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File

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FOR URBAN RENEWAL

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PAS SURVEY STUDY LEADS TO REDUCTION IN CITY DEPARTMENTS, MASSELL REPORTS

The number of city departments is being reduced from 22 to 18 as the result of recommendations

made by the Aldermanic Government Study Committee, Vice Mayor Sam Massell, chairman of that committee, told our full committee meeting April 26. Mr. Massell pointed out that the committee which he heads had been appointed in April, 1966 to study the survey of Atlanta's city government made by the Public Administration Service, the first of many surveys completed under the Community Improvement Program, now nearing its termination. In addition to Chairman Massell, the committee includes Alderman Rodney Cook, John Flanigen, Richard Freeman, Gregory Griggs, Everett Millican and Hugh Pierce. He explained that the committee had devoted considerable time and thought to studying and discussing the 100 plus page PAS survey which included more than 100 recommendations whose complete implementation would cost several hundred million dollars. In addition to the slice in the number of city departments, other government study committee recommendations being put into effect include such items as: 1, a resolution to investigate the use of city owned houses and vehicles; 2, increase the authority of the city purchasing department; 3, put city parking tickets on a computer system (which is expected to increase revenue by some \$300,000 a year); 4, reorganize the police internal security division; 5, eliminate apartments for city prison personnel; 6, review the business license system; 7, amend the city charter to revise method of promotions and hirings in city departments; 8, prepare a report on mechanical changes required to develop a city department of administration; 9, improve coordination among departments on annual reports.

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT, AS RECOMMENDED BY STUDY, FAVORED BY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Discussing the development of a central city department of administration,

as recommended by the PAS survey, Government Study Committee Chairman Massell expressed strong endorsement of such action. Said he -- "The most important recommendation made by the PAS survey is for the creation of a department of administration. Our staff has prepared a study of how this could be done. With a department of administration in being, this committee of ours would not be needed. The department of administration could implement the PAS recommendations. It also could coordinate the administrative functions of the city government." As the discussion with our committee members continued, Mr. Massell made the point that the city charter was not exact in defining the powers of the mayor and the powers of the aldermanic board. Said he -- "Members of the board of aldermen enjoy directing items of administration that come to their attention. The general situation is that if the aldermanic committee chairman is a stronger individual than the city department head, he more or less runs the department and vice versa. Minutes of all department meetings are open to the public. Sometimes it would be embarrassing if they were read and disclosed how much time had been spent on minor details, such as the type of decorations for band stands."

PROSPECTS ARE NOT SEEN AS BRIGHT FOR NEW DEPARTMENT IN NEAR FUTURE

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Massell expressed the opinion

that the creation of a department of administration would not take place soon. Explained he: "For the department to be effective, it must have power to act. This power would have to come from the Board of Aldermen. It does not appear likely that the Board would relinquish such powers to the new department. So far our full committee has not recommended creation of a department of administration."

"I think that a department of administration would make for a better city government, but the feeling is that we now have a good city and a good city government. Unless a crisis should occur, it is not likely that the board would turn over its powers to a department of administration. Also, by reducing the number of departments, the need for coordination also is reduced."

In further Q & A session, Mr. Massell pointed out that since the mayor has the power to appoint all committee members and committee chairmen, along with the power to veto aldermanic action, the present authority of Atlanta's mayor is not so weak as sometimes portrayed. Asked Mr. Massell -- "How much power should a mayor or a board of aldermen have? That is a hard question to answer definitely because no two cities in the United States have the same powers vested in the mayor and board of aldermen or council." In response to a question from Executive Committeeman Hearle, Mr. Massell expressed the opinion that eventually an administration department will be created, as the city's growth demands more time of aldermen. Noting that the city hall was closed on April 26 (in celebration of Confederate Memorial Day), commented Mr. Massell -- "The thought has occurred to me that we should stop closing city hall on this date when nearly all other city halls are open."

**METRO GOVERNMENT, CITY MANAGER IDEAS
ALSO RAISED IN LIVELY DISCUSSION**

The possibility of Atlanta eventually combining with Fulton County in a metro

government and the potential of adoption of a city manager plan were points also raised in the lively discussion which followed Mr. Massell's opening remarks. In reply to a question, Mr. Massell said that we have good people in the city and county governments and accordingly could make a good combination of the two governments. Alderman John Flanigen, a member of the government study committee, joined in to say that he felt that such a merger could not be effected so long as part of Atlanta is in DeKalb county. He added that he thought eventually there would be some form of consolidation. With regard to the possible creation of a Department of Administration, Alderman Flanigen raised the question of how the head of such a department would be chosen. He pointed out that this was as important as determining where the department head's responsibility would lie. In response to a question from AHA Redevelopment Director Les Persells as to the estimated "several hundred million dollars" cost to implement the PAS recommendations, Mr. Massell pointed out that the proposed pension system revisions alone would cost at least \$100 million. Asked about the present status of the Government Study Committee, Mr. Massell smiled and said, "It has just about gone to sleep. It has no meetings scheduled." He explained that it was still in active existence. Commenting on Mr. Massell's remarks in general, said our Chairman Robert L. Sommerville -- "I would regard what Mr. Massell has said as very solid. I am not one of those who believe that we always must have something entirely new, costing a lot, all neon lighted and chromium plated".

