

Mayor Ivan Allen Jr

# THE RENEWER

NEWSLETTER OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FOR URBAN RENEWAL

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Happy New Year

## OPENSHAW CALLS FOR CONCERTED ACTION TO HALT BLIGHT AS HE GIVES REPORT ON YEAR OF URBAN RENEWAL GAINS

Delivering an inspiring report of notable progress in urban renewal during 1967 to our Dec. 19 full committee meeting, Howard Openshaw, Atlanta Housing Authority redevelopment director, also sounded a call for private enterprise, churches, labor organizations and civic groups to join with public efforts in a concerted endeavor to turn back the spread of blight. Summed up Mr. Openshaw: "Too many people look to a single tool to solve all the problems of the city. For example, urban renewal was not designed to speak to the problems of unemployment, lack of education, crime, and other social diseases. Too long have we looked to public programs alone to solve our problems. Churches, civic organizations, labor unions, industry - private enterprise must become involved if we are to succeed in our endeavors."

In addition to citing the gains achieved by Atlanta's urban renewal program during 1967, Mr. Openshaw also reviewed the exciting outlook for 1968. The text of his report follows: **SLUMS AND BLIGHT ARE GROWING** - "Atlanta, like every major city across our land, has awakened to find itself sitting on a potential powder keg. Countless ages of neglect and apathy has resulted in an accumulation of urban blight and decay. People are rebelling against their environment, and we see the resulting strife and turmoil in Milwaukee and Detroit. To make matters worse the slums and blighted areas are growing, not shrinking. In the last 5 years, Atlanta has increased its number of dwelling units by 9,141. During this period, the number of dilapidated structures were reduced from 12,000 to 3,000. However, the number of substandard units increased from 22,800 to 49,300.

"The City's population increase is projected at an annual rate of 2%, with the negro population increasing by 62% and the white population by 4%. Those who can afford it are moving to the suburbs. The City's financial resources are limited, there is no help from the State, and the demand for Federal funds is three times the available supply. We simply do not have adequate resources to cope with all of our problems."

**MUST USE EVERY AVAILABLE RESOURCE** - "The time for action is upon us. We must use every available resource, every tool to make our cities more livable, to enrich the quality of men's lives, and to make every citizen a productive member of Society. We must eliminate our slums, yes. But also, we must halt the spread of blight. Urban renewal is the tool that can allow us to have a slumless city. An effective program of code enforcement is essential to preserve our neighborhoods and to halt the spread of blight. A top priority in the city is to provide housing for low and moderate income families. The mayor has set a goal of 16,800 units to be constructed in the next five years. But even here, we are finding it difficult to find suitable, reasonably priced land for low-cost housing."

**PAST TWELVE MONTHS SHOW PROGRESS IN ALL PHASES OF RENEWAL PROGRAMS** - "In 8-1/2 years, Atlanta's urban renewal program has made giant strides in redeveloping its blighted areas.

"From the period December 1, 1966 to December 1, 1967, the Atlanta Housing Authority has acquired 538 parcels of land at a cost of \$4.7 million. The Authority relocated 576 families from urban renewal areas, and provided housing assistance to 687 additional families relocated as a result of other governmental action. During the past twelve months, the Authority demolished 477 structures comprising 766 dwelling units, and completed rehabilitation of 201 dwelling units. The Authority sold 97 parcels of land for \$886,722 and put under contract for sale an additional 60 parcels of land having a value of \$2 million. Construction was begun on improvements totaling \$2.1 million. These improvements include 106 apartment units in the Butler Street Project, and 38 single family units in Thomasville. Improvements totaling \$4.8 million were completed in the past 12 months, including office buildings for the U. S. Rubber Company, Ford Motor Company, Avis Rent-A-Car, and Cousins Properties. Construction was started on 240 dwelling units and an additional 41 dwelling units completed during the period."

NINE PROJECT AMENDMENTS APPROVED - "Amendments were submitted and Federal approval received on the following urban renewal projects: Butler Street, to provide a second high-rise for the elderly adjacent to Graves Homes on Hilliard Street, and land expansion for Ebenezer Baptist Church; Rockdale, to provide for changes in land use and street pattern; Thomasville, to provide public housing north of McDonough Road; Georgia State, to add the block north of the police station to the project area; Georgia Tech, to include an additional \$737,810 as Section 112 credits toward the City's share of project cost; Buttermilk Bottoms, received Federal approval of Part I of the Application for Loan and Grant; Bedford-Pine, to combine the Buttermilk Bottoms project with Bedford-Pine; Bedford-Pine Letter of Consent, to permit acquisition of additional street right-of-way for the Auditorium; Bedford-Pine draft Part I Application for Loan and Grant. Amendments were submitted on the following urban renewal projects for which Federal approval has not yet been received: Rawson-Washington, to extend project boundary to provide land for school expansion, park, and neighborhood center; Bedford-Pine Early Land Acquisition Loan, to provide a site for public housing, and to make available rehabilitation loans and grants for properties along Boulevard."

