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The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, met in session on Wednesday, October 29, 1975, at 7:30 o'clock p.m., in the Council Chambers, City Hall, with Mayor John M. Belk presiding, and Councilmembers Harvey Gantt, Pat Locke, Milton Short, James B. Whittington, Neil Williams and Joe D. Withrow present.

ABSENT: Councilman Kenneth Harris.

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INVOCATION.

The invocation was given by Reverend Paul Horne.

HEARING ON PROPOSED GRIER HEIGHTS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN.

Mr. Vernon Sawyer, Director of Community Development Department, stated the City has advertised public hearings for the Community Development Plans for both Grier Heights and North Charlotte. The local newspapers, for the past two weeks, have stated that the Community Development Plans for these projects were on file in City Hall and also in the CD Office in the Cameron Brown Building.

He stated they were there for anyone who wanted to examine them prior to the hearing tonight. That as far as he knows, only one citizen came in and wanted to see the Plans.

Mr. Sawyer stated he would like to briefly describe what the Plans contain, the purpose and then answer any questions concerning these Plans.

Starting with the Grier Heights Community Development Plan, he will begin by describing the area of the Plan.

It begins on Monroe Road, then goes to the Seaboard Railroad to form the northeastern boundary; then to McAlway Road, down to Beal Street, Billingsley Road, up to Randolph Road, to Briar Creek and back to Monroe Road. According to the 1970 Census, Grier Heights had a population of 3,506 people. This population was 93% black. There was a 67% increase in population between 1960 and 1970, mainly because of the construction of new apartments. There is still vacant land for future growth in the Grier Heights area.

Grier Heights is predominately residential, with some physical deterioration in structures in evidence; with the exception of one concentrated area of delapidated housing, known as the Rock Apartments, and a handful of scattered delapidated structures, the buildings in the area are capable of being rehabilitated. This is being proposed.

Of the total of 619 structures in the entire area, 75% are considered standard; 19, or 16%, sub-standard, and 56, or 9%, are delapidated. In addition to the delapidated structures and the sub-standard structures the area suffers, it suffers from an adequate ingress and egress with the Randolph Road and Monroe Road, the two main points of entry; and existing streets within the area inadequate for circulation once you get into the neighborhood. The existing street conditions are generally inadequate in terms of pavement, curbs, gutter and sidewalks. Industrial uses on Dunn Avenue are forced by lack of alternative access to circulate through the residential areas of the neighborhood. That is a very objectionable feature to the citizens of Grier Heights. Some

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upgrading and expansion of park and recreational facilities is needed. Although with Griertown Park in the area and Grayson Park, which is under construction near the area, there is no need for major new recreational facilities.

There is isolated ponding of water and minor flooding which occurs during heavy rains, indicating a need for improved storm drains.

He referred to a map, stating the land uses as indicated by color scheme. The dark color is the residential area which is scattered throughout the area. There are several industrial uses; one that is very prominent near the entrance to the project, near Monroe Road is a lumber company and building materials place of business.

The green indicates the public areas - school, park and the county development of health facilities. Also, there are several businesses and neighborhood, or residential related uses - churches - also in the area.

The Grier Heights target area is a rehabilitation, conservation, re-conditioning and redevelopment area that is predominately residential in character and that has been determined by the blight survey approved by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission in June of this year. A Community Development Plan and a Redevelopment Plan have been prepared for the Grier Heights Area.

The two plans have a common purpose which is to arrest the decline and the deterioration of the neighborhood and removing conditions which have contributed to the decline, by preserving the existing housing, improving the existing streets, providing new streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, parks and drainage in the area, as necessary. There are several types of proposed action included in the Community Development Plan and the Redevelopment Plan.

First, the Plan proposes a major rehabilitation program. This is the main emphasis of the Community Development Plan and the Redevelopment Plan. Owners of residential structures in the area that are in need of repair will be required to improve them to the rehabilitation standards contained in the Redevelopment Plan.

