

COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

"TO LET THE NEIGHBORHOODS KNOW WHAT'S COMING DOWN BEFORE IT LANDS ON THEM"

Newsletter No. 10

December, 1976

Berkeley, Calif.

THE LINE FORMS ON THE LEFT...

Candidates, candidates, candidates galore. There have been no official selections, endorsements or declarations yet, so all is in a highly ambiguous state. But the following is what we hear:

The people being considered as BCA candidates are Ying Kelley, Margot Dashiell, Veronika Fukson, Buzz Wilms, Rich Illgen, Suzanne Campi, Gus Schultz, Sunday Sazawoman, Larry Duga, Mark Allen, Luis Macias, Phil Polakoff, Oshri Karmon, and Walter Edwards. We've also heard talk of a Draft Lee Halterman movement. The key question concerning the BCA slate is whether Kelley and Dashiell will agree to run.

Progressive Berkeley Neighbors does not plan to field a slate of their own, but they're particularly interested in Wilms, Illgen, Campi, and Fukson as "neighborhood-oriented" candidates.

There's lots of talk around about a "Henry Ramsey slate." It doesn't have Ramsey on it, but it does offer the names of Sue Hone, Carole Davis, Paul Mayer, and Gilda Feller.

Neighborhood Action for a Better Berkeley (the Dean group) is not meeting right now, but it has been oriented so far around Pat Devaney and Bob Holtzapple as possible candidates, with Stan Naparst and Barbara MacNabb as prominent participants and, thus,

That's 22 names so far, more than four months before the election. And the independents have yet to announce. There's also the chance that the old "Yes on O" group will field some anti-barrier candidates. Is anybody out there not running for City Council??

NEW REPORT ON UC'S TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING POLICIES

The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Transportation and Parking has put out its preliminary report.

This report states that "The campus driving population, either singly or in car pools, comes to campus in some 13,000 vehicles daily. About half of these are parked in University facilities, with some of the 5,300 spaces being occupied by more than one vehicle each day. Small numbers of people park in private or city off-street parking facilities, but the rest, at least 5,000 a day, park on the city streets surrounding the campus. ... At least a ten minute walk away from the campus boundaries is now required to find areas which begin to be free of University-related commuter parking."

Ironically, it seems that the Berkeley taxpayer upset about our traffic problems is compelled to subsidize the very traffic that encroaches on the quiet enjoyment of his home.

This 30-page UC report titled: Preliminary Report of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Transportation and Parking can be obtained by requesting it from Office of Vice-Chancellor Ted Chenoweth, 126 California Hall, UC Campus 94720.

WEST BERKELEY INDUSTRIAL PARK (WBIP)
LOSES \$582,623 in ASSESSED VALUATION

The WBIP was set up under California Redevelopment law. The goal of the project was to keep existing industries and attract new ones to provide Berkeley with jobs and an increased tax base. The method was to finance the purchase of land with tax increment bonds and then re-sell this land at 1/3 of its market value to the desired industrial users. This land bargain and a planned industrial park site were to be the inducements to attract and hold the desired industries, provide jobs and protect our tax base.

The bonds are paid off by mortgaging any increase in assessed value of the industrial park area for the sole purpose of paying off the bonds. When the WBIP was created the level of assessed valuation at that time was "frozen" and that year becomes the base year. Tax revenues generated from any increase in the assessed valuation after that base year are given to the BRA to pay off the costs incurred in developing the project. The principle applied is that any increase in the assessed value in the redevelopment area is due to the project. The amount of tax increment is calculated by applying the combined tax rate for all bodies levying taxes on property in the redevelopment area. In other words until all the bonds are paid off no other jurisdiction gets any increase in tax revenues generated by the park above the base year assessed value.

Things, however, aren't going quite as planned. This year we lost \$582,623 in assessed value because one of the major participants in the industrial park, the Kaiser Foundation, has applied for and obtained tax-exempt status for this much of their holdings. This will cost Berkeley the loss of \$91,000 in tax increments. Since this was money to be used to finance the repayment of tax allocation bonds our ability to refinance the \$2.6 million in debt due in Spring 1977 is seriously jeopardized.

The city staff is now checking to find out what further tax exemptions may be granted to Kaiser and other nonprofit agencies.

Berkeley already has much of its land in tax-exempt status and has had no difficulty in attracting or retaining tax-exempt uses. It does not seem to be very astute policy to mortgage our existing tax base to sell land at 1/3 of its market value to attract and hold still more tax exempt corporations.

Henry Pancoast

THE DOLLAR GAP:
WILL THE GTU LIBRARY BE BUILT?

The GTU Newsletter report on the GTU Board meeting of Oct. 27 indicates that the GTU has only raised \$2.5 million for the \$6.7 million library, leaving them with an urgent need to raise another \$4.2 million. GTU needs to break ground by May 28, 1977, or face the need to file for a new use permit from the city which would open up a whole new set of hearings, negotiations, etc. On the other hand, apparently half the GTU's member institutions are running on internal deficits at present and they fear taking part in any financing which might greatly increase their share of the GTU budget financing. There is apparently strong reluctance to take out a mortgage to go ahead with the project. The member institutions would like to have at least 75% of the funds in hand before going ahead.

