

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: 10 May 1976

Time: 10 pm

Location: Canal House, 25 Calhoun Street, Trenton

Attending:

Commissioners: Mr. Benjamin Kirkland, Mr. Donald Jones,
Mr. Joseph Burns, Mrs. Lee Bullitt,
Mr. James Sayen, Mr. Frank Torpey

Commission Staff: Mr. James Amon
Mrs. Margaret Quigg

Dep. Mrs. Barbara Levin

Absent: Mayor Arthur Holland, Mr. Martin Jessen,
Mr. Ian Walker

Guests: Mr. Warren Nevins, Freeholder from
Somerset County
Mr. Thomas Decker, Somerset County
Engineer

Chairman Kirkland announced that the requirement of the Public Meeting Law had been met by the Commission meeting 10 May 1976. He then gave a brief statement on the concerns of the Canal Commission for the development of the Canal Park. The following are to be part of the uses of the park: water supply, recreation, historic preservation, and urban enhancement. Mr. Kirkland further pointed out that the land on all four corners of the proposed bridge over the Millstone River is part of the Canal Park.

General discussion followed concerning the problems involved in repairing the existing one lane bridge, as opposed to a new two lane structure recommended by Freeholder Nevins and Mr. Decker. Mr. Nevins said that damage to piers which occurred during the winter would make repairs more costly than previously estimated. It is not certain how safe the abutments are. Mr. Decker said that during the last three months his men have gone behind the piers and found decaying cement and dry mortar. Mr. Sayen and several other Commission members questioned the safety of the present bridge and wondered if it should be closed to all traffic. On Canal Road, traffic waiting to make a left turn sometimes piles up. Widening this section was recommended as opposed to a two lane bridge.

Mr. Kirkland asked if a study had been made by the Somerset County Planning Board. Mr. Nevins replied that there had been none because it is a question of maintenance of an existing bridge.

Heavy Traffic

Trap rock truckers are the chief source of heavy vehicles crossing the bridge. Truckers are not instructed to use this road by the Kingston Trap Rock Co.; rather, the independent truckers choose to go this way from 27 to 206. All present agreed to the desirability of limiting heavy traffic.

Fire Company Apparatus

Normal practice is for Griggstown to fight fires in Franklin Township and for Montgomery to do the same. The Griggstown Company occasionally crosses the bridge to help Montgomery or to fight fires in the area around the Griggstown Causeway. The Griggstown Fire Co. has recently acquired a water tank vehicle which is heavier than their other equipment. There is great rivalry between the two fire companies and they depend upon residents for financial support. It would be hard to ask that the companies change their method of operation. At present they use the bridge at their own risk.

School buses travel this way although they do not pick up or discharge children in this area.

Alternatives

Members tried to consider other solutions. It was suggested that no bridge be at this point. A covered bridge was mentioned but all agreed that this would be a dishonest solution. Vacating the road to the State was proposed. Mr. Nevins said that the best plan would be a by-pass over the Millstone River but this is a very long range project. Action must be taken now on the existing bridge.

Light Traffic Regulation

All Commission members favored keeping a one lane bridge with a low tonnage requirement.

The Commission believes that a two lane bridge would have adverse impact on the D & R Canal Park and recommends that a study be made in conjunction with the Somerset County Planning Board. An up-to-date traffic count would be desirable. Mr. Amon stressed that a

bridge through the Canal Park should accommodate the Park. Mr. Nevins stated his belief that the Canal Commission would have more influence than he in obtaining a light traffic regulation and asked our help in this matter.

Summary

Freeholder Nevins listed the following points as the consensus of the meeting:

- 1) Mr. Nevins will have the cooperation of the D & R Canal Commission in obtaining a light traffic regulation for the bridge at the Griggstown Causeway.
- 2) A two lane bridge would be a detriment to the Canal Park.
- 3) A study will be made of the costs and feasibility of a one lane bridge.
- 4) If repairs to the present one lane bridge are not feasible, Mr. Nevins will return to the Canal Commission with a plan having input from the Somerset County Planning Board.

Freeholder Nevins and Mr. Decker departed.

A brief discussion followed. The Commission agreed that a letter restating Mr. Nevins' summary and expressing our desire to cooperate be sent to the Somerset County Board of Freeholders.

Meetin was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for 20 May 1976. A light lunch will be served at 12:30 pm and the meeting will start at 1 pm.