COMPETITION SPURS SUPERIOR PROPOSALS - "A significant achievement of the renewal program was the development competitions for land in Rockdale, Rawson-Washington and University Center Projects. A fixed price was established on the land, and redevelopers proposals were restricted to residential development under Section 221 d 3. The Atlanta Housing Authority staff, the City Planning Department, the American Institute of Architects, American Society of Landscape Architects, the Citizens Advisory Committee for Urban Renewal, the Housing Resources Committee, the State Planning Bureau, the Urban Renewal Policy Committee and the Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners reviewed four redevelopers proposals in Rockdale, seven proposals in University Center, and six proposals in Rawson-Washington. The fixed land price, development competition approach not only resulted in superior proposals from redevelopers, but assured maximum livability for families of low and moderate incomes. The Authority, with assistance from CACUR, conducted 1,271 people on tours of Atlanta's urban renewal and public housing programs."

MODEL CITY, BEDFORD-PINE EXECUTION TOP EXCITING OUTLOOK FOR NEW YEAR - "Exciting things and a lot of hard work lie ahead for 1968. The City, in cooperation with other agencies and residents of the area, will begin planning the model city area. The urban renewal and public housing programs will be involved in the total attack on the social and physical blight of the 3,000 acres of land extending from West End to the other side of Grant Park. The Bedford-Pine Urban Renewal Area will enter execution. The Authority will provide temporary relocation housing for those families living in the initial clearance area. Staging the execution activities will minimize the number of families displaced. Construction will be started on improvements costing \$26.2 million on urban renewal land in 1968. These improvements include 1,468 dwelling units, the Ira Hardin Office Building, stadium motel, and the International House in University Center."

"The ninety-five areas of land on McDonough Road recently made available to the City by the Federal Government will be added to the Thomasville Project, and plans will proceed immediately to provide land for public housing, townhouses, single-family development, and an elementary and middle-high school. We must continue our commitment to eliminate slums wherever they occur, and to halt the spread of blight. We must provide decent housing for all our people, with special emphasis on low and moderate income families. But we must do more than this. We must become more sensitive to the physical design and development of our City. For, unless Atlanta is to become a haven for the homeless and the poor, we must create an environment to attract people of every economic level of life as together we seek to make Atlanta the great city it is destined to become."

HUD'S STRAUB CONGRATULATES ATLANTA  
ON PIONEERING MODEL CITY CONVENTION

Thanking Mr. Openshaw for his pertinent and perceptive report, Chairman Sommerville emphasized

the importance of the model city program and called on Charles N. Straub, Federal Agency Liaison Specialist, from HUD, to bring our committee abreast of developments in this new city-federal cooperative endeavor. Explaining that Atlanta was one of only nine southeastern cities and 63 in the nation to receive conditional approval, Mr. Straub pointed out that final disposition of the planning grants reserved, depended upon the cities presenting acceptable work programs to HUD. Such plans are expected within 45 days. He specified that HUD had requested Atlanta to outline a five year program with a specific work plan for the first year. He pointed out that Atlanta's plans would have to be revised because the city's request for \$500,000 as a planning grant was cut to \$152,000. In discussing this reduction, Mr. Straub mentioned that Atlanta had received an additional \$100,000 from EDA, but only \$18,000 of this would apply directly to studies in the model city area. Then Mr. Straub congratulated Atlanta warmly on innovating the plan of holding a convention open to all residents of the model city area. This convention, held at Hoke Smith Technical High School Sunday afternoon, Dec. 10, is regarded as a new departure in citizen participation, Mr. Straub stressed. Said he "No city has really thrown the model city program open as Atlanta did with this convention. The city also is to be congratulated on accepting what the people asked for." (NOTE- This refers to action by the Aldermanic Board Dec. 18 approving the request made at the convention for a representative from each of the six neighborhoods involved on the governing board of the model city program)

In a following discussion, Mrs. S. F. Crank pointed out that EOA was a prime mover in organizing the convention. Mrs. Grace Hamilton also expressed congratulations to the Aldermanic Board in accepting the recommendations made by the convention. (NOTE- Among others representing our committee at the convention was Director Howland.)

ACTION BEGINS TO LOCATE 221 H HOUSES;  
TWO LISTS OF SUGGESTED DWELLINGS GIVEN

Action is under way to locate houses for suitable rehabilitation by our nonprofit corporation,

CACURRCI under the 221 H program, the full committee meeting was informed. Executive committeewoman Hamilton reported that with Walter Screws of the Atlanta Housing Authority, and Director Howland, she inspected a number of dwellings in and near the University Center project on December 14. She stressed the point that if such houses could be found in this area, their rehabilitation would improve the project's public image. Mr. Screws added that all houses seen were single family occupied. In reply to a question from Executive committeeman Percy Hearle, Chairman Sommerville said 19 houses had been located east of Glen Iris and north of Hunter Street. A guessestimate would be that the houses would range in value from \$4,500 to \$8,000 and that rehabilitation would cost from \$2,000 to \$4,000. Executive committeeman Harold Arnold also suggested some houses on Morgan Street and Boulevard Place. He pointed out that also considered had been the area Mrs. Hamilton inspected, the area adjacent to the Nash-Banns section, the South Atlanta region beyond the model cities area and the area east of Bedford-Pine. In support of the Boulevard Place - Morgan Street location, Mr. Arnold pointed out that it had experienced racial unrest and that location of the 221 H project there, would indicate interest in solving its problems. In the following discussion, Mrs. Hamilton urged that the Atlanta Housing Authority keep a coordinated list of properties screened. Chairman Sommerville pointed out that such lists would be available from the city Building Department and the Housing Authority.