

Campbell Developing Multi-Million Shopping Center on Site

Bethlehem Acts to Take 63 Acres in Hanover;

Dispute Looms

The City of Bethlehem moved yesterday to acquire 63 acres of privately owned property in Hanover Township, Northampton County, for park purposes. It intends to take the land by eminent domain.

The lion's share of the property the city wants is owned by Harold S. Campbell, Bethlehem realtor and builder.

He told The Morning Call he "hopes the city knows what it's doing," and declared that it is a "very grave, serious matter."

The proposed acquisition of his 62-acre holdings, Campbell said, came on the eve of the day he had set for public announcement of what he intends to do with the property.

He revealed that he has already set in motion his plans for a "multimillion dollar" shopping center there . . . that he

showed the final draft of his plans to Hanover officials last week . . . that he already holds signed leases with tenants . . . and that he has already begun excavating for the project.

Appeal . . . or Sue?

Campbell feels he has two courses of action which he can take:

Appeal to the city to reconsider its action — or take it to court to show that "it's too valuable a piece of property for the taxpayers to shoulder when considering its potential as a shopping center."

City Council took its first legal step yesterday by introducing ordinances announcing the city's intent to "enter upon, appropriate, take, use and acquire by right of eminent domain" Campbell's property and three other small parcels.

These are a half-acre owned by Mr. and Mrs. Woodrow Mitman, a half-acre held by Daisy Nonnemaker and .16 of an acre owned by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Nonnemaker.

All four parcels comprise the original Kipp farm. The land is on the northeast side of Schoenersville road, south of Illick's Mill Road. The property is contiguous to Monocacy Park.

News that the city intends to take the land for recreational use was met with surprise. The Henry Nonnemakers had just moved into their newly built home last fall. The Mitmans "don't know what we'll do." Miss Nonnemaker, too, doesn't know where she'll go. She is living in a house that has been in the family for 102 years.

Introduction of the ordinance serves notice upon all four not to make any improvements to

their property. If they do, it will be at their own risk.

If the ordinance passes second and final readings (the first reading met unanimous affirmative councilmanic action) the city must file the legislation with the recorder of deeds office in the Northampton County courthouse.

If the city and the property owners can't come to terms on a price, the city must ask the court to appoint a board of viewers for an appraisal of the land. Either side can appeal the viewers' award. If that happens, it goes to a jury.

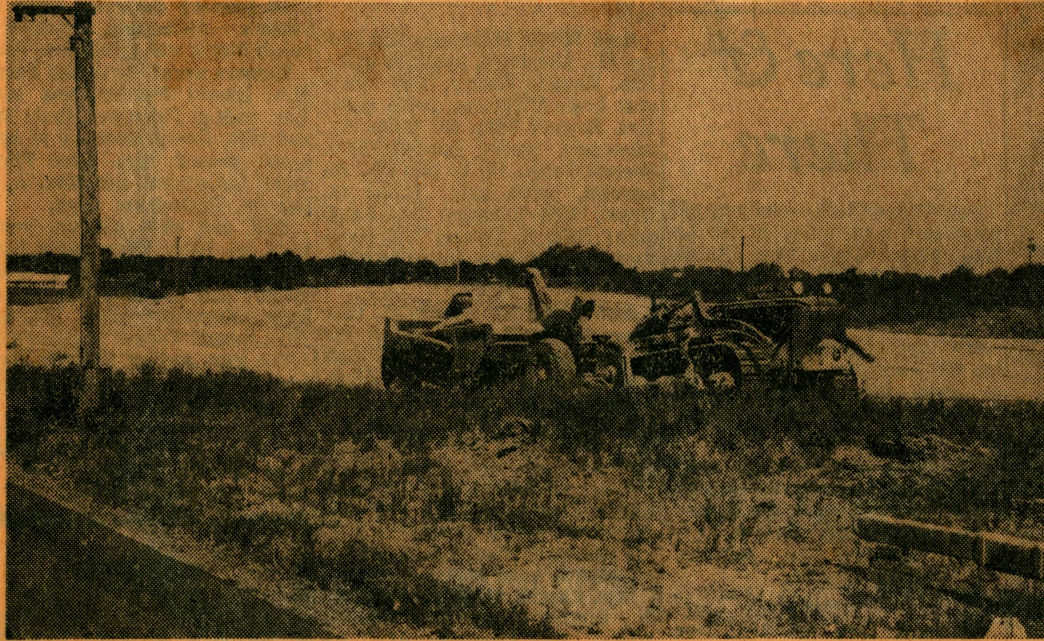
Already on the books is legislation ordaining the extension of Washington Ave., from Center St. to 8th and Eaton Aves. It would pass through some of the land in question, although it has nothing to do with council's action yesterday.

Mayor Earl E. Schaffer summed up council's move as a "logical step" to expand the city's recreational facilities.

"As the city expands in its natural direction of growth, the acquisition will be almost in the exact center of the city's population. It will guarantee a mid-city recreational center in the future," he declared.

He said that "this is the only tract of land that adapts itself to this kind of thing, particularly because it neighbors existing recreational holdings."

Back in March, the city began its quest for more recreational territory by taking 238 acres of Hanover land for park purposes. Township officials then had indicated they didn't like the way Bethlehem had gone about it but had conceded there wasn't anything they could do about it.



WORKING LAND — Grader moves on Campbell property while City of Bethlehem took action to take the land for park purposes.

(Right), newly renovated barn is shown on Campbell land. It was to become the builder's headquarters.

Over

his Hanover property. Council added that he spent thousands on it.



FOR RECREATION — Dotted area shows 62 acres in Hanover Township the City of Bethlehem is acquiring for park purposes. Shaded area to right is 238-acre property it annexed last spring.

Schaffer declared yesterday that the proposed taking of Campbell's land came as a result of "many months of unsuccessful negotiation with him."

Campbell has his own side of the story. He said that he had tried in good faith to negotiate with the city and that the negotiations broke down when the city solicitor to furnish us with the necessary agreements.

He claims that a price had been agreed upon. He said he was willing to sell with one proviso — that the city rezone his 21-acre property bounded by Schoenersville and Catasauqua roads, Westgate Drive and Buchanan Park Apartments, so that he could locate his shopping center there instead of on his Hanover property. Council

eventually turned down his request.

Campbell said he then proceeded to develop the site with no inkling of any interference until council took this action.

He declared he had been "delayed and hampered" in immediate development of his Hanover property when the city had originally ordained the interstate highway spur through it.

Council, he said, had called a special meeting to fix the route the "day after I entered into agreements of sale with Harvey A. Kipp, the former owner." He paid \$230,000 for the property.

He stated he held up work until the new highway route was made public and then began remodeling a barn on the tract for his building operations. He added that he spent thousands

of dollars placing it in usable condition.

Campbell claims that his shopping center venture has "200 per cent backing of Hanover officials," that the land is commercially zoned, that he has been granted certificates of occupancy, that "we sold some industrial sites on the tract" and that he spent "thousands of dollars in the development, designing and leasing" entailed in creating the shopping district.

"To condemn or use my tract for recreational purposes is like condemning Broad and Main," he declared.

The city had its eye on the Kipp farm long before Campbell purchased it. But apparently it couldn't come to terms on the price. While the city was considering it, Campbell bought it.



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