

July 10, 1967

VILLAGE, BANK AT ODDS

A square, concrete blockhouse festooned with enamel panels: that has been characterized as the latest design for the new Piermont branch of the Tappan Zee National bank; and it has caused a set-to between the Village and bank officials.

"We were astonished to see this design," a Village Board official said, "after the bank had shown us earlier designs which were in keeping with the architecture of Piermont. At the last moment, they changed horses. What could we do but turn it down?"

Frederick Palmer, the bank's president, declined to comment on the issue, saying it was "squarely before the Piermont Village Board" whether the bank goes ahead with construction or not. He also said that for the same reason, the bank would not meet with a citizen's delegation at this time.

"All of Piermont is united on this issue," Mayor di Francesca told the Newsletter. "We won't approve a building that does nothing for the residential character of Piermont, especially after considerable time and effort has been spent on improving the Main Street area." The Mayor has referred the controversy to the Village attorney to seek ways for legally denying the permit for as long as is necessary, pending a more acceptable design.

Robert Bradbury, PCA president, has written the bank strongly supporting the Board's views. "We think a building which is unacceptable to the majority of Piermonters is not in the bank's best interests, especially after they had led us to believe that we would get a handsome brick structure. If the bank refuses to discuss modifications, or to reconsider the earlier design, we think an indefinite suspension should be placed on their plan to build in Piermont."

THOMPSON PROPERTY NOT SETTLED

Speculation also surrounds the fate of the Dorothy Thompson property, facing the new school on 9W. Speculation in this case refers to the builders who have seen the property and asked the Board to reconsider the present zoning of one-acre, single-family residences. Privately, one of the builders has remarked that one-acre residences will not sell "in Piermont," adding that the Board can be brought to the position of zoning in smaller-acre units. Builders, with the support of the owners of the property, are favoring a reduction of the restrictions to 1/2 or even 1/4 acre zoning.

APARTMENT HEARING SET

Garden apartments are the issue on another 9W parcel, where the builder of Lawrence Park has requested permission to construct a second development on the last Piermont land reserved for that purpose. The new units, having the Lawrence Park architecture, would be constructed on the northern half of the former DiMeglio property, and would be set well back from the road and connected with the new school by a sidewalk. A Public Hearing is set for Tuesday, July 11, at the Piermont Village Hall.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO WE

Just about a year ago, a small group met informally to share their common bond -- a deep affection for Piermont's uniqueness and desire to help it grow along the right lines. The result: the Piermont Civic Association, which soon was formed, based on a committee system in which everybody could participate. PCA membership has grown to 150, and boasts a true cross-section of the Village.

Its achievements? Even accomplished optimists find them hard to believe. The Tappan Zee Thrift Shop, established last December with little money and lots of work, distributed about \$1,300 to worthy causes during its first quarter, while making many bargain-seekers happy... the highly-successful PCA dinner at Cornetta's was a lively evening for all and actually made some money... trees have been planted on Main Street and are thriving, and more are planned... the Newsletter has become a clearing-house for information.

COMMITTEE WORK URGED

As it begins the second year, the PCA is planning to change from monthly meetings to quarterly ones. The reason is increased emphasis on work within the individual committees. Again, members are urged to join a committee, as there is one for every interest and capability. Here is a run-down on the committees and their work. The name and telephone number are those of the chairman, who needs and requests your help:

Business: Mr. Kurt Gerhardt, EL 9-0122. Explores ways to build and attract new businesses to Piermont. Ideas and members are urgently needed.

Clean-up: Mrs. Arthur Tallman, EL 9-1668, strongly feels that residents should be determined to reduce litter. At present, working with the Mayor on specific anti-litter and control measures.

Liaison: Mr. Dale Hiestand, EL 9-4049. One member attends each Village Board meeting, to keep membership aware of Board's activities and vice-versa.

Library: (No chairman as yet.) Now being formed to provide a broader population base on which support for the library can be maintained.

Newsletter: Mr. Robert Cone, EL 9-0854. Aims to keep all informed about what is of interest in Piermont.

Projects: Mr. Donald Blauhut, EL 9-0999. Considers ways to implement any special projects which Piermont may undertake. The trees on Main Street are the result of this group's work. As a project is decided on, a sub-committee is set up to carry it out. Sub-committees now in existence are considering:

Benches: obtaining park benches for placement along Main Street.

