

# Historical zoning snarl; Town acquires Signal Hill

Everything slowed to a halt yesterday as the Prince William County Board of supervisors became engulfed in a legal question concerning its own previous actions regarding a County Historical Commission.

The supervisors had called for a joint meeting with the Planning Commission to consider historical zoning for Signal Hill outside Manassas. But as discussion progressed it became obvious that the Supervisors could do little without a Historical Commission which they abolished January 1.

The Historical Commission was created by ordinance at the time the Historical zone was created. The ordinance creating the Historical zone refers to the Commission in several places. It appears that the supervisors could have progressed on a six acre historical site at the top of Signal Hill because the zoning request for that was put in motion by the old Historical Commission before Jan. 1—although the site would have to be declared a historical landmark.

However, the larger portion of ground, 105 acres wasn't properly before the supervisors yesterday.

The question then became, did the board action abolishing all county boards and commission's effect the Historical Commission which was created by ordinance? The Board decided to ask the County Executive to send letters of resignation

to the Historical Commission members requesting that those members sign the letters and return them to the supervisors. Then the supervisors will appoint new members to the Commission.

During the discussion, Manassas Park Mayor Roger Costello told the supervisors that the Town of Manassas Park has purchased 13.4 acres at the top of the hill and has an option on another 92 acres facing the Blue Ridge.

The Town of Manassas Park, he said, is not in the real estate business; but it became evident that quick action would be necessary to save Signal Hill and the supervisors were obviously ensnarled in procedural problems.

Costello urged that the supervisors learn what criteria is necessary to meet state and federal standards for grants to develop Signal Hill and then proceed along those lines. He has suggested in the past a park with a restored historical site.

Supervisor Roy Doggett asked Costello whether he had an option on the land the evening he had spoken to the Supervisors and convinced them that some immediate action was needed on Signal Hill. Costello said no, but Doggett was displeased with the land purchase and told Costello so.

Speaking in behalf of the historical zoning was Russell W. Berry, superintendent of the National Battlefield Park. Berry told of the role of the hill in the civil war battle of Manassas.


Jack Ratcliff, formerly of the Historical Commission, explained the reason for the original zoning request being only six acres. A deed of trust on the property had once designated lots to be given to a Historical Commission, town or jurisdiction. He also explained that Commission members had not been asked to resign but the Commission had simply been abolished.

Members of the former commission who will now be receiving requests for their resignations are:

Admiral Richard Black,

Woodbridge; Dr. William E. S. Flory, Woodbridge; Mrs. John F. Hoy, III, Woodbridge; Henry F. Burda, Woodbridge; James L. Cook, Haymarket; Mrs. William J. Cotter, Manassas; Reverdy Johnson, Nokesville; Mrs. Marilyn Muse, Woodbridge; Mrs. Carol Lynn, Jr.; R. Jackson Ratcliffe, Sr., Manassas; R. O. Bridges, Manassas; Francis Watson, Haymarket; Richard A. Long, Quantico; Lee C. Lansing, Jr., Triangle; Mrs. Charles Coe, Haymarket; Mrs. Barbara Kirby, Dumfries; Mrs. Ada Yancey, Manassas.

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