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PRIMARY SOURCES FOR EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Urban Renewal, Vinegar Hill, Charlottesville Daily Progress Articles, 1960 (page 1 of 4)

Bank Presidents Support Redevelopment Program

The presidents of the three lo- posal and will vote for it nextcal banks have endorsed the proposed redevelopment and public housing program in a radio interview recorded for broadcast

W. Wright Harrison of the Peoples National Bank, Henry A. Haden of the National Bank and Trust Company, and William B. Trevillian of the Citizens Bank and Trust Company all recommend that the program be adopted.

The statements were made in answer to questions by Ray Niblack, news director of Station WINA.

"The future of our community is dependent upon the passage of this legislation," Harrison said. Haden said he favors the pro-

Tuesday, A referendum on rede- to move to Charlottesville, they town section." velopment and public housing will be held at the same time as Tuesday's City Council election.

Trevillian said he favors the program and urged support of it the city, perhaps to a shopping ping center, miles away, and thus 'to the fullest.'

Asked his opinion on the feeling of some downtown merchants that urban renewal of Vinegar Hill would draw competition that would be detrimental to merchants already in the downtown area, Harrison replied:

"I certainly disagree with this feeling.

"New business will come to the community as the buying power of the community increases. They won't come simply because a piece of land is available.

will either select a site in the downtown business area, or be

"If there is available good land town area," he said, within three of four blocks of the center of the downtown business area; they will go there. which will mean a further de. Voted down, Harrison said; velopment of our downtown area ping centers."

that the downtown area will have section. space to grow and that new busi- "This means further expansion

"When new businesses decide chants in building up the down-

"Certainly a merchant would rather have a competitor within four blocks than have that same forced to go to the outskirts of competitor move out to the shopdraw traffic away from the down-

> Asked his prediction of what would happen if urban renewal is

"I believe the effect would be rather than a further develop rather serious in that the present ment of the more remote shop. downtown area is limited as far as possible expansion is concerned. There is nowhere that new Harrison said this would give store buildings can be erected in downtown merchants "assurance what is considered the downtown

ness will join with present mer- would have to be at a more redowntown Charlottesville," said Harrison, "If we do not pass this and possibly in the long run result in a depreciation of the values of downtown real estate,"

Citation: "Bank Presidents Support Redevelopment Program," Charlottesville Daily Progress, June 9, 1960

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Asked what he thought the effect would be if the program were defeated. Haden said:

"I suppose we would be in the same position we have been in for the past 100 years as far as the business area of the town is concerned, and new business will continue to move to the suburhs."

Asked if he thought the program was important to the economic health of the community, Haden replied:

"Very important."

Trevillian said: "I certainly do favor the adoption of the urban reneval plan.

"Public housing and urban renews, for any city is essential if that city is to grow and prosper, Blighted areas are certainly to occur through age and growth and lack of repairs, and usually wind up in the very heart of the city itself.

"Improper housing bring to a locality disease, crime, structural fires, and juvenile delinquency. Bad housing is extremely costly—large sums are expended for fire and police protection, health and sanitary service, and administration—yet, they return very little in taxes. Its depreciating effect, and that of hindering logical growth, represents an intangible cost for greater than direct cost, as shown by Harland Bartholosmew and Associates in this report on the city's masterplan.

"All cities are faced with the problem of obsolescence which, if ignored, leads progressively to blight and slum conditions. We must eliminate this condition if it is present by encouraging the rehabilitation of good housing and provide protection and regulation to see that it is maintained.

"Congress years ago recognized the necessity of slum clearance in many of our growing cities, and realized that localities could not finance a project of such size. Due to this fact, they appropriated certain sums of money to be used for this specific purpose—cities that could qualify would be included in this program,

"Charlottesville has qualified, and the citizens have already paid their fair shares in establishing these funds — it is now our right to participate in the program without further cost. If we fail to take advantage of this — some of her cities will — and our only salvation is to do it ourselves. This we know cannot be done without raising taxes completely beyond our citizens' ability to pay.

"We must proceed — let's be sensible — let's vote for public housing and urban renewal to our fullest."

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EDITORIAL PAGE

The Daily Progress

June 13, 1960

Fact and Propaganda

An anonymous leaflet left on many Charlettesville doorsteps yesterday says the mayor's committee for public information on the rededelopment and housing program "turned out to be only another propaganda device to force you to accept federally financed housing." And for this reason, it goes on, "certain concerned citisens have banded together in an effort to see that the taxpayers are given the complete truth."

But the fact is that the mayor's committee includes leading opponents as well as supporters of the program. All of its decisions as to the information it published were by unanimous vote. And as all who have read its reports know, besides giving information about the program it presented arguments for it as well as against it.

Purthermore, regardless of any possible hortcomings in the committee's work, its members are known. They accept the responsibility for their work. And that is something that can't be said of the sponsors of yesterday's leaflet, whose identity can only be guessed at. Certainly the words of men who stand behind what they say are more to be trusted than those of men who speak anonymously.