Grants and low-interest loans are proposed to be made available to assist property owners in making these necessary repairs. The Plan provides for spot acquisition, clearance and redevelopment for structures that are beyond any feasible means of rehabilitation; this is minor. The powers of the Urban Redevelopment Law will be utilized as necessary within the area to carry out the Plan. The redevelopment of land cleared by the acquisition of property, however, will be limited to residential uses or to residentially related uses, such as parks or neighborhood merchant use.

Public facilities, including streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, street lights, storm drainage and parks will be provided or improved to standards designed to strengthen the neighborhood. Some new streets, some new extensions of old streets are proposed to improve the egress and ingress and to improve the circulation within the area. To do this, a budget of approximately \$2,900,000 has been allocated for a three-year program of physical community development and related activities in the Grier Heights target area. Of that sum, \$1,400,000 in round figures, is to be spent during the first action year which ends this next July, 1976.

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Some of the particular first year public improvements to be financed with this \$1,400,000 were pointed out on a map. We are going to improve existing streets by resurfacing and by providing gutters, curbs, sidewalks where needed. The goal for the first year is to accomplish approximately one-third of the needed items, that's 33% of this kind of work will be accomplished the first year.

Then, there are some new street improvements. That is, to install a cul-de-sac at Heflin Street; an extension of Goldwin Street to Orange Street and revise the intersection of Orange and Sandalwood; re-align Leroy Street as it intercepts with Goldwin; rebuild the intersection of Billingsley Road and Ellington Street, and then provide a solution for traffic problems at Monroe Road in the vicinity of Dunn and Montrose Streets and Fannie Circle. This is to be done by flaring the corners and improving the medians and providing for a traffic light. Then storm drainage to provide new and up-graded storm drainage associated with the resurfacing of the streets. Approximately one-fourth of the total storm drainage needs for the area is the goal for the first year.

A neighborhood entrance sign will be provided Randolph Road and Orange Street. Then, acquire some real estate. We are going to do some spot clearance; acquire approximately four of the estimated thirty-six scattered structures, classified as sub-standard and warranting clearance. We are going to acquire the lumber yard at the corner of Orange and Dunn Streets to remove a incompatible use from the residential area.

The biggest acquisition will be the Rock Apartments and some nearby land structure to remove the delapidated structures that are the Rock and provide a re-use, some new multi-family residential and some neighborhood commercial uses.

Also provide for a new Alpha Street, re-routing Alpha as a buffer between these residential uses and the industrial uses on the east side of Dunn Street. We are going to acquire land providing for the streets to be improved this year.

There will be some relocations. We have provided funds for the relocations of fifty-eight families and individuals, including five homeowners; five businesses; one church - from the parcels that will be acquired. The actual relocation may not occur, and possibly will not occur the first year. Relocation will probably occur the second and third years, but the money for the total relocation has to be allocated the first year anyway. That money has been included.

We will demolish the structures on the acquired properties, once relocation is accomplished and only after orderly and satisfactory relocation is accomplished. The rehabilitation will be the major activity during the Community Development Program.

The first year objective is to begin rehabilitation of residential structures in need of repair, using proposed loans and grants to assist property owners to make the repairs. We are going to move as rapidly as possible once we begin the rehabilitation, but no specific number of units as an objective the first year.

In the second and third years, there are public improvements proposed, and, referring to the map, he stated they can see the color build-up and they can see the lighter brown, indicating the second and third year property that will be acquired. The red still indicates new streets that will be improved.

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The new Alpha Street will be realigned to intersect Goldwin Street at Marney; rebuild a portion of Goldwin Street to four lanes with a landscaped median divider to protect the existing single family residential areas from new neighborhood commercials; and provide focal point for the center of the neighborhood; extend Burkland Drive to intersect with Marvin Road to improve internal neighborhood circulation; extend Wheatly Avenue to Randolph Road, extend Leroy Street south to intersect with new Wheatly to improve access to Billingsley Elementary School; extend Dunn Street through the industrial area to intersect the proposed Wendover Beltway to provide new access to the industrial area and separate the industrial traffic from the neighborhood. When that is completed, Dunn Street will be dead-ended so that industrial traffic will not be routed or have to thread its way through the neighborhood in order to get in and out.

