

File

THE IRENEWEIR

NEWSLETTER OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FOR URBAN RENEWAL

Vol. 5 No. 7

Atlanta, Georgia

July 1967

DEARTH OF LAND ZONED FOR APARTMENTS BIGGEST HOUSING HEADACHE, ALEXANDER TELLS COMMITTEE

By comparison with what is required for Atlanta's five year housing endeavor,

only a minuscule quantity of land zoned for apartments is available, Cecil Alexander, housing resources committee chairman, reported to our executive committee July 19. Said Mr. Alexander: "Vacant land now zoned for apartments totals 482 acres, but of this total 125 acres is committed for low income housing and 122 acres has been turned down as unsuitable. Another 31 acres have been planned for other purposes. That leaves 204 acres, but usually only one-third of the acreage turns out to be suitable, so that means only 68 acres are available for the housing program. It is estimated that a total of 1,565 acres are actually needed, so with only 68 acres available, it makes a bleak picture." Mr. Alexander also pointed out that while most Atlantans regard Five Points as the center of the city, that is not geographically accurate. He added that only 18 of the available 68 acres are located east of Five Points. He stressed the point that housing needs reach out beyond the city limits to present a truly metro area problem. Said he: "The acreage of open land is much larger in the west and northwest sections of the city. When you try to go east you run up against DeKalb County, which has no workable program. Housing is now a metropolitan problem. To be realistic, we are going to need something like 4,500 acres zoned for apartments. We must come up with an over all plan to distribute this as widely as possible."

HOUSING PICTURE NOT ALL GLOOMY, TOTAL OF FIRM AND PROBABLE COMMITMENTS SHOWS

By contrast with the bleakness of the available land picture,

Mr. Alexander reported encouraging figures in firm and probable commitments for housing units. He listed 5,244 as firm, 2,965 as probable. The combined total of 8,209 comes to almost half the five year goal of 16,800. In addition, 8,000 units are being considered, with 2,830 more regarded as doubtful. The grand total of more than 19,000 represents about 95 per cent of what is in sight at present, Mr. Alexander estimated. Summed up the speaker: "We must have a realistic determination to build housing in quantity to develop a market for it. We need a new zoning ordinance quickly or developers and non-profit groups will become discouraged and go to other cities." Mr. Alexander also called the committee's attention to a new departure in housing being carried out by National Homes in the Thomasville project area where some modification of code regulations is being tried. He cited this experiment, after pointing out that code enforcement can cause hardships to home owners outside urban renewal projects. Such owners cannot obtain the low interest loans for rehabilitation which are available inside urban renewal areas.

Following Mr. Alexander's talk, Executive Committeeman Edgar Schukraft pointed to the example of Minneapolis as having built housing throughout the city. Said he: "Negroes and poor people should not be shoved off in one direction. We must look ten years ahead. Atlanta is supposed to be a new city, but it will be a city without understanding unless all of us realize that Negroes and poor people are the entire city's responsibility." Executive Committeeman John Wilson made the point that an overall plan is essential. Alderman John Flanigen, chairman of the aldermanic zoning committee, expressed hearty support of Mr. Alexander's call for an updated zoning ordinance. Said he, "In connection with what Mr. Alexander has said, the first thing I said to Mayor Allen was that we need a new zoning ordinance. I don't want to hire an outside group of consultants. I'd like to see a committee of local men study the zoning ordinance and revise it." Then speaking of the scarcity of land in the eastern section of the city, Mr. Flanigen said the situation there was almost as critical as it has been in Buttermilk Bottoms, with regard to relocation of people in new housing. Said he: "There just isn't any vacant land where housing can be put to take care of people who must be relocated." Commenting on Mr. Flanigen's remarks, said Chairman Sommerville: "From what Alderman Flanigen has said, it is indicated that this committee or its successor will have to be in business for a long time."