**NEIGHBORHOOD WISH FOR URBAN RENEWAL
NOW REGARDED ESSENTIAL, COOK EXPLAINS**

In the designation of future urban renewal projects, the desire of the neighborhood for

such treatment will be given primary consideration, Rodney Cook, chairman of the aldermanic planning and development committee told our full committee meeting April 26.

"This is a change of policy", he explained, "In the past we have undertaken urban renewal as a physical tool. Now we feel that the people in a neighborhood must desire and ask for urban renewal. In the past there has been a major problem in that people have not been included in the planning. We have started to change this in the Bedford-Pine project. West End has gone all the way in this respect. Now in Vine City and other areas, we are in the process of setting up meetings and discussion groups. If the neighborhoods want urban renewal, they must ask for it and then participate with the city in planning the projects."

FED BOARD, COLLEGE GROUPS TOUR GUESTS

During April our committee was host for two urban renewal

tours. On April 13, more than 60 members of the Federal Executive Board were our guests. On April 20, the Georgia State College Women's Club combined with Dr. Robert E. Garren's Urban Complex class to fill a bus. Mrs. Margret Ross, Jim Henley and Tom Kresbach of AHA served as guides with Director Howland.

MERGING OF TWO PROJECTS VIEWED
AS WAY TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY HOUSING

The biggest problem in all urban renewal projects is the relocation of the people already

living in these areas, Alderman Cook reported to our full committee as he explained that Vine City and East Atlanta are being considered as next in line. "The rehousing of people should be in the same area that is being cleared", he continued, "therefore, temporary housing must be provided before demolition takes place. This can serve until permanent housing can be constructed later. With that in mind, the thinking now is that the Buttermilk Bottoms and Bedford-Pine projects should be combined to provide ample space for temporary housing. Another possibility is to have vacancies in public housing adjacent to urban renewal projects." Mr. Cook also mentioned the redevelopment of a project by stages as a method to allow for temporary relocation of displaced persons. He also stressed the importance of greater utilization of public housing resources.

MORE MARKETABILITY EVIDENCE SEEN
AS VITAL TO DECISION ON PROJECTS

In talking of Atlanta's future program, Mr. Cook emphasized the importance of having ade-

quate evidence on marketability of the land to be cleared for any project. Also in mind, he said, is the thought of sale of land prior to its acquisition for clearance. He pointed out, by way of illustrating the need for land marketability evidence, that four excellent proposals for Rockdale were now being studied. Returning to projects in execution, Mr. Cook explained that Lee Street School is presenting a problem in West End. The location of the present school is in the middle of the proposed shopping center as set out in the redevelopment plan. Since the present school cannot be demolished until a replacement is built, a delay of a year or more is indicated. A possible solution is to begin developing the section of the shopping center farthest away from the school site and proceed by stages. Mr. Cook also stressed the point that increasing weight is being placed on good design in the criteria for redevelopment. Speaking of the area for which Atlanta is seeking a model neighborhood planning grant, Mr. Cook asked that our committee give thought to how housing code enforcement could be best handled during the interim period.

NEW ASST. REGIONAL UR ADMINISTRATOR
IS HONOR GUEST AT APRIL 26 MEETING

An honor guest at our full committee meeting was John T. Edmunds, who takes office May 7

as assistant regional administrator for renewal assistance in the Atlanta HUD headquarters. A native of Hopkinsville, Ky., and a graduate of Vanderbilt University and Yale Law School, Mr. Edmunds has been serving as acting assistant regional administrator since the retirement of R. Bruce Wedge December 31, 1966. For the previous 11 years he has been in the regional office and has become thoroughly familiar with urban renewal in his role as a chief attorney on urban renewal matters.

OUR COMMITTEE PARTICIPATES
IN ROCKDALE PROPOSALS HEARINGS

At the request of Lester H. Persells, Atlanta Housing Authority redevelopment

director, our committee took an active part in surveying the four proposals submitted for the redevelopment of Rockdale urban renewal project. Chairman Sommerville appointed a special subcommittee, consisting of T. M. Alexander, Sr., Chairman, A. B. Padgett and Mrs. Grace Hamilton to study the written proposals and to listen to the verbal presentations by the would-be developers at two four-hour hearings April 11 and 13. Chairman Sommerville and Director Howland also attended the hearings. Our subcommittee then made its comments for the recommendations which are now under final consideration.

MASSELL TALK SPARKS EDITORIAL

The day after Vice Mayor Massell addressed our

committee, the Atlanta Journal had a lead editorial on his remarks. Said it in part: "Sam Massell, the fireball vice-mayor who seems to be everywhere at once, has spoken up about the Government Study Committee of the aldermanic board. Mr. Massell says the committee 'has just about gone to sleep'. Somebody should nudge the committee awake. The aldermen may be sleepy, but the problems of running the city of Atlanta are as awake as a bright new day."

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MAY 24 -- DETAILS LATER