There will be some park improvements, improved park land acquired to expand Griertown Park, pave and improve two half-acre play areas - the minor areas include a new park at Goldwin and Alpha Streets and then acquire the land that is necessary to that.

Everywhere there is a new improvement, there is some proposed new acquisition of land. Then, we will also provide street trees and other neighborhood beautification measures as necessary. There are some activities proposed beyond the first three year period. Those are identified in the Plan, that is, provided the Council makes funds available in the fourth, fifth and sixth years. But if the funds are not available and these items are not accomplished, it will not be serious in terms of the success of the Plan for this area.

In order to finance these improvements, there is a budget which is broken down as follows: Public Improvements, \$252,000; Rehabilitation, first year, \$65,000; Real Estate Acquisition, \$590,700; Relocation, \$259,300; Administration, \$175,000 and Contingencies, \$100,000 - a total of \$1,442,000. These funds will be made available from the city's Community Development Block Grant for this first action year.

The CD Plan also has a Social Services Program supporting it, and an Economic Development Program supporting it; and a proposed Loan and Grant Program to be financed by the Community Development Funds - local funds - which will be presented to Council on November 3. These plans have been prepared by their staff and with the help of their consultants with the full involvement of the citizens through a number of neighborhood meetings and planning sessions. Ten meetings have been held in Grier Heights. They have employed a full time staff member to work with and represent the citizens in Grier Heights; also in North Charlotte. During this planning, and also in the future, during the Plan implementation, these staff members are to provide the direct means of communication between the citizens in the area and the City - the Community Development Department. These plans presented here tonight that are the subject of this public hearing, also respond to the preliminary plan for the expenditure of Community Development Funds approved by the Council in February of this year.

They also have for the Grier Heights area, a Redevelopment Plan. The requirements for the Redevelopment Plan have been met and have been briefly explained during his explanation of the Community Development Plan, except for the relocation requirements.

In the Grier Heights area, there are sixteen families proposed to be relocated in the first year - ten families, six individuals - and in the three year period, a total of fifty-eight. For those fifty-eight families, they have a list of housing units that are expected to be available, both public and private housing, including sales units and rental units, during the period of time depending on if public housing in the proposed Section 8 rent supplements for 175 existing units which the Housing Authority has applied for and which are anticipated to be approved for Charlotte. They have not listed in this available housing any of the existing standard conventional public housing units that might be available for rent during this period. They have been eliminated. All of this housing, most of which will be available in the second and third years, is the housing that the Housing Authority proposes to build on scattered sites throughout the City. Otherwise, it is mostly rent supplement, or HUD assistance housing and private housing that has been identified through an actual survey that was made just this month.

He stated the financial assistance will be dispersed in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance - Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970.

Councilman Gantt stated that he wanted to certainly applaud Mr. Sawyer for the fine effort that he and his staff made, and he understands that he had very good community participation in the process, to come up with what appears to be a reasonable approach to improving the Griertown area.

He stated he has a couple of questions. The first one relates to the first year relocation program of sixteen families - ten families and six individuals. On Page 5 of the document, it states that \$259,300 in the first year for relocation of fifty-eight families. There is an inconsistency here.

Mr. Sawyer replied that no; the law requires that all of the money has to be put into the Plan, or into the budget the first year for all relocation during the three years, so fifty-eight families are all that we can see that will be relocated in the three years and all of the money is budgeted in the first year for that. In addition to the families, there are some businesses and one church that are to be relocated.

Councilman Gantt asked one church, one business, a lumber yard? Mr. Sawyer replied yes, that was one. He asked Mr. Waddell if he had the details of the relocation, and Mr. Waddell stated there would be five businesses - one institution, which is the church, and fifty-eight families. Mr. Sawyer repeated that there are five businesses, one of which is the lumber yard. He further stated that the City is obligated to the actual moving expenses for business. The lumber yard may be expensive; it probably will be. Or, in the case of a smaller business, that business can get a payment in lieu of moving expenses in the maximum amount of \$10,000.

