Further information on the background of the land bill was revealed in the Bates memo describing his March visit to Provincetown. According to the memo, Mr. Bates agreed to come to the town after a call from Town Manager Lawrence on March 26, "for a day or two for a fee of \$100 plus expenses." The essential purposes of the visit were "to see how to help Provincetown plan to get a share of the Provincelands for expansion of its very limited taxable economic areas; study supplementation of the highway system to provide access to the desired new areas (instead of their being incorporated in the proposed Cape Cod National Seashore park); and assist in working out a Master Plan upon which to base a Capital Improvements program for the next five years or so."

Mr. Bates arrived in Provincetown at 6 p. m. on March 29, according to his memo, and made an inspection of the Provincetown area and the Province Lands the following morning, "although hazy and very windy," in the company of Selectmen McKellar and Carpenter, John R. Ham of the Planning Board and Mr. Lawrence. A sketch plan was made at that time of his basic ideas "on Provincetown geodetic quadrant sheet to show highway supplementation scheme and division of Provinceland areas so firm sanded areas nearer town could be acquired and developed by town thru a Development Corporation."

That afternoon Mr. Bates inspected the new waterfront plans and Marina project and "notes also made on outer dunes and possible scenic route of one sort or other. (Possible 2.8 mile aerial car line from Race Point observation tower to Mt. Ararat.)"

In the evening Mr. Bates attended a joint meeting of the Selectmen, Planning Board and Finance Committee, at which "agreement arrived at to vote \$1,500 at the forthcoming special Town Meeting to retain Van Ness Bates Associates as own Planning Consultant to make a preliminary general plan survey and report to be in such format and of such nature as to be readily expanded and incorporated in any final Master Plan that may be approved as a second stage."

Petition Supports Bill

A petition supporting the acquisition of the land was also said to be making the rounds this week. Its text was quoted as follows:

"We the undersigned, being registered voters or taxable inhabitants of the town of Provincetown, hereby express ourselves as being completely in favor of House Bill 3290 to cede a portion of the Province Lands to the Town of Provincetown because of the urgent need for land into which we may develop and expand our economy, since we are the only town on Cape Cod now losing population."