

MINUTES OF MEETING CONCERNING EBENEZER LOT AT GAY AND MANSION
STREETS - SEPT. 15, 1976, at 8:00 P.M., at THE NORTH LIGHT BOYS CLUB

V. Esposito, Pres. of Manayunk Neighborhood Council, called the meeting to order after an introduction by J. Willard. Mr. Esposito had contacted Mr. Pearlman's office and the Ridge Ave. Methodist Church. Mr. Esposito explained that the ground was tied up with some legal problems and that there was nothing definite planned yet. He said that the Rev. Rendle would be down later in the meeting to explain the legal problems. Mr. Esposito then asked for some recommendations from the community.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. The area is hazardous - with soot and cinders etc., which wash down to properties below and blow around with the wind. Plus it is dangerous to children. Could it be blacktopped and fenced in?

2. Could it become a municipal parking lot similar to Umbria Street?

3. Could we propose something for the community's benefit? It was suggested that we should be opposed to additional housing, because of the parking problems and the already high density of housing.

- Perhaps a:
- a. playground - for local kids
 - b. parking
 - c. 3/4 parking and 1/4 play area

At this point a motion was made and seconded that there would be no housing on this lot. The vote was unanimous in favor of this motion.

4. The question was raised that someone was surveying on the lot yesterday (9-14-76), who was it and why? Mr. Esposito promised to find out as soon as possible.

It was tried to define the needs of the area for the lot. The response was an immediate need of blacktopping and perhaps fencing the area off. The feeling seemed to be against a tot lot or playground since it would bring more kids into the area.

At this point Rev. Gil Rendle of the Ridge Avenue Methodist Church arrived and gave a general account of the history of the lot.

When the building burned - the Ebenezer Church trustees agreed with the city that the building had to come down and that the city would contract to have the building torn down. After the demolition no bill was received for a while. Then a bill was received

with a +10% added on to the agreed price. Ebenezer Church then contacted the city - Barbara Gilbert of the City Solicitors' Office. Ms. Gilbert told Ebenezer Church that she would check on the bill and that in the meantime not to pay the bill. From this point (in the fall - November?) until February when Ebenezer merged with the Ridge Avenue Church nothing happened. It should be noted that those trustees from Ebenezer disavowed any involvement with the community, but these same trustees did not pass on to Ridge Avenue Methodist Church. Hence when the Ridge Avenue Church received the Ebenezer property etc. they were not aware of the problems that were previous to that point. There were two lots involved - the parking lot on Levering St was sold. The second piece of ground, the lot at Gay and Mansion Streets was found to have had a lean placed against it by the city for the money owed the city from the demolition bill. A lawyer was contacted and the ground was taken off the market. Rev. Rendle has since spent extensive time dealing with the city and trying to get the bill straightened out. He has gotten in touch with Mr. Pearlman's office and Mr. Stein has been working to help straighten out the problem. Nothing can be done with the property until the lean is removed. Rev. Rendle commented that the current trustees have not discussed the property yet. The Rev. was interested in any feeling expressed by the community as to what they want.

The neighbors questioned the churches intentions as relates to the community. It was suggested that a petition be submitted to Mayor Rizzo. It was asked if the church had insurance in case some one was injured. Rev. Rendle said yes the church does carry insurance.

It was asked if a ordinance could be brought into effect to force the church to clean-up.

Another comment was the fact that the center area of the lot is weak. Cinders were just dumped on the foundations and it is felt that the area is weak and might cave in.

Another question was would the church be selling the lot. The Rev. said that this question would go back to the trustees with any other community input that he could get.

Further discussion followed about the piece of wall which was supposed to be left as a retaining wall. There was apparently only a verbal agreement. The church's lawyer said that there was nothing written. Mr. Esposito said that he will check this

It was suggested that the city be asked to pave the lot. Either by checking city specifications, there should be some legal guidelines as to how a lot should be left, and L. and I. can be brought in to force paving. Or by community request get the area paved by the city and the city can then place another lean against the the property.

It was decided that the minutes of this meeting would be sent to the church and be presented to the Board of Trustees. Another question was raised that; should we be personally represented? It was decided that the Board will meet with out our representation, but that the church will meet back with the community afterwards.

At this point the meeting was adjourned until further information can be gotten. There will be another meeting in 2 or 3 weeks.

SUMMARIZED

1. There is an immediate need to get the lot cleaned up.
 - macadam be placed on the lot.
 - check the middle area where the foundations are and the ground is settling.
 - something be done to get a retaining wall on the lower end.

That pressure be brought to ge the above, either by going through the city to get the billing straightened out or working through L. and I. and pointing out the area as a hazard.

2. Check about the agreement on the retaining wall. Is it written or verbal and can the city be held to it.
3. Check and see who was surveying the lot (9-14-76) and why?
4. For the future the general opinion seems to be:
 - No More Housing
 - Possibly a parking lot, if it can be worked out
5. Rev. Rendle will go back to the Ridge Avenue Methodist Church trustees and present our problems to them and see what kind of cooperation can be gotten.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ray Smith

cc: V. Esposito, Pres. Manayunk Neighborhood Council
A. Pearlman, Councilman at Large
G. Rendle, Ridge Ave Methodist Church