Councilman Gantt replied this is what he is driving at; when he saw the \$259,300 for relocation, he read that as the first year relocation, but what in effect they are saying is that is the relocation budget for all three years - for the entire fifty-eight families? Mr. Sawyer replied that is correct. Once you buy the property, you have to encumber the funds to relocate them regardless of when they are relocated. That's why you have to put the money in up front - all of it.

Councilman Gantt's second question was, one that he has always been raised over and over, as you look at the first year program, even though he realizes that they have taken great care to only acquire probably four sub-standard units and one business, you are almost spending

\$600,000 on real estate land acquisition - he imagines that the proportion for legal services is relatively small compared to the overall amount. Mr. Sawyer stated yes, but it is also in.

Councilman Gantt asked if that was a projection, or is it the results of actual appraisals done and Mr. Sawyer replied no, that appraisals have actually been made. It is their estimate, based on their past experiences in buying similar property and also looking at the tax records, the tax appraisals and applying an increment that we have been accustomed to paying in addition to that - our other activities - so it could be an up or down, but he would point out that the large area containing the apartments that are called The Rock are included in the first year - that will be the major acquisition.

Councilman Gantt asked if they were classified as sub-standard, or delapidated and Mr. Sawyer replied delapidated; that they could not be worth very much, except to the owner and the courts.

Councilman Withrow asked if, during the rehabilitation of the units that are to be redone, is it possible for the people to accomplish their own work with the government furnishing the materials and Mr. Sawyer replied they have discussed this; they have debated it and think it is possible, if, for example, MOTION gets into the picture and assumes the kind of responsibility for the end result. The objective here is to bring the properties up to standard, to rehabilitate the properties, and to do it within a reasonable period of time. Our Economic Development units certainly want to get the local citizens at SKILL involved in this rehabilitation and certainly one that owns his home, or is renting and can make a proposition or deal with the owner, can do the work. But, they are trying to guarantee the final result and then, in turn, would let the owner do it with supervision. That could work.

Councilman Withrow asked if he had any projections for real estate acquisition in the second and third year and he replied yes. He turned the Council to the back sheets under the tab "acquisitions" where he had them tabulated, which builds up to the total amount budgeted.

Councilman Williams stated that was the first acquisition. They do not have a total altogether, including the second and third year. Could he give him an estimate and Mr. Sawyer replied in the second and third years, he could identify the property that is proposed for relocation, for acquisition, but did not have the cost of it at this time.

Councilman Williams stated he was interested in comparing the total amount of money they planned to spend in this neighborhood against the amount devoted to real estate acquisition and relocation. In the first year alone, and he realizes that they have all their relocation in the first year by necessity, but in the first year, they have over half of the appropriation devoted to real estate acquisition, plus relocation - over half. And only \$252,000, approximately, for public improvements.

Mr. Sawyer stated that is correct. They are going to need the property in the first year and need to acquire it in order to get the public improvements that are proposed underway in the second and third year.

Councilman Williams asked if he meant they were planning to use some of this acquired property for public purposes. Mr. Sawyer replied that most of the acquired property, except for the Rock Apartments, the majority of it will be in streets rights of way. Referring to the map, he stated that in addition to the two parks, the red colors are new streets, right-of-way has to be acquired for those streets and except for the big apartment project, that is most of it. They are sticking to the budget that was proposed by Council, originally.

Councilman Gantt stated that was what he was getting at; the total acquisition funds are not likely to be as high in the next two years. Mr. Sawyer replied they would be practically nothing; this is just about it.

Councilman Whittington asked Mr. Sawyer to talk for a minute about the relocation. Is it his purpose, for example, to eliminate the Rock units because they are delapidated? Mr. Sawyer replied yes. He asked is there to be any reconstruction in there as the road is built? Mr. Sawyer replied the land will be offered for sale for new multi-family construction by private companies.