PORTABLE HOUSING ON TEMPORARY BASIS
IS SEEN AS NEW RELOCATION EXPERIMENT

The Atlanta Housing
Authority is asking
federal approval of a

plan to provide portable housing for temporary relocation use, Lester H. Persells, AHA redevelopment director, explained to our executive committee. Said he: "We have some reason to believe that the federal government will go along with our plan to put portable housing on vacant land on a temporary basis. For example, 100 to 150 families could be relocated in this kind of housing for a year or a year and a half while permanent housing is being constructed. This is an experimental approach and could be used in the Bedford-Pine area." Commenting on Mr. Persells' remarks, Chairman Sommerville said our committee was keenly interested in such use of portable housing and would like to be kept fully informed of any further developments.

FOUR GEORGIANS BEGIN YEAR'S TRAINING
AS U. R. INTERNS FOR HOUSING AUTHORITY

Special guests at the
July 19 meeting were
four young men who are

beginning a year's training in urban renewal as interns with the Atlanta Housing Authority. At the end of their course of paid training, they may become staff members or go to positions elsewhere. All four are Georgians. Following are brief biographies: JAMES P. BING, born in Waycross, graduated from Center High School here, then majored in Social Science at Morris Brown College, from which he was graduated last May 31; DARRYL R. CHANEY, Atlanta born, after being graduated from Hapeville High School, attended West Georgia College, then transferred to Georgia State College, from which he will receive his BBA August 17; CURTIS PARRISH, born in Waycross, a graduate of Center High School, then attended Morris Brown College, after completing his undergraduate work there, worked a year as social teacher and football coach at Drexel Catholic High School, Atlanta; SHELLEY B. STANLEY, born in Dublin, after graduation from Mathar Academy, Camden, S. C., attended Daniel Payne College in Birmingham, Ala. two years and then finished his college education at Paul Quinn College in Waco, Texas, from which he received a B. S. in Social Science.

NEW LAND PLAN INCLUDES DATA TO MEET
NEEDS UNTIL 1983, PLANNER GLADIN EXPLAINS

Updated from the original
1958 version, the city's
land use plan now pro-

vides information for projections up to 1983, Collier Gladin, city planning engineer, explained to the executive committee July 19. He pointed out that the land use plan is part of the city's comprehensive plan, which also embraces thoroughfares, community facilities and public improvements. Said he: "Under the 1962 federal highway act, the governments of the metro area and the City of Atlanta must come up with a thoroughfare plan for the five county area. This plan has to be approved by the Federal Bureau of Public Roads before highway funds can be released." He showed that with data furnished by the land use and thoroughfare plans projections can be made on population, growth, housing needs and many other points up until the year 1983, when the Atlanta Metro area is scheduled to have 2,000,000 population. Mr. Gladin illustrated his explanatory talk with slides of maps showing residential, business and industrial uses and also showing improvement treatment. He pointed out that the CIP had provided data on vacant land and other land that is not fully in use. Mr. Gladin further explained that the land use plan has been reviewed by the Board of Aldermen and the aldermanic planning and development committee. As the plan progresses, it will continue to be reviewed. In answer to a question from Executive Committee Member Grace Hamilton, Mr. Gladin said that final approval was up to the aldermanic board. In a discussion following Mr. Gladin's remarks, Executive Committee Member Rich inquired what would be done with the plan. Chairman Sommerville replied that the plan's future depended upon a political decision. Executive Committee Member T. M. Alexander, Sr., emphasized that coordination among city departments will be a major factor in putting the plan to use.

HALF YEAR SHOWS BOOM IN RENEWAL TOURS
COLLEGE TEACHERS HAIL EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Figures compiled by the
Atlanta Housing Authority,
disclose that 764 persons

participated in our urban renewal tours so far in 1967 as compared with 850 for all of 1967, Chairman Sommerville informed the executive committee. Said he: "The tours have exposed a lot of people to both the good and the bad and have proved very worthwhile. They also cause a financial problem for the committee."

