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4/18/97

Mrs. Barbara Wright, RMC
City Of Salem
17 New Market Street
Salem, NJ 08079

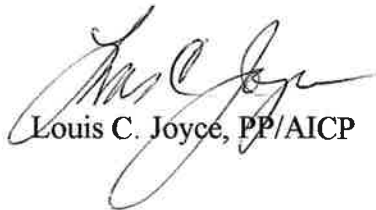
Re: Master Plan Reexamination Report

Dear Mrs Wright:

Enclosed is a copy of the March, 1996 report on the six year reexamination of the City Master Plan. This report was adopted by the City Planning Board after several revisions and a hearing. I look forward to presenting this report to the City Council at their meeting on Monday night, April 21, 1997.

Please feel free to call if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,



Louis C. Joyce, PP/AICP

enc.

cc: Mr Ben Ford, Chairman Planning Board

CITY OF SALEM
MASTER PLAN
RE-EXAMINATION REPORT

March 27, 1996

Prepared by
Louis C. Joyce, P.P.
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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Louis C. Joyce", with a stylized flourish at the end.

LOUIS C. JOYCE

PROFESSIONAL PLANNER

March 27, 1996

Mr. Ben Ford, Chairman
City of Salem Planning Board
17 New Market Street
Salem, NJ 08079

Re: Master Plan Update


Dear Chairman Ford:

Enclosed is the final report on the City Master Plan six year update. This report has been reviewed by the members of the Planning Board, and their comments have been incorporated since the draft report was released.

After the Board reviews and adopts this plan report, the City clerk should receive a copy, and copies sent to adjoining municipalities and the County Planning Board.

I have enjoyed working on this report for the City and commend the Planning Board for their work on this matter.

Very truly yours,



Louis C. Joyce, P.P., AICP

enc.

The purpose of this report is to re-examine the municipal plans and regulations of the City of Salem. The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55d - 89, specifies in part:

"The governing body shall, at least every six years, provide for a general re-examination of its master plan and development regulations by the planning board which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such re-examination, a copy of which report and resolution shall be sent to the county planning board and the municipal clerks of each adjoining municipality. The first such re-examination shall have been completed by August, 1982... Thereafter, a re-examination shall be completed at least every 6 years from the previous re-examination."

The re-examination process provides an important opportunity for the Planning Board to determine the relevancy of existing plans and regulatory documents and to evaluate the appropriateness of current planning objectives. The conclusions and recommendations reached as a result of this re-examination process shall form the basis for any significant changes to the City's master plan and zoning regulations. Included in this review and analysis, and incorporated herein by reference are the following documents:

1. Salem Comprehensive Plan - 1974
2. Salem City Master Plan - 1978
3. Port District Redevelopment Plan - 1981
4. Master Plan Re-examination Report - 1982
5. New Market Redevelopment Plan - 1984
6. Housing Plan Element - 1987
7. Master Plan re-examination Report - 1989
8. Historic Preservation Element - 1991
9. Land Development Ordinances, ch. 130 - 1994

This report will focus on the major changes relating to land development and overall general characteristics of the City that have occurred since the last re-examination of the plans and regulations was performed in 1987. An important footnote to the process is that the municipal regulations were codified and adopted in 1994, and this report will reflect changes made to the code of the City at that time. This report will not constitute an update of the Master Plan but will present a factual presentation of conditions within the City in the form of an update of the Plan of 1974.

PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

A determination of the appropriate planning objectives and development policies is an integral and necessary component of a continuing planning process which should be exercised by the Planning board. These objectives and policies are critical because they form the basis for the various master plan elements. The conscientious formulation of these goals and policies will help assure the achievement of the desired planning objectives.

The 1974 Comprehensive Plan identified the City's basic planning objectives in general terms which included preservation of amenity values, correction of existing deficiencies, and recognition of those changes which may affect development. The 1974 Plan provided framework for all future land use and planning decisions, and established Planning Objectives and Development Policies for the City. The plan provided a summary of current (1974) conditions and an inventory of the community population, housing, services and transportation. It provided an overview of the City capital budget and an employment analysis. It reviewed future land use projections. A brief summary of the objectives and policies follows:

1. Encourage types of development and uses which, while consistent with other policies and goals, will increase the financial capability of the City to provide required community services and facilities;
2. Preserve and strengthen the four basic roles of Salem: a residential community, a County seat, a regional commercial center, and a source of industrial employment;
3. Prevent the spread of haphazard and incompatible mixtures of residential, commercial and industrial development;
4. Provide for adequate and diversified housing supply in attractive healthful and safe environments;
5. Continue the City's program to eliminate substandard housing;
6. Maintain an active and viable central business district;

