

# Signal Hill Is Preserved

Signal Hill is preserved.

Or at least 13.4 acres of it is. The Town of Manassas Park bought it for \$110,000.

"As far as we're concerned it's in the public domain," said Manassas Park Mayor Roger Costello who revealed to the Supervisors yesterday the town has a firm contract on the property which has been the subject of proposed historical rezoning for some time.

"We're gonna deliver money. He's gonna deliver a title. That's our only justification.

We're not in the real estate business. We were convinced if we didn't act, lots might be developed. We happen to believe it's bigger than us. If somebody doesn't care, we still care. It's just a beautiful place

as you know," the mayor told the board.

Costello also revealed that Manassas Park has an option on an additional 94 acres "because that could be cut into lots too," he explained.

He pleaded with the board on more than one occasion yesterday to reactivate the Historical Commission. "You'd better resurrect the Historical Commission if you want to be in the historic business."

Two public hearings were scheduled before the board yesterday on two tracts of land consisting of Signal Hill and properly adjacent to it.

One public hearing designating the Historical

Commission as the applicant was for 5.9154 acres or what is referred to the west side of the actual Signal Hill fortification formerly owned by the Peters Co. of Washington, D.C. and part of the 13.4 acres now under contract to the Town of Manassas Park.

The other public hearing was scheduled jointly with the Planning Commission on what Powell's Tract and consisting of about 105 acres.

The whole thing turned out to be a mumbo jumbo of confusion because of the questionable status of the Prince William County Historical Commission.

That Commission was established in 1969 by ordinance. Two year terms

were provided for 17 members. In Feb. 1971 names were submitted for appointment and reappointment and approved.

(Continued on Page 2-A)

## INSIDE

Task force will undertake critical sanitary problem. See Page A-3.

Church News..... B-6  
Classified..... A-10  
Editorial..... A-6  
Entertainment..... B-9  
Obituaries..... A-3  
Prince William Living..... B-1  
Scholastic Weekly..... B-3  
Sports..... A-7  
Teen Scene..... B-8

Oct. 27, 1972 Journal Messenger Manassas

# Signal Hill

(Continued from Page 1-A)

creating an 18-member Historical Commission.

Chapters 20 and 21 of the Prince William County code deal with the creation of historical districts and the role of the Historical Commission in such creation.

Questions yesterday centered on whether the Historical Commission was indeed abolished by the Jan. 1 action of the current Board of County Supervisors and whether the Commission had complied with the ordinance requirements for the Signal Hill rezonings which were the subject of public hearing.

There was no answer as to whether the Historical Commission was abolished or whether its members had resigned.

According to a staff report on the subject, R.O. Bridges, Historical Commission chairman, said he had submitted a resignation for the entire commission, but the resignation could not be found in county files.

R. J. Ratcliffe, county historian and Historical Commission member, declared the Historical Commission had never been asked to resign — that it had been abolished. He said it had done everything required by law for the six-acre parcel being considered

yesterday to be classified in the historic zone. "We even had it surveyed."

Letters will be sent out asking the Historical Commission members to resign as a "personal favor to the county" in order to try to clear up the matter. The rezoning matters were tabled until the legal questions are answered, hopefully by next week.

Also discussed was the possibility of rezoning as historic the Junior Roseberry side of Signal Hill which is now under the Roseberry private ownership. The entire hill is deemed historic. The Manassas Park purchase will only encompass up to the top of the hill.

Russell W. Berry Jr., superintendent of Manassas Battlefield Park said the entire hill with fortifications should be preserved. The National Park Service would be "most happy" to provide planning for the site.

Signal Hill is important because it ties directly into the first battle of Manassas. It was said to be the first time flag signals were used in combat to warn of the approaching enemy.

HISTORIC SITE FILE: Signal Hill  
PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM  
RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib, Manassas, VA

# Historic Zone Use Is Urged

By RANDI DEIOTTE  
JM County Editor

Prince William County's Bicentennial Commission is trying to stir up renewed interest in historical zoning, the Planning Commission was told Wednesday.

The thrust is aimed at having certain county sites designated as historic and creating some hoopla in time to tie in with the nation's bicentennial celebration in 1976. Local historians say they feel hampered by the lack of historically designated sites.

Following creation of the historical zoning classification several years ago, the county Historical Commission attempted to have two parcels on Signal Hill placed into that category.

After planning commission approval, the zoning applications became bogged down at the board of supervisors' level and have never been acted upon, according to Planning Director Virginia G. Young.

Mrs. Young said the county Historical Commission and the Bicentennial Commission plan to reactivate the cases and seek supervisor approval of them. Other applications for historic zoning may also be submitted.

The county's supervisor of assessments, Arthur L. Shoemake, said historical zoning would not necessarily increase the assessed value of property so designated.

In other business, Mrs. Young alerted the commission to a new state law affecting zoning applications. According to the planning director, applications submitted after Jan. 1, 1976 must be acted upon within one year or they will be deemed to have

(Continued on Page 3A)

## index..in

MEMBER OF ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mob keeps police on alert at Charlottesville. See A-2.

Classified .....	B-7
Comics .....	B-9
Community Sound Off .....	A-4-5
Editorial Page .....	A-4
Living .....	A-6
Obituary .....	A-5
Sports .....	B-1
State News .....	A-2
TV Log .....	B-9
Woodbridge .....	B-6

J.M. - *Hum.* Apr. 3, 1975

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