

# Dam Will Be Detriment, Say Residents

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BELVIDERE — Angry residents of Pahaquarry Township last night told the Warren County Board of Freeholders their homes are being taken indiscriminately, that they oppose the Tocks Island recreation area, and that the Tocks Island dam will be a detriment to Warren County.

The night meeting was scheduled so the Pahaquarry committee and residents could discuss with the freeholders the reasons they oppose a speed-up in land acquisition in the project area. The committee by letter criticized a freeholder resolution which sought early action in land purchasing.

The freeholders said the resolution was designed to assist the people in the area who wanted to sell their properties and to stop land speculation. The group last night contended that nobody in the township wants to leave.

## Feeling Changed

Frank Jones, township treasurer, said the residents were willing to accept the dam, "but when the recreational area which will encompass the entire township was included, the feeling began to change."

Jones said when the idea was first proposed, residents were

advised they could move to higher ground if their homes were flooded. "This is no longer the case . . . they intend to take the entire township. . . there is no land speculation in Pahaquarry Township, so why should we be penalized?" he asked.

Mayor Michael Mordkin, who was the county's official representative at congressional hearings on the dam and who is a member of the Tocks Island Regional Advisory Council (TIRAC), said he favored the project, but must protect the interests of the residents of this township.

Freeholder John Pfeffer criticized the committee and residents for not making their opposition known earlier. He said: "If you really feel you can stop this project now, then God bless you. You are not in favor of this plan, yet you wait five years before telling us . . . I think there will be a tremendous land appreciation after the dam is built."

The group charged that Warren County does not need the dam and is not ready for it.

## 'Rubber Stamp'

They criticized TIRAC as being a "chamber of commerce" for the project. Jones charged "TIRAC is merely a rubber

stamp . . . we don't see why we should pay \$20,000 to a man who says yes to everything the government wants. Right now, Frank Dressler (executive director of TIRAC) is seeking legislation to create a division of government which would supersede our local government."

Mordkin criticized TIRAC for wanting to obliterate the Pahaquarry and Walpack governments. He charged that the disillusion of these two municipalities, "was the first order of business on the agenda at the first TIRAC meeting. Is this the way to help people?"

Mordkin has asked Congress to permit local elections and to retain the present municipal status.

The group contended that the boundary line for the recreational area is constantly changing and that it now contains more land than it did in the beginning.

## "No Speculation"

Donald Von Hagen said "at first, all they wanted was a mile from the river. Now they're taking Delaware Water Gap and that's four miles below the dam."

George Wilson, a resident, said there is no land speculation in Warren County. He said: "They have all the planning in

Sussex County and that's where the speculation is, and they're not doing anything about it . . . we're inviting the federal government to create problems of pollution, traffic, policing, juvenile delinquency and 15 million people . . . Go down and look at the Spruce Run Reservoir today. It stinks. The shore line is full of stinking leaves and mud. This is what the Delaware River will look like, only it will be 37 miles long."

Jones pointed out that Pahaquarry Township has everything the project promises, "recreation, Boy Scout camps, fishing, boating, hunting, picnicking, hiking and beautiful forests and mountains. We already have this. We don't need their project."

John Uporski, a township constable, wanted to know who would pay for needed roads. "They can't build Route 80, how are they going to finance all the roads needed?"

## Flood Control

Jones charged that the state's water officials have said there is not enough water in the Delaware to supply all the usages and still keep the salt out of Philadelphia and Trenton.

"Even flood control is not guaranteed . . . in the 1955 flood no lives were lost on the

Delaware, they were lost on the tributaries, but have they done anything to correct this? We have zoning. We've kept the developers out. We're better off taking care of this valley ourselves."

Wilson and Harold Wackwitz charged that land acquisition was discriminatory and arbitrary. Wackwitz said he went to the national park office and saw the boundary line of the park on a large map. He said it was drawn deliberately to include his home in the park area, which means he will be forced to vacate.

Wilson made the same charges, contending, "if they simply drew a straight line, it wouldn't be so bad, but they deliberately excluded Fred Waring's 'Shawnee on Delaware' from the park area, a lumber company and a golf course near Milford. This is what really makes the people mad."

The freeholders took no action to rescind their resolution, but Director Herman Shotwell, who said he has seen the master plan of the park area, agreed the project is larger than originally announced. He said, "The more I see of Tocks Island, the less I feel it's going to be a benefit to Warren County."