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10:00 a.m.

CITY OF ATLANTA



DEPARTMENT of PARKS

Office of General Manager

Atlanta, Georgia 30303

October 30, 1967



JACK C. DELIUS
GENERAL MANAGER

Mr. Collier B. Gladin, Director
Department of Planning
City of Atlanta
City Hall
Atlanta, Georgia

SUBJECT: Neighborhood Study for Northwest - Browntown Area

Dear Collier:

My staff and I have read with interest the preliminary study of community problems in the Northwest-Browntown Area of Atlanta. Having been asked to comment on the contents of this report, our observations regarding the problems, needs, and recommendations included in the report are set forth in this letter.

To begin with, we would like to comment on the several references to Gun Club Park. Early in the report it is stated that Perry Homes has virtually no City recreational facilities and programs and very limited access to those in other areas (Page 5). While the large Gun Club Park will serve as a community park for the entire study area, it was acquired primarily to serve the residents of Perry Homes and is located immediately adjacent to the Perry Homes Project. Further, the report makes several references to Gun Club Park being an inadequate and poorly developed park (Pages 5, 6, 10 & 11). The report states that what has been built shows little appreciation for the preferences of the local residents, that plans should be drawn up in such a manner that the local residents can have a voice in selecting the types of facilities to be erected in the park (Pages 6 & 12). Before construction began on any of the development of this park, a master plan, which included nearly every facility you would find in a community park as well as a recreation building and swimming pool, was completed. The master plan for Gun Club was discussed on two occasions with Perry Homes citizens and other area residents. (This is the procedure followed prior to development of any new park.) The Perry Homes citizens asked for and endorsed tennis courts. The park will

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include many facilities such as basketball-multi-use courts (included in the present phase of construction now under way) which have not yet been built. For financial reasons, we must develop all new parks in stages over a period of years. In most cases, the first phase of development includes few facilities above ground that can be seen. Most of the money goes into preparation of the site, utilities, sewers, and underground storm drainage during the first phase of construction. The first phase of construction of Gun Club began on April 11, 1966, and was concluded in February 1967. This phase cost \$83,456.00 and included the following items:

1. Clearing and grubbing
2. Rough grading - West area
3. Utilities - water - sewers - lighting
4. Drive and parking
5. Sidewalks
6. Two tennis courts
7. Playgrounds
8. Fencing and retaining walls
9. Restrooms
10. Storage buildings
11. Concrete benches
12. Landscaping - trees and shrubs
13. Finished grading and grassing.

On August 4, 1967, construction began on phase two of development, estimated to cost \$52,206.00, which includes the following items:

- A. In the South portion of the park
 1. The remaining portion of the parking lot
 2. The addition of landscaping
 3. The multi-use court area
 4. The play hill and related play area
 5. The erection of playground equipment and structures
- B. In the North portion of the park
 1. The day camping areas and related parking
 2. The grading and establishment of an athletic field with two baseball diamonds and a football field
 3. Entrance drive and parking

Phase two development, while scheduled for completion in December, 1967, is running behind schedule due to technical problems but should be completed in early 1968.

This department recently received a windfall of \$350,000.00 from the State to purchase park land and for capital improvements in existing parks. On July 26, 1967, the Aldermanic Parks Committee approved the allocation of \$75,000.00 (the largest single allocation to any one park) for further development of Gun Club Park. Our original plans were to attempt to secure matching funds from the Federal Government and, if successful, build a major size swimming pool and bathhouse estimated to cost \$150,000.00. In the meantime, however, a study group has been organized to prepare a park and recreation survey and plan for the entire city with projected needs

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according to population trends, etc. through 1985. This comprehensive study is a joint effort of the Community Council, E.O.A., the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Planning Department. Staff personnel from each of these agencies are devoting considerable time to this project, which should be completed in late December, 1967. We have asked this group to study the Northwest area first and attempt to determine from the area residents their preference regarding the swimming pool or a community building. It should be emphasized that we only have \$75,000.00 allocated and our regular community buildings, which do not include a gym and would not be adequate for the population, have been costing approximately \$85,000.00. Federal assistance is not available for the construction of a recreation building as such. In order to qualify for Federal assistance, a building would have to be a complete neighborhood facility offering various services other than recreation. Further, it should be pointed out that the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation is the only Federal agency that approves grants for swimming pools; and, B.O.R. funds allocated to the State of Georgia being rather limited, we have no assurance of Federal assistance in the construction of a pool. We welcome and solicit comments from citizens' groups in the Northwest - Browntown area concerning their preferences.

In regard to Center Hill Park, only \$20,000.00 has been allocated; and, again, we shall attempt to secure matching Federal funds. Center Hill Park, being an older park, has no design plan. We intend to develop a master plan for this park, including the improvements you have mentioned in the report.

There are references throughout the study of the lack of recreational services in the public housing projects, to the insufficient distribution of recreation leadership, and to insufficient recreation leadership due to poor development of recreation facilities in general (Pages 5,6,10,11 & 12). This Department has realized for many years the need for recreation leadership in public housing projects and we have never been able to secure funds to pay salaries of recreation leaders in these projects. However, during the summers of 1966 and 1967 we were able to provide recreation leadership through our contract with E.O.A. in Perry Homes, Bowen Homes, and Gun Club Park. We have provided recreation leadership at Scott School for approximately thirty years. On a number of occasions, we have checked out other schools in the area only to find that none are designed for other agency use. Several years ago we attempted to provide recreation leadership at Whitaker School only to be asked to leave when the principal at Whitaker School objected to our staff being there and even secured petitions from area residents demanding we withdraw our program. In regard to poor facilities for recreation programs, a tremendous increase in appropriations to parks and recreation would be necessary before we could begin building and staffing needed recreation centers. The cost of staffing one recreation center properly would be a minimum of \$17,290.00 annually.

This study refers numerous times to lack of communication between citizens in the Northwest-Browntown area and the Parks Department. While communications have been less than perfect, we have on many occasions discussed Gun Club Park, playlots, recreation leadership, etc. with civic leaders, including one or more listed in the

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Mr. Gladin

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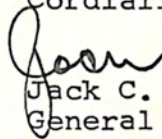
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Special Planning Committee, and with Mr. Arthur Smith, Housing Manager of Perry Homes. I believe I am correct in stating that no community in Atlanta has had more consultation regarding parks and recreation. Any suggestions for improving communications would be greatly appreciated.

We sincerely appreciate the efforts that have gone into the Northwest-Browntown area study and suggest that copies be sent to each member of the Parks Committee as well as the Park and Recreation Study Group.

Thanking you for the opportunity to comment on this report, I am

Cordially,



Jack C. Delius
General Manager of
Parks and Recreation

JCD:lg