Erie R. R. right-of-way: gathering information on how other abandoned rights-of-way have been used. Hopes to provide specific data on use, financing, and development of ours.

Power lines : exploring means for placing lines underground.

Research: Mrs. Julian Lewis, El 9-2574. Works closely with many other committees in researching whatever is essential to their work. Currently planning a survey of the interests and talents of residents for use of the library and PCA.

Thrift Shop: Mrs. Gilbert Burck, Burck, El 8-2455. Volunteers always welcome. Merchandise needed too. Beneficiaries of the the Thrift Shop to date have included the Sparkill Community Play School, Piermont Library, Palisades Library, Piermont Ambulance and Empire Hose Co. #1.

COMMISSIONER COMPLIMENTS PIERMONT

A noticeable improvement in householder's compliance with the sanitation ordinance has been remarked by George Hickey, Village Commissioner for Sanitation. Most refuse cans are now covered and are taken in after being emptied, he said, following Mayor di Francesca's announcement of action and fines against chronic violators. As an instance, 67 violations were found the Monday before the Mayor made his announcement in the Newsletter, while the first Monday after it there were only four.

A few violators persist, however, the Newsletter learned, and they were being carefully watched. These are residents who deposit refuse in paper bags, or even have been seen to throw it on the street from upper story windows. The Mayor has said that any citizen who observes such a violation and reports it to the police will not be required to appear as a witness, but that the police alone would be responsible for upholding the law.

As a reminder to Piermonters, Trustee Hickey said that refuse is to be set out only on scheduled collection days -- Mondays and Fridays, in covered cans which must be taken in within 12 hours after collection. A special pick-up the first Tuesday of each month takes oversized items, but not hedge cuttings and similar bulky garden waste.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The Piermont Rotary made its annual scholarship awards to three Piermont students. Joseph Rotelli was presented with an engraved watch and a citation as the winner of the Scholar-Athlete Award. Carol Palcovick received \$500.00 and Lydia Savage \$250.00 for their outstanding scholastic records.

PRESERVE GETS LEASE ON WILDLIFE

A 25-year lease was given the Brookside Game Protective Association for a game refuge on the Sparkill Creek, at an annual rental of \$120.00. The Association operates the skating rink on the Creek, as well as the game preserve on the east side of the waterway.

SUMMER HAPPENINGS -- AND A HAPPENING

Summer story time at the Piermont Library will be Wednesday mornings at 10:30, beginning July 5, and extending through August 30th. Children 4 to 6 years old are invited, and juice and cookies will be served. Mrs. Arthur Watkins is in charge, and readers will be Mrs. Nathaniel Arbiter and Mrs. Stafford Ordahl. Teenagers are also needed for helpers, and Mrs. Watkins (EL 9-0299) will be happy to hear from any.

A special summer book collection is now featured at the Library, as well as a boating display on Olde Piermont and interesting boat models. "New Yorker," "Redbook" and "Glamor" have been added to the collection, along with new fiction and non-fiction and a collection of large-type adult books. Summer hours are now in effect -- Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3 to 5 and 8 to 10 p.m.

Little League ball games are played every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Continental Can ball field. Come on down and root for your team.

A film festival, with a selection of outstanding films for children between the ages of 7 and 11 will be held at the Piermont Annex on Wednesday, July 12, from 2 to 4 p.m. Free refreshments will be served. Mrs. Donald Blauhut has organized the program, and Mr. Ernest Tebo is going to "run the projector."

For the young folks, 6 to 15 years old, there is the PAL summer program at the Village Hall daily, rain or shine, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Sailboat races are regularly scheduled through the summer by the Tappan Zee Sailing Association. If you're a boat owner, or thinking of becoming one, you certainly should join. In addition to races, prizes and get-togethers during the year, the TZSA instructs novice skippers in the art, and holds a junior sailing program. Phone E1 9-1025 for details.

The Democratic Outing will be held on Sunday, September 3, at noon at the Continental Can ball field. Watch for further details.

A happening is contemplated by the Piermont Civic Association for late summer or early fall... replete with atmosphere, surprises, even an historical theme. To determine interest in such an event, we would like your reaction, and possibly help. Call EL 9-1396 and tell Mrs. Paul Bordwell if you are in favor of a happening and when you would prefer it to be.

