

January 28, 1966

Friday evening.

Present: All commissioners, Senator J. Frank Raley, Mr. Henry Fowler, Mr. W. Chapman, Mr. T. Rice, Mr. Enders of Tri-County, Mr. Johns Dixon, Mr. J. Daugherty, Mr. A. Wood, Mr. R. Wigginton, Mr. M. Dean, Mr. S. Reeves, of REA, and Mr. A. Briscoe, Mr. Ben Smith.

Mr. Burch called meeting to order and stated purpose of same was to discuss the future use of the railroad in the county, whether or not it should be used in the construction of Route 235 or retained for shipping use.

Senator Raley said that money has been appropriated to build the road from Halfway House to Lexington Park, and the SRC would like to use the railroad. However, there has been testimony to the effect that the railroad should be retained as it is vital to the economy of the county. If the SRC does not use the railroad, they will build the road on the present right of way, and the latter method will cost approximately \$350,000 less. The railroad has been declared surplus and if the county does not buy it, it will go out to private bidders.

Mr. Bill Chapman introduced Mr. Enders, Director of the Tri-County Council, and then said that approximately all inquiries from industries that might be brought into the county need rail transportation. There are two prospects looking at property along the railroad right now, and these industries would employ many people. In such instances the railroad would be important to the economy of the county. Mr. Chapman said he has had a request for all the available locations in the county for businesses from a very large company and without the railroad we cannot even talk to these people. If we do not have the railroad, we will lose about 50% of our attraction for business to come into the county.

Mr. M. Dean, speaking for the REA, stated that REA needs the railroad as they have signed a contract with Pepco, and have a contract with the base to supply current, and the transmitter was built on the railroad right of way. It begins at Hughesville and except for a certain area, the line goes through all the way on the railroad right of way. In 1964 they renegotiated a 20 foot easement for 50 years for which they paid the government \$4,000. If the railroad is condemned, it will mean building a new transmission line and the cost will be prohibitive. For this reason, it is very important to keep the railroad, as their situation is critical. The REA has appointed a committee to look into this matter and they have the authority to negotiate what they can to retain the railroad. At this point, Mr. Chapman read a letter in which it was stated that the present right of way on the railroad is 66 feet, and also mentioned stipulations as to the use of the railroad. Mr. Dean said that the REA is ready and willing to do whatever is necessary to retain the railroad as it is so vitally important to their operation.

There was a question raised as to the authority of the SRC to build roads in the county, and Senator Raley and Mr. Fowler stated that the SRC cannot build a road anywhere in the county unless the commissioners and the legislators agree to this.

Mr. Enders then stated that he has had contact with many people and is aware that the county has a growing interest in industrial development. If we hope to attract such businesses to the county the railroad will be a big advantage. He feels it is possible for the railroad to pay for itself within a period of time if it is purchased.

Mr. Buck Briscoe mentioned one industry that will require 1500 cars a year if they locate here, but without the railroad they will not come. The Pennsylvania Railroad has taken a tract of land and have already mailed information to two projects considering St. Mary's.

Mr. Burch stated that it seems to be a unanimous feeling to retain the railroad and now a way must be found to do this. Mr. Dean said the REA will work with the county in any way possible to save the railroad. Mr. Daugherty stated that he feels that the county could buy this and the REA could have a lifetime lease to protect their interest. He feels the three southern counties could manage this. Mr. Wigginton said that the REA could also buy it. Mr. Chapman read from a brochure dealing with how property is disposed of according to GSA regulations, and the REA could qualify according to same.

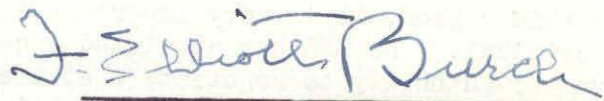
Mr. Wigginton said they are going to investigate every phase of this matter and asked if one of the officials would like to be present when they do. Senator Raley asked for a letter to the commissioners stating that the REA has need for this property and their desire to lease it. Could also meet with Senator Brewster, GSA, and the REA and work this out and find out how it could be done. Mr. Enders read notation in the back of the brochure concerning public power projects who can purchase surplus land. This might be worth looking into so far as the cooperative acquiring this is concerned.

The sale can be negotiated after appraisals are made, and the commissioners will have to find out if they can legally purchase the railroad. The federal government should also be made aware of the lease the REA has and this will help negotiations. Senator Raley said he will arrange for the meeting with Senator Brewster some time next week and get all the information necessary. (Mr. E. Gough came in at this point).

If the commissioners need additional authority to purchase the railroad, this can be gotten through emergency legislation.

Meeting adjourned.

Approved,



F. Elliott Burch, President