

# Committee Should Delay Land Sale

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It seems almost inconceivable to us that the North Brunswick Township Committee plans to proceed with the sale of 98 acres of township-owned land without first ascertaining the maximum value of the land.

The land, which is currently vacant, will go up for bids next Tuesday. Reportedly, the township has received an offer of \$250,000 for the land from Dr. Herbert Poch of Elizabeth.

The largest part of the land lies in an area zoned residential. Another small portion lies in an industrially-zoned area. But Home News Staff Writer William Heffernan reports that the value of the land could increase by as much as \$9,000 to \$12,000 an acre if it were rezoned to a commercial designation.

But what is most strange about the whole situation is that the Township Committee is in fact considering rezoning the land to a commercial designation—AFTER the sale takes place. Why?

Why would the township sell the land it owns and then rezone it to make its resale far more valuable than it was originally? There seems to be no compunction about rezoning the land to commercial. In fact, the Township Committee indicated at its meeting Tuesday night that the land might be rezoned with an eye toward development as a shopping center.

The committee has already indicated it will not accept bids which are less than \$400,000 for the total acreage. But even the \$400,000 figure seems to be low, even for land which is zoned residential.

We do not wish to point accusing fingers at anyone. But we do think the Township Committee would be well advised to postpone the sale of the land until, at the very least, the question of how much the land is worth is settled. Beyond that, there remains the problem of the seemingly capricious decision not to rezone the land until after the sale. This just doesn't make sense.

If the legal process involved in selling the land has gone too far to postpone the sale, we would advise the Township Committee to reject all bids out of hand and then get the whole question straightened out.

Then the land, zoned for maximum possible value, should be put up for bids again. To proceed with the sale with so many questions hanging fire is a disservice to the taxpayers of North Brunswick.