VILLAGE CLASSIFIED :

(Rate 10¢ per word. To place ads, call EL 9-0854.)

Wanted: Part-time library clerk. Paid position. Typing, filing, aptitude and interest in library work. Box 337, Piermont.

Wanted: One white kitten. New home available August 1. EL 9-0999.

Free: 208-volt air conditioner. Free for the taking. EL 9-1373.

For Sale: Fast sailing sloop, Flying Dutchman class. Sacrifice.
EL 9-0854.

Piermont Custom Tailor -- Sal Conigliaro. Cleaning, dyeing, pressing.
495 Piermont Avenue, Piermont, N. Y. EL 9-1431.

For Sale: Eighteen-foot plywood cabin sloop, \$1,200. EL 9-1373.

JOIN THE PCA -- NOW.

Are you a member of the PCA? Next to members aligning themselves with PCA committees, new PCA members are the things we want most. If you've postponed joining, don't wait any longer; just send your dues of \$1.00 (or \$2.00 per family) and you'll be helping Piermont and yourself.

Enclosed are my dues.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Village and Zip No: _____

Send to Piermont Civic Association, Box 365, Piermont, N. Y.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Robert Bradbury

For a small village with relatively little undeveloped property, we seem to have a lot of zoning and building problems: whether to build more apartments in the diMeglio property, what to do with the Erie right-of-way, preventing the exploitation of the Thompson property by developers uninterested in the character of the village, and, most recently, plans for a new bank which the Mayor has opposed on the basis of its severely modern design.

Regarding the bank, the people of the village seem to be unanimous in support of the Mayor's stand. Several months ago, a group of directors of the bank asked the officers of the PCA to meet with them to discuss the possibility of building a permanent structure in Piermont. We urged them to do so and pledged to do what we could to encourage Piermonters to use the local branch and increase its business. Our one reservation was that we hoped that the building would not be stridently contemporary, but would fit into our plans to generate a new interest in improving the village, based on an appreciation and restoration of some of the old buildings that have architectural merit. We acknowledged that contemporary planning and even detailing are sensible and desirable, but hoped that the overall appearance, and particularly the use of materials such as stone and brick, would not only be harmonious with our picture of the future Piermont but would be actually the first step in that direction, giving impetus to future improvements. We felt that we had gotten our message across; in fact, we were assured that we would like the plans, which were then in progress. So it was astonishing to see how completely our suggestion was ignored, when the plans were presented for a building permit.

The really puzzling thing is why the bank officers would risk offending the very people it must depend on for future business. They may have felt, understandably, that the new PCA could not be relied on to represent the majority view in the village. Or they may have simply concluded that most Piermonters simply did not care about the bank design. Whatever the reason, the reaction of the Mayor and the Trustees must have convinced them by now that they made a mistake. Well, we all make mistakes. We hope that the bank will now take steps to give us a new building that will be a source of pride, not resentment.

Of course there is always the implied threat that the bank may refuse to build a branch here at all, but we doubt that that decision will be made on any but a purely financial basis. At any rate, if the bank has no respect for the village government and appreciation of the village character, let's find it out now. We don't need the bank to push us around -- we already have the Continental Can Co.

Regarding the diMeglio and Thompson properties, the village authorities

have publicly taken a position with which the PCA agrees. At the hearings a year ago which gave birth to the PCA -- on the first diMeglio project -- the Mayor advised us that there was one additional tract "zoned" for garden apartments (the one now proposed), but he pledged that the Thompson property would not be down zoned from one-acre lots. Fair enough. But a year has gone by without a new zoning ordinance and until the new ordinance goes into effect the Thompson property remains on the books as 1/4 acre zoning. The board has certain procedures for refusing building permits until the new zoning is approved, but they might not stand up in a tough court fight. We would feel much more secure if the new ordinance were passed, even in an imperfect form, making adjustments later by amendment, rather than leaving the Thompson property vulnerable to speculative development. That property is being advertised in the New York papers at this writing as suitable for garden apartment development.

Finally, we tilted at the wrong windmill in this column last issue, when we complained that nothing was being done about the Erie right-of-way. The village board was at that very time tentatively accepting title to the land, subject to clarification of one or two sticky legal points. We stand happily corrected.