

CHESTER TIMES – July 7, 1905

NEW TROLLEY LINE GETTING RIGHT OF WAY THROUGH DELAWARE COUNTY – Philadelphia and Garrettford Street Railway Company is Given a Franchise for Clifton Heights Streets by the Borough Council after a Spirited Meeting That Lasted Until Midnight and is Marked by a Free-for-all Discussion by the Citizens – Road That Will Eventually Reach Chester

Clifton Heights Borough Council held one of the longest sessions in recent years last evening, is being a few minutes of 12 o'clock when the body adjourned. Then two trips had to be made from the Council chamber in an automobile to the home of Chief Burgess Jacob B. Byres to rouse him from his peaceful slumbers to sign an ordinance which had been passed, granting the Philadelphia and Garrettford Street Railway Company the right to construct and operate a trolley line in the borough.

When Council convened those present were: President Thomas F. Manley, Messrs. Bernard Doherty, James McDermott, Don J. Welling, James Garren and John J. Taylor. A big crowd of representative citizens also came to present their views on the ordinance. Many of the citizens gave their views, and it was plain to be seen that they did not favor the corporation coming into the town except under certain conditions. Some wanted five cent fare to Philadelphia, some contended that if the trolley road is built on land, the company had purchased it would prove detrimental to the borough. Others did not want the company to have the exclusive right to operate a line on Springfield Avenue, shutting out competition, and still others were willing to allow the company to cut through private land, provided the concern would pave Broadway Avenue, adjoining with vitrified brick from curb to curb.

The company did not ask the Broadway Avenue, but before Council adjourned and the ordinance was passed, President Taylor, of the company, agreed to macadamize the avenue, provided it was not embodied in the ordinance. The meeting, although of long duration was spicy and interesting, and some good points were brought out, but President Manley of Council, had his hands full, while presiding over the session. President Taylor repeatedly answered questions regarding the construction and operation of the road.

Mr. Doherty started the ball by offering a number of amendments to the original ordinance. Some of the provisions were that the company use Broadway Avenue instead of private land; another that the company only be allowed to lay one track on Springfield Avenue, and the borough to reserve the right to allow any other trolley company the privilege of operating a line on the avenue while minor suggestions were offered.

ON THE WAR PATH – After reading his amendments, Mr. Doherty stated that the ordinance was gotten up in a hurry, and that there were some defects in it. He then made a speech, scoring some men who were not present. He said:

“The experience of the citizens of this borough is not a pleasant one. The Delaware County Line tore up Baltimore Avenue, for which the borough had paid a large sum to have macadamized.” The company laid its tracks and in making excavations for the road bed the stones were removed and said to have been used for foundation walls for the company's car barn in the borough. The borough is still paying interest on the big loan for making the road, and what have we got today? The water company came

through by divine right; then came the gas company with an ordinance given by Council for \$1.75 gas. We threatened the gas company with a civil suit for discrimination as the corporation at that time was giving Chester \$1.00 gas. The gas company advanced the price of gas in Chester to \$1.25 and reduced it to \$1.25 in Clifton Heights.

“For this reason I have asked the citizens to be present and give their views on the new trolley ordinance. Now is the time for you to express yourselves, and that there will be no after clap after the ordinance is passed.

“It has been said that I am here in the interest of the Delaware County Line. I wear no man’s collar. Since I have been in Council I have accepted no favors from any one and have given none and don’t have to give any. I don’t have to be any man’s puppy dog.”

PRESIDENT TAYLOR’S REMARKS – President Taylor of the Philadelphia and Garrettford Street Railway Company was given the floor. He said their aim is to make this road one of the best in the country. “We staid upon our record that we have carried into every town, and we promise to make this road, which we are asking the right to build in this borough, meet with the appropriation of your citizens and your Councils. We have purchased \$25.25 worth of property in Clifton Heights and this land was all purchased with the positive assurance that there would be no unjust restrictions put upon us.

“If you are interested in Clifton Heights,” he continued, “you will assist us in giving you good service and maintain the finest street railway in Pennsylvania. But we will not accept an ordinance which will prohibit the running of good standard cars. We operate nothing but large cars – we don’t want to go back to running small cars that cannot make good time. We propose to carry the people from Clifton Heights to Broad and Market Streets, Philadelphia in 30 minutes. We will take you to Sixty-third and Market Streets in 10 minutes or less. We will give you the same system as is that on the elevated and subway roads in New York.

VIEWES OF CITIZENS – The citizens were given an opportunity to express their views. They were limited to five minutes, and some warm speeches were made. Matthew Barry wanted a five-cent fare to Philadelphia. Mr. Taylor replied that the company’s rate was 1 ¼ cents per mile – 6 cents to Sixty-third and Market Streets and 5 cents from that point to Broad Street.

Ex-Councilman John Gridale said he did not doubt that the company was reliable, but he also believed that Mr. Doherty’s statements were just as reliable.

MORE QUERIES – Mr. Blake wanted to know what the company proposes to do with the lots purchased. President Taylor replied: “Improve them by selling them to people for horses.” He said they would also advance the money for building houses and would stipulate in the deed what kind of houses should be erected.

James Jordan, Sr., Charles Crawford, James Reilly and others also objected to giving the company the exclusive use of Springfield Avenue.

Ex-Burgess N.S. Kelly said he was in favor of seeing the town progress and he thought Council, citizens and the corporation should be able to come to some understanding satisfactory to everybody.