7. Encourage the location of additional industries in appropriate area, and the continued expansion of existing industries;

8. Provide for adequate community facilities, including programs to meet social, cultural and recreational needs;

9. Provide for safe and convenient circulation within the City and to points beyond;

10. Protect to the maximum extent possible and promote the best use of the remaining open spaces in the City.

Since the original planning document was created, the City has undergone many significant changes that the authors of the plan could not have foreseen. A dramatic decline in population and industrial activity have changed the community of Salem. New activities have emerged to shape the future of the City. Two elements were added to the Master Plan to guide the City policies on Housing and Historic Preservation. Despite all the changes of the past twenty-two years, the originally stated goals and objectives are still relevant to guide the future development of the City of Salem.

EXISTING LAND USE

Salem is located in the Southwestern portion of Salem County. It is bordered by Mannington and Pennsville Townships to the North, Quinton Township to the East and Elsinboro Township to the South and West. The City is adjacent to the Salem River where that tributary drains into the Delaware River. The City of Salem occupies 2.7 sq. mi., is densely populated and serves as the County seat of government for Salem County. The surrounding land area to the City is a rural lowland land form that typifies the Lower Delaware River and Bay region of New Jersey. The City is easily accessible to all major cities in the region via surface roadways and has achieved international access through shipping via the Port of Salem. The City continues to exhibit a diverse land use pattern as a consequence of its historical heritage and its function as an urban center in a predominantly rural area. Salem contains a wide range of housing types, a central business district, a large industrial area and significant areas designated for historic preservation.

The Master Plan contains a analysis of the existing land use in the City including classifications for residential, commercial, industrial, public, semi-public, streets, marginal and vacant land. There have been no major changes in land use since the last Plan examination in 1989. It is assumed that the percentages of land use types have remained relatively constant as reported in earlier studies. These statistics suggest that 25% of the City's land area is residential and 20% is in public use. Additionally, about 40% of the land area is classified as either wetlands or vacant and, commercial and industrial uses account for the remaining 10 percent. An update of conditions and inventory of existing uses is presented.

Population and Housing

The population of the City of Salem followed a declining trend during the decade from 1980 to 1990, with total population decreasing from 6959 to 6883 persons. This figure is slightly misleading as a significant inmate population in the County jail was included in the figures. When the 303 persons in institutions is deducted the adjusted 1990 population is estimated at 6580 persons and represents a 4.2% decline. The figures are subject to dispute. The 1994 census update estimated the City's population to have risen to the 1980 level. According to the County Planner, the 1994 population was 6953, an increase of 70 persons from 1990.

A similar decline in the number of families was reported from 1,814 families in 1980 to 1,682 families counted in 1990. However the number of persons per household remained constant at 2.50 persons. The number of persons per household was slightly higher in the County at 2.68 persons. The character of the population aged significantly as of 1990. The number of persons living in Salem aged 65+ increased 15.6% from 882 persons to 1,020 persons.

Other significant factors in housing analysis relate to owner occupied rates and overcrowding. The 1990 census reported that only 1,094 units were owner occupied representing 41.8% of the City total. A majority of the housing units in Salem are renter occupied at 58.2% of the total. The number of persons per room is a measure of overcrowding and that figure showed 3.2% of the units had more than one person per room.

New housing has been created by renovation and conversion of single family to multifamily dwellings. Since

1989 only seven dwelling units have been constructed and these have all been reported as single family units. During the same period two units have been demolished for a net gain of five units. These figures are reported through 1993. The City addressed the conversion situation by revising the City ordinances to eliminate "conversion by right" from single to multifamily in the residential zones.

Industrial and Commercial Development

Major industrial uses in the City have remained relatively stable since the last re-examination report. Wire Pro, Alu Chem and Anchor Glass Container have continued to provide an industrial base. In addition Port Salem continues to increase in activity. RTI has reopened on a limited basis.

The municipal Port been under lease to and actively managed by the South Jersey Port Corporation. Significant dredging of the Salem River channel to a new depth of 18 feet was completed and will improve opportunities for Port growth. Also an expansion of activities has been approved for Mid-Atlantic Shipping to add another berth to their operations.