Mr. Sommerville explained that our committee's policy is to finance tours only for groups or organizations that do not have resources for such purposes. Executive Director Howland expressed our committee's thanks to Mrs. Margret Ross and her associates at the Atlanta Housing Authority for helping to conduct the tours. Illustrating the value of such first hand exposure to urban renewal, Mr. Sommerville read a letter from Dr. Beate Bandy of the Georgia State College faculty which thanked us for arranging a tour July 13 for two of her classes. Wrote Dr. Bandy:

"Since you took us on the tour of the Atlanta Urban Renewal Areas we have had two very lively class sessions. Most of my students know social problems of this magnitude only from books; a realistic demonstration like this can make the points better than any combination of classroom instruction and reading. I want you to know how much my students and I appreciate the time and effort you spent on us, and also, that this time and effort is put to very good use."

Warm appreciation of a tour conducted June 22 for teachers of disadvantaged youth attending a NDEA institute at Emory University also was expressed by Dr. Dora Helen Skypek, institute director. Wrote Dr. Skypek,

"The tour was the highlight of the first week of our program. It was enlightening and enjoyable not only for the 18 teachers from New York, Detroit, Denver, Seattle, Spokane, Milwaukee and urban areas in California, Illinois and the Southeast, but also for the 19 teachers and staff members who live in Atlanta. Some preconceptions were shattered and limited information had to be revised. Emphasis on the rehabilitation aspect of urban renewal was a worthy prelude to our required reading of H. Gans' 'The Urban Villagers' and related sociological readings."

EX-SENATOR DOUGLAS AND HIS COMMISSION
ARE SHOWN HIGHLIGHTS OF ATLANTA RENEWAL

At the request of the
National Commission on
Urban Problems, a

special tour of Atlanta urban renewal projects and the model city target area was arranged by our committee July 20. Headed by Chairman Paul Douglas, former U. S. Senator from Illinois, the commission members who were in Atlanta for hearings July 21, viewed Buttermilk Bottoms, Bedford-Pine, Butler Street, model city, part of West End and University Center areas. High point of the tour was a stop at the Antoine Graves housing for the elderly. Commission members visited a number of apartments and expressed themselves as much impressed by what they saw. Tour conductors were Director Howland and Mrs. Margret Ross, Atlanta Housing Authority information officer. At the hearing next day, Director Howland made a brief appearance as a witness to tell how our committee had helped obtain active citizen participation and thereby obtained a cooperative attitude in Bedford-Pine planning. Mr. Howland also expressed our committee's endorsement of the Housing Authority's plan to try temporary housing as an experiment to relocate people while new permanent housing is under construction.

CHAIRMAN ACCLAIMS SELECTION OF CELOTEX
AS "SPLENDID PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BLENDING"

On behalf of our
committee, Chairman
Sommerville July 6

expressed congratulations to the Celotex Corporation upon being selected as developer of 208 units of housing in the University Center project. Chairman Sommerville spoke at the contract signing July 6. Also representing our committee were T. M. Alexander, Sr., chairman of our special subcommittee to review redevelopment proposals, and Director Howland. Said Mr. Sommerville: "This is a splendid indication of the blending of private enterprise and public service. The quality of this proposal assures us that we will not be building a future slum. I heartily congratulate the Celotex Corporation and welcome it to this first venture in the field of low and moderate income housing. What has impressed me about all the development proposals is their excellence. Representing Mayor Allen was Dan E. Sweat, Jr., director of governmental liaison for the city. Saying he personally was "excited and pleased with the selection", Mr. Sweat read a statement from Mayor Allen. "I warmly congratulate the Celotex Corporation", stated Mayor Allen. "This marks an important new step toward meeting Atlanta's housing needs in that one of the largest building materials manufacturers is entering this field for the first time. In so doing, Celotex is demonstrating a very high sense of public responsibility. I would also like to express my appreciation of the excellence of all seven proposals submitted."

THE NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE IN SEPTEMBER-NONE IN AUGUST