Councilman Whittington asked if any of the people who are to be relocated could be relocated somewhere within the Grier Heights area and then moved back in to the new construction and Mr. Sawyer replied they had been told by a number of the residents of the Grier Heights area that there are sufficient number of vacant units and units to be rehabilitated within the area to take care of all the relocation. That while they know that is true, they cannot present that as their plan because that may be contrary to the requirements of the consent agreement in our Federal Court suit that we are in; so we have relocation provided otherwise which does meet the requirements of that suit. However, in the final analysis, a person to be relocated has his own choice and he might choose to do that.

Councilman Whittington stated the hope is that if they can do this within the area then we are not moving back and forth. One other thing and that is those people that have businesses in the area, are they going to be given an opportunity to relocate back in there. He is not talking about the lumber dealer, which certainly is not compatible, but grocery stores, drug stores, shops, that he mentioned. Mr. Sawyer replied they will be given the opportunity; the whole improvement on the property now occupied by The Rock Apartments, a portion will be set aside for new community or neighborhood shopping and they are working with a group of local merchants now in trying to get together the financing and everything that is going to be required to develop this and bid on that piece of land.

Councilman Whittington asked about up on Seventh Street and Monroe Road and Mr. Sawyer replied the two would remain and will not be affected by the street improvements planned there to help the traffic situation.

Councilman Whittington asked about the Randolph and Billingsley area and Mr. Sawyer replied there is one store located right there now, but it will be eliminated when that is straightened out and he is one of those and one who will not participate in this.

Councilman Short stated the area east of Wendover Road is not traditionally thought of as part of Grier Heights; how does it happen that this is included? It is not traditionally a part of it and it does not seem to participate as a need for rehabilitation. Is any money being spent in that area? Mr. Sawyer replied he does not believe so, the only money being spent in this area is on Dunn Street, to get the industrial traffic out of the neighborhood. This was included, he believes, simply because it was in the census tract, and the delineation of these areas was made by reference to census tracts. That is the only reason.

Councilman Gantt stated he wanted this for his own clarification - \$600,000 is being spent this year for land acquisition; and then he looks at the map for the second and third year plan and sees several substantial parcels of land which still have to be acquired and your original program proposed \$18,000 for that. Are you suggesting another \$200 and some-odd thousand figure we will be putting into the budget and Mr. Sawyer replied yes, that is the amount that will be budgeted.

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Mr. Ken Bouleware stated he was of the Grier Heights Community, which he is proud of and he is proud of the history of it over the past record they have had in their firmness, not only to the Grier Heights Community, but also to what they think is fair to the whole community.

He stated he would like to cite some of the things that they have done out there and it will be no news, at least to some of the people, because like Mr. Whittington, Short and others, they know it. That while they are a community of four churches, they have one Presbyterian, one AME Zion Church and two Baptist Churches and included in the two Baptist Churches is the Greater Antioch Baptist Church, just completed. Also, they are the origin of the East Side Council on Community Affairs.

Mr. Bouleware stated this probably will bring back some memories to many of them there as to what they did with their public acclaim. They always met, they did the things they thought was fair, they did not wait for a lot of headlines and whatnot. He will cite just a few things.

Back some years ago, even at Memorial Hospital, where the cafeteria was segregated only to white personnel, and the black nurses there would have to go behind the counter and serve and then go into segregated places, so the East Side Council had a quiet meeting and were instrumental in getting this thing opened up. Now, the press didn't know it - they knew it. The only thing they were interested in was the thing that was fair. They also were instrumental in the orderly desegregation of the Myers Park High School and East Mecklenburg High School in the years that Jerry Kirkpatrick added a lot to the conference - a black guy who broke the record was set at Myers Park. He was from the Grier Heights Section; they were glad of that, but they got no public acclaim, they wanted none.

They also have their one school, so they have churches, schools and they are together as a total community. They opened many doors to blacks that were open to whites only, through behind the door negotiations. The East Side Council does not get credit for this but the whole Grier Heights Community because they were behind them, they knew what they were doing; they are proud of that.

