

# Zone Ordinance Adopted by Alameda, Cal.

By Charles E. Hewes, City Manager.

(The reading of this article should be preceded by that of Mr. Cheney's article on Stabilizing Values, etc., on pages 3 and 4 and succeeding pages.—Editor).

What is probably the most completely worked out and comprehensive zone ordinance so far adopted in the United States, was passed by the Alameda City Council on the recommendation of the city manager and advisory city planning commission in February, 1919. Alameda is a city of approximately 35,000 population, with about four miles of industrial water front along the north side of the city, and recreation beaches on the south side, the main portion of the city being a large island, with a second undeveloped area of several square miles of farm land, on Bay Farm Island, to the south-east.

After a year's careful study of the tendencies of growth in all parts of the city and the preparation of use of property and heights of building maps, the city's consultant in city planning, Mr. Chas. H. Cheney, held neighborhood meetings and conferences in each of the principal districts and centers of the city, some forty conferences in all being held, at which an agreement was obtained as to what protection would be for the best interest of property owners in each neighborhood. These neighborhood recommendations were then combined together in a general zoning plan and the whole put up for public hearing as the preliminary form for the zoning regulations. So well had the preliminary work of education been done, however, that there were practically no objections to the ordinance, either at this time or at the later hearings after it was introduced before the city council.

This ordinance is expected to stabilize property values, prevent the deterioration of residence districts, help business by requiring it to be concentrated at established centers, and by making a definite place for industries to locate and invest where they will be safe from protest and interference.

It combines the best features, we believe, of the Los Angeles, St. Louis and New York ordinances and is similar to the zone ordinance adopted in Palo Alto (population 6,000) in August, 1918, and to the proposed new Berkeley and Fresno ordinances.

The ordinance applies to new building permits only, existing buildings and uses of property not being effected even though they fall outside the respective zones proper for them.

Eight classes of use districts were found to be the minimum that would cover our requirements. Although it is desirable to have as few classifications as possible, we found that we could not meet Alameda's needs with less.

The Use Districts established are as follows:

Class I Residence Districts permit single family dwellings only. The Class I districts were established to cover about two-thirds of the residence area of the city.

Class II Residence Districts permit any kind of dwellings, flats, dormitories, apartments, hotels without stores. About a third of the city, in which flats and apartments were already established, was placed in this classification.

Business and Public Use Districts of Class III are for ordinary better-class retail business, trades and professions, including residences of Classes I and II. Two principal business centers of the city, on Webster Street and on Park Street, each some six blocks long, were put into this class, with smaller business districts of Class V adjoining them.

Class IV Business and Public Use Districts are for schools, public and semi-public buildings, churches, playgrounds, green houses, nurseries and parks, including single family dwellings. All such institutions throughout the city have been placed in small districts of this class, comprising only the size of the lot which they occupy.

Class V Business and Public Use Districts are for all types of business of class III plus public garages, dyeing and cleaning establishments, wholesale business, warehouses, oil supply stations and any kind of residence, or public use of classes I, II, III or IV. They comprise small areas adjoining Class III centres and also many little local business centres at cross roads in residence sections about a half mile apart.

Class VI Business and Public Use Districts are for hospitals, sanitariums, charitable institutions and any kind of residence of Classes I and II. As yet no districts of this class have been assigned—any new institutions of this type will have to have a public hearing and secure approval of the neighborhood and amendment of the zoning plan before locating.

Industrial Districts of Class VII are for all ordinary, non-obnoxious factories, warehouses and industries, including any business use, but excluding new residences of any kind. A district a half mile wide and about three miles long, along the north water front was established in Class VII, where the present industries of the city are located. Another industrial district was also provided on Bay Farm Island for future development. The first district is identical with the previous industrial zone established by ordinance a year ago, which also prohibited new dwellings to go in to block the growth of industry.

Industrial Districts of Class VIII are for obnoxious and odor producing factories, including any business use, but excluding new residences of any kind. One district of this kind only has been established now, on the leeward side of the city, where the prevailing winds will blow smoke and odors away from the city, across the bay marshes existing to the eastward.

The ordinance also found it necessary to protect the various parts of the city from the dangers of over-crowding, and depreciation of property values by the building of scattered over-high structures. The following Height Districts were established, carefully arranged to protect the existing tendencies of growth:—

2½ Story Height Districts require all new buildings to be limited to a maximum of two stories and finished attic, not to exceed a total height of 35 feet to the finished ceiling line of the attic floor above the curb. As over 99% of all the buildings in the city were found to be of this type or less in height the city felt justified in maintaining this tendency. This height limit was placed upon residence districts of Class I.

3 Story Height Districts limited to a maximum of three stories not to exceed forty feet to the finished ceiling line of the third floor, were established to cover the Webster street business district and all residence districts of Class II, for hotels, flats and dwellings.

4 Story Height Districts limited to four stories, not to exceed 50 feet to the finished ceiling line of the fourth floor. One district of this kind only was established for the present, to cover the principal business center of Classes III and V on Park street.

8 Story Height Districts limited to eight stories, not to exceed 90 feet to the finished ceiling of the eighth story, were established to cover the industrial districts of Classes VII and VIII. This is perhaps a higher limit than necessary. The City's Consultant advised four stories, which had been the limit in our previous Industrial Zone Ordinance of 1918. Some of the Planning Commission could not understand the need for any limits and the compromise height of 8 stories resulted.

Towers, tanks, chimneys, spires, etc., covering an area of not more than 15% of the lot, are allowed to build up to any height.