

YOUR WILMINGTON TODAY

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garing one, was the lack of municipal regulations insuring physical development of property in a protective and orderly manner.

No Time During War
There was no time, during the rush of building ships and housing soldiers' families, to stop the show and change scenery in the middle of the act. But the realization did set some substantial citizens to some serious post-war thinking.

Among these was the late Mayor Bruce B. Cameron, Sr., a man who long had envisioned a Wilmington of 50,000 population and an important commercial and trading center for a vast area of North Carolina. City planning had been discussed here before the war, and when Cameron took over as chief executive of the City council, talk of planning was revived.

As the problems induced by a war-swollen population increased, Mayor Cameron and City Manager A. C. Nichols began the first discussions which ultimately led to creation of a City Planning board. As the late mayor envisioned the board's job it was to insure that the full scope of Wilmington's post-war potentialities be explored. Out of that exploration has come bold, decisive action.

Step one, as a previous article of this series has related, was the retention of an expert planning consultant—a specialist in the field of city planning and municipal economic development. The man retained was George W. Simons, Jr., of Jacksonville, Fla., an authority in his field with a strikingly successful record of achievement in a dozen or more Southern cities.

His first commission, entered in to by contract with the city in February of last year, was to prepare for the city and its Economic Development committee a survey of the city and its economic development possibilities. That work was completed and delivered to the city in December.

A Master Plan
Phase No. 2 of the contract instructed Simons to prepare a study of the City of Wilmington, and to chart in detail a comprehensive master plan for its future physical development. To be included in the master plan were complete data concerning the following subjects:

- 1-Streets and highways.
- 2-Traffic movement and control, including parking.
- 3-Parks and recreation.
- 4 - Neighborhood development (the re-arrangement of existing urban areas into definite neighborhood patterns.)
- 5-Utilities, including water, sewerage, drainage, gas, light and power.
- 6-Waste collection and disposal.
- 7-Land-use patterns, including a

recommended zoning plan and ordinance regulating use to which the land may be put.)

8-Transit facilities, urban and suburban.

9-Public buildings of the city, county, state, federal government, hospitals and schools.

10-Housing facilities.

11 - Transportation, including terminals and loading facilities for water, rail and air.

12-Bridges and viaducts.

13-Fire and police protection.

14-Civic art and civic center.

15-Fiscal pattern and assessment practices.

Simons asked for, and was granted, 18 months in which to complete the two projects. One has been delivered. The master plan, now being compiled into book form with maps and charts, will be laid before the City council and the Planning board about June 1, next.

One Phase Completed

One phase of the master plan, a proposed zoning ordinance, has been completed and only last Wednesday it was submitted to the City council—not for action, but to obtain council permission for the Planning board to begin a series of neighborhood hearings around the city to acquaint the people with the instrument and to get public reaction to its proposals. Because zoning for the future—and that's what part seven of the master plan provides—has a profound effect on every taxpayer's physical property, the Planning board and City council are not in a great hurry to adopt the recommendations, or modifications of them. The future of the city, insofar as its physical development is concerned—is at stake. A good zoning ordinance is essential. A poor one can be as disastrous as none at all.

To chart a sound zoning program a lot of preliminary work has been necessary. That's why the city readily decided to spend \$13,000 for a master plan prepared by an expert. When the plan is complete, the city expects to have in its hands a comprehensive outline, fairly complete in detail, of every last factor and trend which have produced the physical city as it exists today.

A great many Wilmingtonians have known for years that the city was developing in a haphazard manner. One result has been to send thousands of city dwellers into the suburbs. Another has been the gradual depreciation of property values in certain districts—depreciation which in too many instances resulted in property going to rot because the owner could not get from it an income commensurate to its assessed valuation. Still another result has been the ruin-

ation of fine residential districts by indiscriminate commercialization of nearby property.

That was happening until quite recently, primarily because there was no legal way to prevent it. The practice, extended over the years as it has been here, has resulted in a general depreciation of real estate values in some districts and an abnormal increase in others.

A Cost to Everyone

And in the long run, everyone has had to share the piper's bill. The non-owner of property may have thought he was escaping the penalty of a tax bill, but a college sophomore economics major could cite the fallacy of the reasoning. And the property owner was taking it squarely on the chin every time the tax collector came around. It was a vicious circle—a circle, it might be added, from which the city isn't yet freed.

A sound zoning ordinance will go a long way toward stabilizing property values. It has in other cities; cities larger and smaller than Wilmington. Sound zoning has helped pull many an American city from the prospect of community-wide decay. Whether Wilmington was, or is today, near a state of community decay insofar as property values are concerned is not important at this moment. What does matter, though, is how stable its real property values will be five, 10 or 20 years hence. Proper zoning ordinances can be a powerful factor in that stabilization.

The proposed ordinance Simons has presented to the city, based on the surveys being compiled for the master plan, divides the city into seven zones. Wisely, the proposed ordinance, follows a general pattern already prescribed by use to which property in each zone is currently being utilized.