They also, this same community, endorsed fully the Community Development Program. They did not come to this conclusion by their just talking to them; they had several meetings and there were some that they had that didn't agree, but through negotiation, some of the things were opened to them - they yielded some, and they yielded some.

He stated he thinks they have a much better, not necessarily for the Grier Heights Community, but for the total community, what Grier Heights has stood for throughout the years - total government and total community - not just their little island that is in the total community.

That by endorsing that - they got other things - there are three other things that they are concerned with. The relocation that has been stated of the people that have planted their roots in that community and are told that certainly this community, that if they are relocated, maybe it might be necessary that they will be out, but that they will have the opportunity to come back in and regain their position in the community where their roots have been. This is a real concern to them.

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They also are willing to have rehabilitation program built into the Community Development for the elderly. This is most dear to them - more than anything else. They will be watching these things. Being aware of these things - this is what they want. They would like to see a black fill the position of rehabilitation consultant.

The main thing about this - get somebody to communicate. It is not that they just want blacks because he is black, but only blacks can understand some of the older people that were brought up in other generations in communicating. They want these positions filled with black people that can communicate with blacks and for this reason only - they are concerned about them - some that have been in this community all their lives.

That he was talking to a lady this afternoon and she just said, "Oh, I hope they don't take my house." He told her this was preposterous that Community Development has no idea, but they want as a community somebody that can communicate and relate to these people and he feels Council can understand this.

Thirdly, but by no means has any diminishing effect, our traffic situation coming in and out of Grier Heights. That he ought to have named that we have these Social Service Centers that have really crowded their area coming through and out, in entrance and leaving. Coming out of there in the afternoons - now, this is a problem - afternoon, morning and almost all of the time, it is necessary and it is mandatory that this island within itself there be given an outlet. We have got to go to work, we have got to go home. Without this traffic situation.

That he knows Council can understand - if you have to be at work, you have to be at work. If you cannot get to work, you cannot hold a job. He stated he would just like for Council to try to come out. The traffic situation is a horrible thing since we have all of our Human Development and Social Development Programs in there and you really have put a burden on the community and Council is the only one that can alleviate this problem and he asked them, in behalf of his community of which he has been for some 30-odd years to live there and it is a part of him, to do something about that.

Councilman Withrow stated he knows what this gentleman is talking about; it is impossible to get out on Seventh Street in the mornings for these people to go to work. Randolph Road is hard to get out on and at night, when they have got something at the Coliseum, it is impossible to get out on Seventh Street. That he feels this should be one of the first priorities for these people.

Councilman Whittington asked Mr. Sawyer if he did not say in his presentation that a traffic light, or lights, would be placed in there and Mr. Sawyer replied yes, this would be first priority.

HEARING ON PROPOSED NORTH CHARLOTTE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

Mr. Sawyer stated this Plan is a Community Development Plan and would not be as complicated as the Grier Heights Plan. That he would begin by describing the boundary of the North Charlotte Target Area.

Beginning at the top half of North Tryon Street, to Craighead Road; Craighead Road down to the Southern Railroad; Southern Railroad over to Eastway Drive; and there it intersects The Plaza; follow The Plaza down to Woodside Avenue over to the Norfolk and Southern Railroad; from that point, then the Norfolk and Southern to 36th Street, back to Tryon.

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That it is a rather large area and according to the 1970 Census, it was racially mixed with 80% white and 20% black population. There are only a few delapidated structures in North Charlotte. Of a total of 1,333 structures, 763, or 57%, of the structures are considered in sound condition; 569, or 43%, are considered showing signs of deterioration. He believes there is only one delapidated structure in the area.

Land uses are predominately residential. Referring to a map, he pointed out the yellow color, indicating the residential area, the other colors; pinkish color being the industrial area; the red color, the commercial area; green areas are public areas - two elementary schools and a park serving the total population of about 2,400 people.

