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Collection Summary

Repository: Manchester City Archives. Office of the City Clerk. City of Manchester, NH.

Creator: Planning and Zoning Board. City of Manchester, NH.

Title: Planning and Zoning Board Meeting Minutes

Collection Number: 0411.005

Accession Number: 2003.38

Dates: 1923-1926

Volume: 1 bound volume

Languages: Collection materials are in English.

Related Collections: Planning Board Meeting Minutes (0411.009); Zoning Board of Adjustment Records (0411.008).

Access: Access to collection is open to the public. Please contact the archives for an appointment to view materials. Cite the collection number, box and folder numbers when making an appointment.

Digital Note: Materials are not accessible online at this time.

Conservation Notes: Not applicable.

Finding Aid Prepared by: Mike Intranuovo, 2017

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Historical Note

On November 20, 1923, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen authorized Mayor Trudel to appoint a committee of citizens, cooperating with the city government, to establish a City Planning and Zoning Board. By December of the same year, the board was established and members were appointed. Since the board existed before municipalities in New Hampshire had the authority to zone, the board initially focused on proposing new legislation to the state government. With the assistance of the United States Department of Commerce, a bill was introduced to the New Hampshire State Senate to empower municipalities to adopt zoning regulations. After the bill became state law in 1925, a city resolution passed in May 1926 giving the board the power of zoning regulations.

Shortly thereafter, the Planning and Zoning Board disunited into two separate, but related, entities: the Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment.

The Planning Board was established by ordinance in 1927. Its responsibilities included studying the resources, possibilities and requirements of the city, and to make plans for its future development, including street layouts and proper housing for citizens. The first meeting of the board occurred on August 9, 1927. Throughout the city's history, amendments to the original ordinance establishing the board and its responsibilities have been passed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. It continues to work on long-range community planning, and also hears applications for subdivisions, site plans, and planned developments.

The Board of Adjustment was created in compliance with the provisions of Section 7, Chapter 92, NH State Laws of 1925, entitled "An Act to empower municipalities to adopt Zoning Regulations," and the zoning ordinance passed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on January 4, 1927 and signed by Mayor Moreau on January 18, 1927. In February 1927, Mayor Moreau divided Manchester into five districts of approximately equal area and appointed one resident from each to the Board of Adjustment. The board was given the power to permit the erection of buildings, permit the substantial restoration or reconstruction within twelve months of a non-conforming building damaged by fire, explosion, flood, etc., permit aviation fields, greenhouses, cemeteries, hospitals, etc., as well as several other powers as listed in the original 1927 zoning ordinance.

Prior to 1927, a demand in Manchester arose from businesses and homeowners for protection from undesirable developments near their property. The city recognized that zoning would be an appropriate solution, and the results were favorable for several years. After World War II, the original zoning ordinances were proving to be outdated. Although amendments to the original ordinance were made, the need for a new set of zoning regulations was apparent by the early 1960s. It wasn't until the mid-1960s, almost forty years since the original zoning ordinance was established, that Manchester would pass a new zoning ordinance.

By the 1990s, the Board of Adjustment began being referred to as the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). The board continues to serve as an intermediate step when a property owner would otherwise seek a zoning amendment from the legislative body or take court action.

Collection Description

The collection consists of one bound volume of meeting minutes from the board's creation in 1923 until its dissolution in 1926.

The records document zoning plans, business and commercial districts, and problems with land subdivision. The minutes also document specific initiatives of the board, such as the work to pass legislation in the state government to give municipalities the authority to zone. It also contains copies of records from the Board of Mayor and Aldermen relative to the Planning and Zoning Board's creation, and rosters of members.