

Dateline: September 17, 1959

RESIDENTS QUESTION SITE FOR LIBRARY

Several residents were on hand at Monday night's council meeting for the introduction of an ordinance authorizing a \$35,000 bond issue for the purchase of a future library site. The final hearing on the ordinance will be held Sept. 28.

The ordinance authorizes an expenditure of \$36,750 for the site with \$1,750 to be paid as a down payment and the balance to come from the bond issue.

Mayor Frederick A. Demarest, in giving some of the background on the ordinance, said, "The library facilities of this municipality are grossly inadequate and there is still one department of the local government we have no room for in this building (the Municipal Building). We feel, with a high school in the town now, that adequate land for a library be secured.

"We have for sometime been thinking of this property," he added, "as there is no other property around here nor is there room on these grounds."

George J. Guess Jr., of 54 Monmouth Road, one of the 35 people present, asked about the possibility of using the high school grounds as is done in many other towns. He also asked what relationship the \$36,750 price had to market value.

Mayor Demarest said, in reference to the price, that 1,600 other people want to buy that property, hoping perhaps to achieve through the courts a zone change to business or permission to erect an apartment house there. As to the site, "I don't know of any better location," the mayor said.

Mr. Guess said that if the borough is buying the site for defensive measures that's one thing but repeated that he felt a location nearer the high school would be better.

He also cited the high feeling of discontent prevalent in the last year or two over rising taxes and felt using school property would help keep taxes down.

Councilman Walter F. Nutt said that the Board of Education would probably point out that the school grounds are not large enough now to meet the state standards and putting another building on them would only eliminate more land.

H. P. MacNeil of 73 Belvidere Rd., supported Mr. Guess' contention that the high school would be a better location. He also said that if the library were there it would eliminate one of the three libraries in town.

W. A. Siegel of 74 Belvidere Road asked what the cost of the new building would be. Mayor Demarest said approximately \$350,000 adding "in due time of course".

Speaking in support of the library location was Mrs. Robert Howard of the League of Women Voters, which had a large delegation present at the meeting.

Mrs. Howard said that the league had for the past year been studying the library, its facilities, services and problems.

"As a result of this study," she said, "the members who attended the library study units came to a 100 percent consensus that our library definitely needs physical expansion in every area."

She also noted that the study included comparison of the Glen Rock library with the most recent standards established by the American Library Association in 1956.

"The standards for the physical location of a small town library," she said "recommend an area centrally located so that older school children can walk to the library; an area near bus stops, train station, shopping area, business district and thoroughfares to larger towns."

She pointed out that the property in question on the corner of Rock Road, Maple Avenue and Hamilton Avenue, which is being considered, meets all the recommendations of the American Library Association. She concluded her presentation by noting that the League's study was undertaken independently of the Borough Council, nor was the council aware that the study was underway.

On the question of cost, Mayor Demarest again said the borough didn't want to spend a dollar more than necessary nor buy more property than necessary but added that the property is available now and if the borough doesn't take the step now it may be too late.

When it was pointed out that buying the property would take it off the tax rolls, the mayor said, "There are certain things we must do or lose the opportunity."

Mayor Demarest asked Mrs. Helen Griffen, head librarian, to give her views on the questions raised at Monday night's meeting.

Mrs. Griffen said that high school students are only a small part of the library's work. As far as the location goes she said that a location near the high school would place Byrd and Central students far from the library and also many adults.

"The library should be in a central location," she said. She also noted that the circulation was about 45 percent juvenile and 55 percent adult. The high school students are in the adult group.

Mr. Siegel asked again about the timing of the new building. Mayor Demarest said that the council did not know. "We are over our bonded indebtedness now and will probably have to wait." He also pointed out that the Hubschmitt family has

consented to accept the purchase price in three payments spread over a three-year period.

Although the final hearing on the ordinance has been set for Sept. 28, that is the day the borough officials will meet with Trenton officials to obtain approval to exceed the debt limit. Since the ordinance cannot be passed until this approval has been received, the final hearing will probably be postponed.