They do have some storm drainage and street improvements that are deficient in many parts of the area, but otherwise North Charlotte is not classified as a blighted area, nor is it classified as a rehabilitation, conservation and reconditioning area. Instead, the target area is considered just as a residential area predominately sound, but experiencing some physical decline. A Community Development Plan has been prepared for this area.

He stated the purpose of this Plan is to arrest the decline and the deterioration of the neighborhoods within the North Charlotte area by preserving the existing housing and the amenities which support it and by improving the streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, parks and drainage area. The types of proposed community action are that a major housing code enforcement program is proposed. Owners of residential structures will be required to improve their structures to the minimum housing code standards, and loans and grants are proposed to be made available to assist the property owners in paying for these required improvements.

Public facilities, including streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, street lights, storm drainage and parks will be provided or improved by the City to standards designed to strengthen the neighborhood in North Charlotte. To do these things, a budget of approximately \$3,400,000 has been allocated for the three-year program of physical activities in the area.

Of that sum, \$1,100,000 is proposed to be spent during the first action year which ends July 1976.

As some examples of the improvements that will be taking place during the first action year, are resurfacing of existing streets, curb, gutters, sidewalks where needed and the goal for this first year is to accomplish 60% of the resurfacing as needed.

Now, the storm drainage is going to receive major attention in this project. First, they will construct an open channel storm drainage system in the vicinity of Matheson Avenue (the blue color on the map indicates the proposed storm drainage improvements); second, construct an enclosed storm drain west of Herron Avenue, from Holt to Spencer - that portion is proposed to be acquired in connection with that improvement; next, construct an open channel storm drain west of Herron, from Spencer to the railroad tracks, so that the remainder will be an open channel; construct an open channel storm drain from Alexander Street past Davidson Street to the railroad tracks; construct an open channel storm drain from Dinglewood Avenue to the railroad tracks; construct an open channel storm drain off Oakwood Avenue, between Sweetbriar and Essex; then for other surface drainage, minor

improvements associated with the improvements on the existing streets. There will be some new street improvements; they propose to construct a cul-de-sac on Sweetbriar Street - the street is already there, it lacks a turn around; the turn around will be constructed; construct a short, new street between Garrison and Spencer Streets, just off 35th. In order to accomplish some of these street improvements and other improvements, they do propose to acquire some real estate.

They propose to acquire two parcels, each about one acre or less in size for mini parks. Those are indicated but they may not turn out to be the final sites, but somewhere in there two small sites will be acquired for mini parks. Then, they will buy the triangular piece of land, west of Herron Street and south of Spencer, to provide for the storm drainage improvements there.

Then buy the land for the cul-de-sac improvement on Sweetbriar. For park improvements, they will begin improvements to the North Charlotte Park - it is the only park now in the area, providing children's play area, landscaping, basketball court, improved baseball diamond and fencing, and some other improvements.

A code enforcement will be the major activity during the Community Development Program. The first year, the goal is to accomplish code enforcement 20% to 25% of the residential structures in the area, using the proposed low interest loans and grants as incentives.

To do these, they have a budget for the first action year of \$1,082,400 - that is in round figures - the \$1,100,000 referred to earlier. That budget breakdown is public improvements (that is all the public improvements proposed for the first year), \$664,900 - the biggest expenditure; code enforcement, \$155,000; real estate acquisition, \$37,500; administration, \$175,000; and contingencies, \$50,000 - a total of \$1,082,400.

These funds will be made available from the City's Community Development block grant funds for the first action year. In subsequent years, there are certain improvements that are proposed; continue the improvements to the existing streets; completing the resurfacing; providing curbs, gutters and sidewalks as needed; add street trees and street signs as appropriate; and one other thing that they want to undertake - and that is to investigate the desirability of closing Oak and Sweetbriar Streets at The Plaza to deter through traffic. No decision has been made, but they were asked to study that during the year and also explore the desirability of closing Herron Street underpass.

