

Journal
1 Messenger



day, Wednesday & Friday Oct. 6, 1972

6, 1972 PRESS RUN THIS ISSUE 16,750 Copyright 1972 Prince William Publishing Company, Inc. 15 CENTS

PUBLIC HEARING SET

Supervisors Move Toward Preserving Signal Hill

An Oct. 26 public hearing has been set by the Supervisors for historic zoning of six acres at Signal Hill, famed Civil War setting of first signal communications.

The site is located off Blooms Road near Manassas.

In addition, the Supervisors and the Planning Commission will hold a joint public hearing the first week in November on an additional portion of the Signal Hill tract.

Indications were yesterday that the Supervisors intend to get the land for historic preservation.

The board members disappeared into executive session with William Stephens, a developer's attorney. The developer was not named. Also in the session was Roger Costello, mayor of Manassas Park, who had a map rolled under his arm. What was discussed in the executive session was not clear.

A Centreville firm has been conducting percolation tests on the historic property. Some 20 were observed yesterday morning, many of them right in the trenches dug long ago by those Civil War soldiers.

Mrs. Shirley Miller, a Blooms Road resident, has been conducting an almost one-woman campaign in recent days to save the historic property from the hands of enterprising developers. Apparently from yesterday's board action, she may soon see results.

Signal Hill has also been of prime interest to the county's Historical Commission when it was constituted. The Historical Commission envisioned the site as a partially restored picnic grounds for a historical lunch time stop on a tour of Prince William.

The Historical Commission has received assurances from the Army Corps of Engineers for assistance in restoring the site. At one time the commission almost had in hand a deed for the six acres but plans went awry and have not been consummated, although the members of the former commission still feel the county has a valid claim to the land.

Mrs. Miller wrote Congressman William L. Scott of her concern.

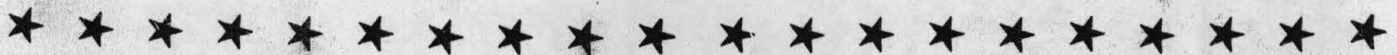
"I am writing you in regard to Historical Signal Hill in Prince William County that is about to be demolished.

"History books tell us that it was from this signal station flags were first used to relay messages during combat. On the morning of July 21, 1861 Lt. E. P. Alexander saw sun reflecting off Union bayonets as they moved down Sudley Road on their way to Manassas. He used the flags to spell out the message to the Confederate troops and this advance warning had an important, if not decisive, influence on the First Battle of Manassas.

"In his book, Bull Run Remembers, Major Joseph Hanson says, 'the earthwork fort on Signal Hill is as perfect, except for the levelling process of time, as it was when completed in 1861.' It is on this spot that last week percolation holes were dug for the purpose of building houses by a local developer. If this historical site is to be preserved, we must act quickly.

"I do not know the proper channels to take, so I beg you to please bring this to the attention of the proper authorities immediately before another piece of history is destroyed."

Thus far there has been no reply from the congressman.



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