Using code designations for a key to the seven zones, Simons' recommended ordinance provides for the following:

R-1 AA Single family (dwelling) district: An area or areas where a single residence occupied a lot of not less than 10,000 square feet.

R-1 A Single family (dwelling) districts: Where a single residence occupies a lot of approximately 5,000 square feet.

R-1 Single family (dwelling) districts: Where a single residence occupies a lot of approximately 3,000 square feet.

R-2 Multiple family (dwelling) district: Where a single roof covers two or more self-contained dwellings; i. e., duplex, flats, apartments.

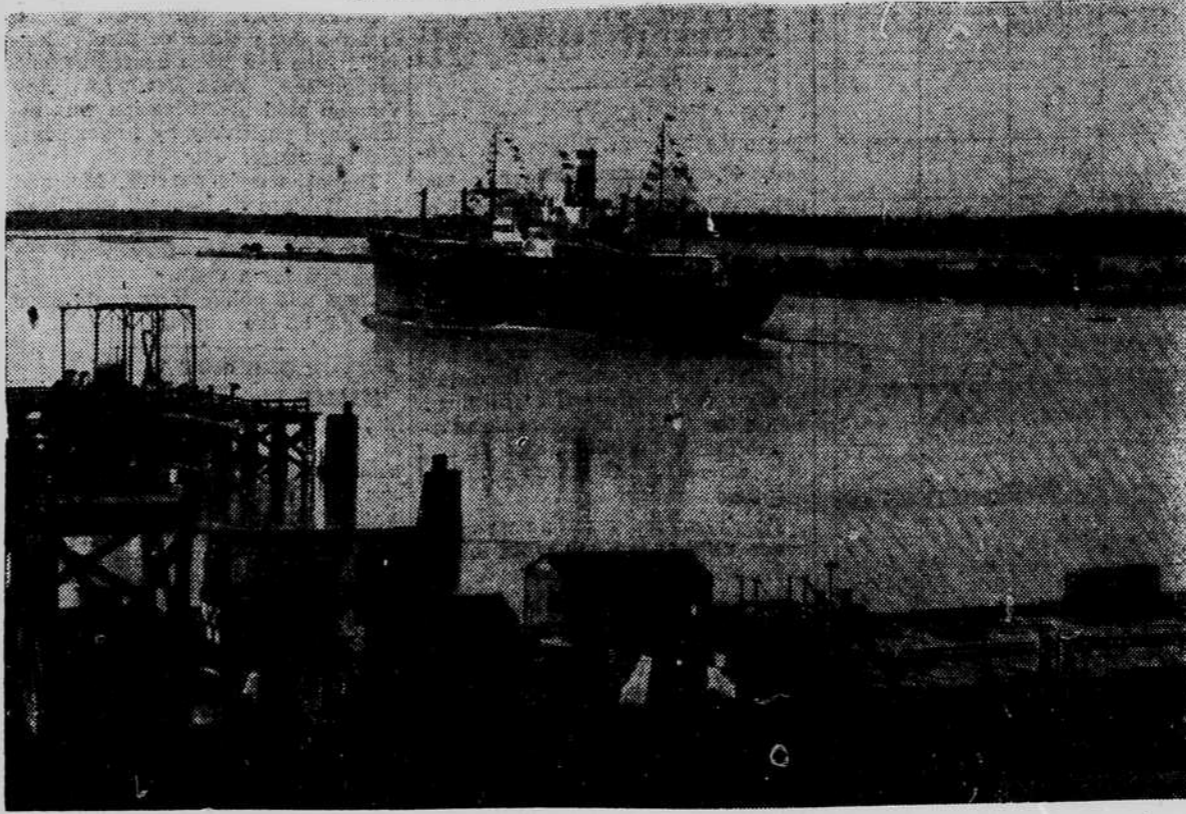
C-1 Commercial district (retail).

M-1 Light industrial district (wholesale and light manufacturing).

M-2 Heavy industrial district.

A map of the city, with each

OFF TO THE SEVEN SEAS



Gaily be-decked with her freshly unfurled flags, the S. S. American Traveler, last of 19 ships of her class built by the North Carolina Shipbuilding company for the United States Lines, steamed down the Cape Fear river Saturday, formally delivered to the steamship company. She is scheduled to join other U. S. Lines vessels built here and now in overseas trade.

of the above zones indicated by key number, has been prepared by Simons to guide the Planning board and council in adoption of necessary ordinance to establish a sound zoning program. Whether the key map will be adopted as prepared, or whether the forthcoming public hearing and subsequent council deliberations will materially alter it remains to be seen.

It is, as one zoning minded realtor said, "at least a good start."

Interim Zoning Law

Members of the Planning board, currently functioning under the handicap of an inadequate interim zoning ordinance, are going to great pains to assure one and all that the contemplated permanent ordinance will not force a change in use of any existing structure—so long as it remains in its use.