Commercial activities in the business district have shown a variety of changes. The loss of the Acme market on Fifth Street has left that shopping center without an anchor. Fenwick Plaza was completed in the center of the City and has provided a stable site for commercial activities. However, significant vacancies continue to exist in the Broadway storefronts, with nine buildings standing unoccupied along the street from Chestnut to Walnut. The City National Bank building is unoccupied signifying a loss of banking variety in the center of the City. City Council was successful in convincing the J.C. Penny Co. not to close its' store at the corner of Walnut St.

At the Eastern edge of the City the Salem Plaza shopping center has maintained a high occupancy rate. The IGA Market was approved for an expansion and a freestanding pharmacy also received approval and is expected to open in early 1996 adjacent to the McDonalds restaurant. The success of the Salem Plaza center may be at the expense of the rest of the commercial district of the City, although it should be noted that significant shopping center development in neighboring Pennsville Township has had a negative effect on Salem's status as a commercial center as well.

Overall the proportion of land use utilized for commercial activity has remained constant at 12%.

Traffic and Circulation

Recent developments and expansion of activities at Port Salem have been the only actions to cause significant changes in traffic flow since the last update. As discussed in the last report, a structural change at the intersection of Rt. 49 and Griffith Street has been implemented. The results of the intersection realignment have been mixed. Since traffic now cannot enter Griffith St. eastbound, it must move onto West Broadway. The added traffic, particularly truck traffic bound for Anchor Glass, is a source of problems for the historic district and for the center city area. The NJDOT has indicated it will review the new pattern for affects on the city.

In general, Salem's streets provide for an adequate traffic circulation network both intra-city and for connection to the region.

Community Services and Facilities

Numerous changes have been implemented in community facilities that should be noted. The County jail has relocated outside the City to a new Correction Facility in Mannington Township. The City Police department has relocated to renovated offices in the Chelsea Title building at Chestnut Street. Newly renovated offices on New Market Street house the City Clerk and other offices formerly in the City Hall.

The new Union Fire station building was occupied, located at Walnut and Belden Street. Also completed was an upgrade to secondary treatment levels and expansion of the City wastewater treatment plant on Tilbury Road.

Recreation and Open Space

A significant new facility, the Greater Salem Community Center, was completed and opened to the public. This center was directly created by the civic activities fostered by the Stand Up For Salem community committee. Located at Walnut Street and Grieves Parkway the Center provides community based activities of a recreational, fitness/health, cultural and educational nature. There have been no other changes to the recreation opportunities in the City. Open spaces have remained constant, No tracts of open land have been

developed. The open space adjacent to the Port of Salem is being utilized for industrial activities however, all those lands were either Port Authority property or private land not dedicated as recreational in nature.

There continues to be a need for active recreation sites in the City.

Economy and Employment

The increased shipping activity at the Port has contributed to the employment opportunities within the City. The Port jobs are usually temporary, however, being dependent on ship arrivals.

Overall, employment in the City as reported in the 1990 census indicated that the labor force of 2,889 persons showed employment of 2,438 persons. An unemployment rate of 15.6%, significantly higher than the region, was reported.

COMPATIBILITY WITH THE MASTER PLAN

The major external development regulations affecting the City are the NJDEP Rules for Coastal Development and the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Zoning and development regulations are consistent with the restrictions of these statewide regulatory programs.

Recent rule enactments by the NJDOT regarding access to State roads should be reviewed. Salem is served by two major state highways, Rt 49 and Rt 45. Both highways are fully developed along their frontages in the City. Any newly redeveloped parcels will require NJDOT permits and the review and approval standards promulgated by the rules will be applied.

Finally, in 1993, the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) adopted rules to provide affordable housing. The City is expected to provide 56 new units of affordable housing through construction or renovation by the year 2000, according to the COAH report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The general character of the City faces a shift away from the core of industrial and business activities that have defined Salem in the past. The City population shows a definite trend away from home ownership and single family residences to renter occupied multifamily dwellings. Economic activities will continue to be affected more by external forces than from within the City but the recent success of the Stand up for Salem movement and other community based programs should be a lesson in the strength that local commitment to the City can bring.

1. A plan for the central business district should be pursued.

2. The City should continue and strengthen its efforts in historic preservation both as a way of maintaining its heritage and as a development of a tourist sector to the economy.

3. The City should continue to develop programs for enhanced recreation and cultural activities.

4. The City must continue to promote rehabilitation and development of adequate housing. The focus must be on providing opportunities for home ownership as a means of strengthening the neighborhoods.