So when it comes to a question of who is presenting facts and who is indulging in propaganda, it is the mayor's committee, composed of well known citizens representing both sides of the issue, that has by far the better claim to public confidence. The rightness of this conclusion is confirmed by a reading of the pamphlet prepared by the unidentified "concerned citisens." For in the main it is devoted not to a presentation of facts but to an attempt to breathe new life into the old bugaboo that public housing means racial integration.

Experience clearly proves that it means no such thing. It is true that federal law does not permit the enforcement of segregation in federally assisted public housing, such as is contemplated here. But neither does it require integration. And the fact is that not one of the scores of federally assisted public housing projects that have been built throughout the South under similar programs, including many that have been in operation for years, is racially integrated.

The only public housing to be provided if the Charlottesville program is approved in the refendum tomorrow will be for Negroes. It will be built at the south end of Ridge Street, in an rea already inhabited by Negroes. Under the aw, it may be supposed, some white family secting the requirements for residence in such project might in theory be in a position to bring a successful suit to compel its admission the project. But that is the only way the project could be "integrated." And honestly, now, who thinks that is likely to happen? For that matter, if it did happen how would it impair the ight of the rest of the people of this city to the acially separate housing accomodations to which they are accustomed?

Reasonable men can differ in their judgment s to the wisdom of this whole undertaking. There is a case against it as well as for it. This newspaper endorses it in the belief that the enefits to be expected from it far outweigh any possible disadvantages. The great benefit is that very large sum in federal money—really our money, collected from us in federal taxes-will e made available for the doing of a job of civic improvement that is very much in need of doing. It is every citizen's right to disagree with this conclusion. But we trust no one will permit himself to be frightened into disagreeing, and into asting an adverse vote in tomorrow's referendum, by the raising of this "integration" scarecrow. There is no basis for fear on that score. The public housing that is planned will be occupied solely by Negroes; it will be built in an area aready occupied by Negroes: it will be in the school district served by a school attended exclusively by Negroes.

One further point:

It is said that the redevelopment of Vinegar Hill could be accomplished by the city itself, without federal assistance and without providing public housing for the families that would be displaced. Perhaps so, although no way has yet been found to overcome some of the obstacles that would be encountered. But if it could be done at all, it could only be done at a cost to the taxpayers of this city vastly greater than the cost to them of the federally assisted program. And if it was nevertheless undertaken despite this great additional cost, what would become of the families that would be displaced? To what part of the city would they move?

Citation: "Fact and Propaganda," editorial, Charlottesville Daily Progress, June 13, 1960

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City Council Approves Vinegar Hill Project

City Council approved a specific! Questions from the floor were Negro families relocated from the plan for redevelopment of Vinegar from Lionel S. Key, who asked if Vinegar Hill area will go into pub-Hill yesterday and signed an agreement to contribute about \$400,000 in street construction and utility installations and in land.

The action was taken after a quiet public hearing on the Redevelopment and Housing Authority's application for a federal loan and grant from the Urban Renewal Administration.

Council then gave notice that at its July 18 meeting, it will consider the long-postponed minimum housing standards ordiwhich would permit condemnation of dwellings for health reasons and safety reasons broader than those currently permitted under the City Building Code, has been deferred because, until public housing was approved in the July 14 referendum, city officials felt persons whose dwellings were condemned would have no place

David J. Wood Jr., attorney for the Authority and its acting director, gave negative answers to the only two controversial questions that were asked at the public hearing. He said no special provision could be made to relocate Negro businesses in the redevelopment area, and that every effort would be made to avoid any controversial placement of displaced families when new homes are found for them outside the Vinegar Hill area.

In response to a letter from W. R. Bingler Jr. asking that surveys be made now and again five years after the area is redeveloped so the true economic effect of redevelopment could be determined, Council voted to have a survey made of gross income, taxes paid and similar data from businesses now located in the redevelopment area.

there would be any "block-busting" in relocation of Negro families whose homes will be demolished in redeveloping Vinegar Hill, and from Mrs. Arthur M. Smith, who asked if part of the redevelopment area could be set aside for Negro businesses displaced from their present quart- of property after Vinegar Hill ers during the project.

both questions.

handled by two full-time emnance. Action on this ordinance, ployes of the Authority, and that Street NW north of Inge's market, "every effort will be made to as this land will be less expensive avoid" controversial placements than that along Main Street and of families with whom this agency other principal streets, but that carries out its work. Most of the (See Redevelopment, Page 8)

lic housing units when they are completed, but some families will not qualify for public housing because their incomes are above the maximum set for eligibility.

Wood said the Authority is prohibited from discriminating on the grounds of race in disposing is redeveloped, and that this Wood gave negative answers to would prohibit restriction of any one section to Negro businesses. He said relocation would be He said Negro business is envisioned developing along Fourth

Redevelopment

(Continued From Page 1) none of the land can be sold at less than a reasonable cost.

Mrs. Smith had suggested some land be reserved especially for Negro businesses displaced from their present locations, and asked if arrangements could be made to assure those affected that sites would be available in the area after redevelopment.

Citation: "City Council Approves Vinegar Hill Project," (excerpt) Charlottesville Daily Progress, June 28, 1960