Perhaps the Wilson House was demolished for naught and the site will sit vacant just as does the site where the Barker House was demolished so hurriedly.

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HOUSING ELEMENT HEARING
NPO DEMOLITION CONTROLS SET FOR DEMO

Pat Devaney, Chairman of the Housing Advisory and Appeals Board testified before the City Council that the demolition controls proposed in the DRAFT Housing Element were outrageously inadequate and would open the way for widespread demolition and perhaps the loss of more housing units than had been built in Berkeley in the last 5 years. In response to this objection the City Council has directed staff to make a count of abandoned and vacant buildings in Berkeley.

Having held the state required public hearing the City Council can now adopt the Housing Element at a regular Council meeting. The vote on the element will probably come early next year.

CURIOUS OCCURRENCES

The Summary of the Oct. 12 meeting reports that the City Council "supported the City-Manager's instructions to the Planning Department to complete the Needs Assessment no later than Mar. 1, 1977 and finish the Social Element as soon as possible thereafter". Why the need for Council action to underline a City-Manager directive to one of his department heads? And, while we're being curious, why was the Comprehensive Planning Department left out of the City Directory in the 1976 Berkeley Annual Report? (Do you think it's an omen, Tom?)

THE UBIQUITOUS OAKES:

YOUR GO-ANYWHERE/DO-ANYTHING ADMINISTRATOR

Roy E. Oakes, head of the Public Works Department and acting Assistant City-Manager, has now also become acting Director of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services. Gazette articles on Nov. 13 and Nov. 18 have also identified this Renaissance administrator as being head of the Planning Department and an Assistant City Attorney presenting an application to the U.S. Public Works Department for \$4.2 million in federal funds for dike repairs and for construction of senior citizen centers. Mr. Oakes has been called on to take on additional tough assignments in the past and has gotten the job done, but (if the Gazette is to be believed) this is a bit much. Let-Roy-Do-It is OK, but should we make Roy do everything?

H.P.

THE CITY COUNCIL: A LOOK AT THE BRIGHTER SIDE

The Council set up a working committee composed of members of more than one faction of the members and the committee successfully negotiated a swap of the North Berkeley BART Station air rights for the return of a portion of the Hearst Strip to the city of Berkeley. This is one of the best performances of the present City Council since the cohesion they showed during the Firefighters' strike. Perhaps in the future we can look forward to more such bi-partisan committees shouldering some of the workload of the City Council.

COUNCIL CONTINUED: THE SENIOR CENTERS

The City Council and staff have moved quite quickly to submit applications for federal U.S. Public Works Department funds for the senior centers. If all continues to go well we will have zipped through one of the shortest lead times ever before going into actual construction of a major project. So far this appears to be a stellar performance by all concerned.

City government has been made more accessible by the installation of the City Hall elevator. Hale Zukas got the first ride up in the elevator. Florence McDonald got the first ride down. Now all of us can get to City Council Chambers.

SMOKE DETECTOR PROGRAM

The city has established a Smoke Detector Program to see if we can eliminate the loss of life in fires in Berkeley. The city has bought smoke detectors in bulk, at wholesale prices. Berkeley residents can purchase them at wholesale cost from the Berkeley Fire Department. The Department will send personnel to demonstrate how detectors work and where to install them at meetings of neighborhood groups or other Berkeley organizations. Call 845-3722 or 843-7027 for further information.

Smoke detectors are now required for most new residential construction in the United States. Many jurisdictions now require that all rental units have smoke detectors within a 5 to 10 year period. The Berkeley Fire Dept. has available 3 different approved detectors ranging in price from \$17 to \$34.06. If enough of us take advantage of this bargain we should see a marked drop in the loss of life and injuries in fires in Berkeley.

HEARST STRIP/ PERALTA STRIP

The Hearst Strip Park Committee deserves great thanks from all of us for making the Peralta CC Plans for the Hearst Strip a front burner issue and thus moving a long-standing impasse off dead center. But while the city now has part of the strip back, the toughest part of the problem remains finding an acceptable alternate site for the Peralta building and getting the rest of the land back.

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MEETING NOTICE

Date: December 6, 1976 Monday

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: West Branch Library
1125 University Avenue

AGENDA

1. Reports and comments
2. Civic Art Commission: Where is the \$\$ going? *(next month)*
3. Alternate sites for Peralta College
4. Traffic Management Issues
5. McDonald's/Economic Development
6. West Berkeley Industrial Park: loss of city tax revenues
7. Discussion and vote on Charter amendments
8. Other Boards and Commissions
9. Public Library: the flow of information
10. New Business

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[New Berkeley Corporation]