

P'burg Council Hears Plans for River Park

By JAMES FLAGG
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Detailed plans for a proposed Delaware River park were presented to Phillipsburg Council at a conference meeting last night.

William E. Hann Jr., director of Phillipsburg's Department of Community Development, explained possible funding for the park and presented blueprints of the area.

The park would extend along the river from a point near Stockton Street northward beyond the Route 22 toll bridge, a stretch of more than one mile.

The council is expected to pass a resolution at next week's meeting to apply for state and federal funds for the project. Hann said there is a good possibility that the state's Green Acres program would pay 50 per cent of the cost, which has been estimated at \$1,136,000. He also said that the U.S. Department of Agriculture may provide assistance through its Resource Conservation and Development program.

Both recreational and historical facilities are planned for the park area, which is roughly divided into four sections. There would be picnicking, swimming, fishing and open play areas as well as basketball, volleyball and tennis courts. A parking lot for 28 cars would be constructed. The old Pennsylvania Railroad station in the area could be converted into comfort stations and storage facilities.

Reconstruction of portions of the Morris Canal is being considered along with a boat basin and launching site. Other historical landmarks planned are the Port Delaware Historic Area, and a Geologic Historical area near Mount Parnassus. Bike paths and hiking trails are also included in the project.

Hann stated that the three sections in the plan are the acquisition, dedication and de-

velopment of the land. Some of the land is privately owned. Some is owned by a railroad company. Some is owned by the town. He added that land under the bridges would have to come under "land use" because it cannot be acquired.

Councilman Raymond Stern questioned the cost of the maintenance of the park, which would have to be financed by the council, since the park would become prop-

erty of the town of Phillipsburg.

Stern cited the potential problems of supervision, grass-cutting, snow-plowing and lighting.

Hann said there are no plans currently for any lighting facilities. When questioned about the possibility of flooding, he said that only picnic tables would be in the flood plain area, and would be removed during the winter. Ap-

proximately 50 per cent of the area is located on the river banks, he said.

Hann added that he thought Green Acres would provide funds for 50 per cent of the project because of similar appropriation of funds from the program for other urban park areas in New Jersey.

Mayor Anthony F. Stillo said, "this is an elaborate plan that could be very good for the town of Phillipsburg.

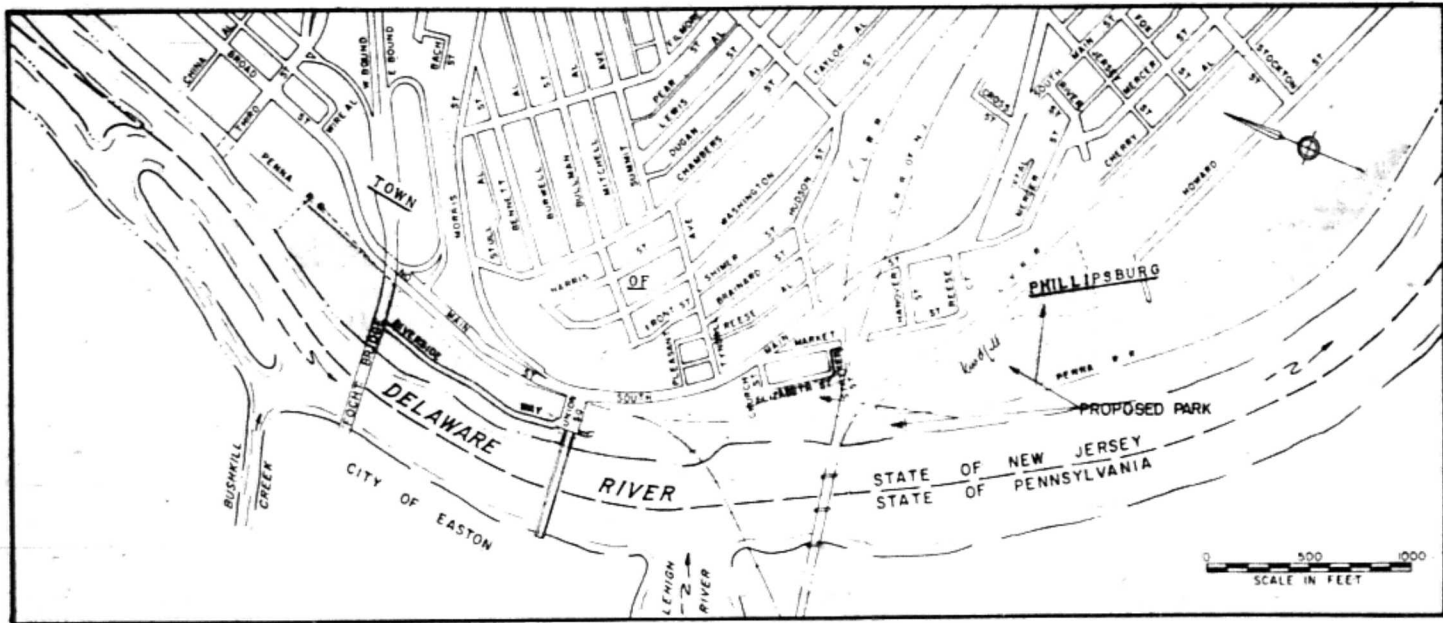
People are getting in their cars and driving to the country, and this will keep them home."

The council is the second governmental body to hear Hann discuss the proposed park. Last week the Warren County Planning Board was told of the project and is considering including the park in an adopted master plan.

In other actions last night, council agreed to meet with

Peter Kowalick, a town accountant, to discuss the proposed Green Street park project. Council is considering a 50-50 financing arrangement of the park with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

Councilman Guy Bock noted that the town has lost three football fields, principally to industries that provided the land temporarily. Stillo concurred, saying that there is



not enough recreational area in Phillipsburg.

Stern said that the town has no additional tax basis to finance the proposed \$120,000 park, which would be located on a tract adjacent to the Green Street School.

Council also debated the possibilities of selling the land where the former Brensinger School at Mill and Congress streets was recently demolished. Suggestions included the sale of the land for a nursing home, single-unit dwellings or a high-rise development. After a decision was made to obtain a plot plan of the area from the planning commission.

Town Atty. Donald Morrow also commented on the feasibility of initiating a lawsuit to force the presentation of a petition on a change of government.

"There's no way to file that suit," he said, after consulting legal sources. "The Legislature has given people the right to circulate petitions," he said.

Stern noted that the petition has interfered with the operations of the council. Stillo said that it is not fair to the people who signed the petitions for the people in power to withhold the documents.

Several councilmen repeated that they are not opposed to the presentation of the petition, but rather the withholding of it.