Someone started a rumor to the effect that the zoning ordinance, if adopted, would require all non-forming dwellings or establishments to close down or move into a zone in which the use did conform. Idle talk, says H. R. Emory, chairman of the board.

As envisioned by far-sighted business and industrial leaders, and supported by real estate men who know the value of sensible zoning, a sound zoning ordinance can and will be a tremendous asset to the city. They are thinking in terms of years to come, and while not altogether prepared to sacrifice their own or anyone's property values today for a long-range pro-

gram, these zoning-minded men see danger signs ahead without the protection of adequate ordinance.

What, for instance, they ask, is there to prevent an objectionable business or manufacturing plant to move into the heart of any one of a half dozen highly desirable residential neighborhoods? What, they ask, is there to enjoin a neighbor from opening a garage, an all-night cafe or what-have-you next door to your home?

Wilmington, its leading citizens are determined, is going to grow. An era of industrial and economic expansion seems reasonably certain to include Wilmington in its plans for the next decade or more. Controlled growth along uniform lines is highly desirable, and with that argument there can be no serious difference of opinion.

For more than 200 years the city developed pretty much as the trends of the times influenced it. The results, while not irreparably damaging, have not always been desirable. A good zoning ordinance and earnest cooperation from the citizens at large should insure a stable future development of the city.

A lot of business men think so and they're ready to back their conviction to the limits of their financial stake in Wilmington and the city they believe it can and will be.

BRUNSWICK NCEA COMMITTEES SET

Committees from the Brunswick county unit of the North Carolina Education association last week were appointed to serve in 1946 during a meeting in Bolivia, presided over by Glenn M. Tucker, president.

Attending the meeting were members of the Brunswick county NCEA council, including three new members, Mrs. Deane B. Eakins, Leland, Mrs. Muriel Lennon, Southport, and Miss Bertha Reid, Bolivia. The following committees were appointed:

Professional service: Mrs. Rena L. Joyner, Southport, chairman; Miss Bertha Reid, Bolivia; Mrs. Louis Tweed, Shallotte; Mrs. J. Elmore, Waccamaw school, Ashe, and Mrs. Dean B. Eakins, Leland.

Legislative: Mrs. Guy McKeithan, Waccamaw, chairman; Mrs. Ruth Hood, Southport; Mrs. Madge Bell Smith, Leland; Miss Bertie Bolden, Shallotte, and Mrs. Frances Holden, Bolivia.

Federal aid: Henry Stone, Shallotte, chairman; Mrs. E. M. McEachern, Southport; Miss Marie Hammond, Leland; Mrs. Muriel Bennet, Waccamaw, Ashe, and Mrs. Ora G. McKeithan, Bolivia.

Public relations: Mrs. Margaret Martin, Leland, chairman; C. M. Byrd, Southport; Mrs. Muzette Arnold, Shallotte; Miss Williams, Waccamaw, and Mrs. Margaret Hall, Bolivia.

Membership: Mrs. Elizabeth Lewis Johnson, Bolivia, chairman; Mrs. Annie Weeks, Southport; Mrs. Laura C. Muckle, Waccamaw; Miss Ruth Floyd, Shallotte, and Mrs. Mildren Peterson, Leland.

Planning and resources: J. T. Denning, Waccamaw, chairman; Mrs. Thelma Willis, Southport; Mrs. Sara Smith, Shallotte; Mrs. Louise Jones, Leland, and Miss Alice Watkins, Bolivia.

CARNEY, STRANGE PRAISED BY PARTY

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members of County Boards of Election to be made by the State Board of Elections.

"We in New Hanover county think that we have had for years the best County Board of Elections in North Carolina and we do not want any change made therein, at least as to the representatives of the Democratic party, and, therefore, it gives me much pleasure to recommend the reappointment of Messrs. H. G. Carney and Robert Strange.

"I will appreciate your forwarding his recommendation to the State Board of Elections."

Following receipt of Haskett's recommendation, the State board is scheduled to make the appointments on March 1.

The primary this year is Saturday, May 25.

NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS OF ZONING HEARINGS

The City Planning Board wishes to announce the first part of a series of hearings for the purpose of discussing the preliminary zoning plan for the city. Property owners and residents are respectfully invited to attend the meeting pertaining to their area or areas as follows:

Tuesday, February 19, 1946
8:00 P.M.
New Hanover High School
For that part of the city bounded as follows:
13th Street on the west
Burnt Mill Creek and the old city limits line to the east
City limits lines to the north and south

★
Wednesday, February 20, 1946
8:00 P.M.
Hemingway School
For that part of the city bounded as follows:
13th Street on the East
Dock Street on the south
Cape Fear River on the west
City limits line on the north

★
Thursday, February 21, 1946
8:00 P.M.
Tileston School
For that part of the City bounded as follows:
13th Street on the East
Greenfield Street on the south
Cape Fear River on the west
Dock Street on the north

WILMINGTON CITY PLANNING BOARD

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