Mr. Sawyer stated another part of the project is to study the feasibility and ways and means for rehabilitation and revitalization of the commercial district. This is on North Davidson and 35th Streets. Further continuing the code enforcement work by completing the rehabilitation of the remaining 75-80 percent of the residential structures. Continue the park improvements, and approve a new park at Fairwood Avenue, and acquire land to create that new park.

Councilman Gantt stated he has two questions. One is the storm drainage system; two is the acreage of park land in an area with 4,000 plus people. He asked how many acres are in the existing park along Spencer Street, and Mr. Phillips replied about four acres.

Councilman Gantt stated in the second and third year they propose to acquire additional land which would about double the size, plus the two mini parks they are not sure about. He wonders if there is any concern about a larger area; it seems to him there would be a use for a larger park. Mr. Phillips replied most of the vacant land is in the industrial area, and it is out of the way for the residents of the area.

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Councilman Gantt asked if all the facilities for industry are being used and Mr. Sawyer replied everything in red on the map outlines an existing development.

Councilman Gantt asked if anyone has analyzed whether or not the open storm drainage system will have any impact on the flooding situation that occurs - that he is referring to the open channel drain dumping into Little Sugar Creek and Mr. Sawyer replied there has been. One of the big problems in curing the most aggravating situation in the whole area was connected to that. They could not go in and acquire that in isolation and do something with it.

Councilman Gantt asked if there will not be a greater flow of water into that creek and Mr. Finger, with Hensley-Schmidt, replied the City Engineering did the ultimate development of this design; the existing culvert under the Southern Railroad is a limiting situation. It does not limit it in such a way that ponding will occur; but it does limit it to the extent that it will not cause a significant problem in the creek. Mr. McGregor, with the Public Works Department, stated it will not increase the flow a substantial amount that will cause anymore flooding than is there now.

Councilman Whittington stated we can do something to increase the park acreage by coming in on Davidson Street, where the Y is and where the park is, up to the commercial property; close in the culvert that has been a problem there for years, and make this another playground to go with what has been mentioned. That he things we should concern ourselves in here.

Mr. Sawyer stated in responding to what the citizens have proposed and knowing there was a limited amount of money, they had to spread it out as far as it would go, and speak to all the needs. They would do what has been suggested but it would mean less somewhere else.

Councilman Whittington stated he hopes the people in North Charlotte will consider coming back to that in the second and third year. The park is there; the Y is there, and if we could get rid of the creek by channeling it, we would hve this additional park land which he thinks is needed on this side of 36th Street. The one on Bearwood is on the other side of 36th Street. Mr. Sawyer stated that serves the Dinglewood area.

Councilman Whittington stated in the overall plan, he hopes, with the citizen's approval, to find a way to pull in this scattered sub-standard business area - pull it together where it is more convenient to the people, and rid that area of that delapidated or unfit business property.

Councilman Withrow stated sometime ago there was some rezoning in the area. If there is any additional rezoning to be done, should it not be done during this time we are in the area; now would be the time to study if if there is any rezoning needed. Mr. Phillips replied there has been some consideration for rezoning but not right away. There is some housing between the Southern Railroad and the Norfolk-Southern Railroad that is surrounded by industrial uses that could present a problem over the long haul. Basically, they have not gotten into any rezoning consideration yet.

Mr. Sid Barber, President of the North Charlotte Action Association, stated this Association appeared before Council a number of times under the Community Development Program. That he is here tonight to commend Council for the services recommended for the North Charlotte area. The people are excited, and they are in about 90% agreement with the Community Development Department.

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There are a few items they would like to take apart and discuss. The area Mr. Phillips referred to is zoned R-6. Across 36th Street there is still multi-family zoning and there is a possibility they would like to have that looked into later.

In talking about the park, they are not in agreement on the land acquisition, especially for one park; they are talking about the area on the corner of 35th Street and Holt Street. The city has authorized people to use city land for gardening, and that is one of the most beautiful gardens in the City of Charlotte. That two or three families farm it every year. They would like to see that deleted from the program, and take that money and take it to the schools and build up the school grounds - the Plaza Road School and the Highland Elementary School - they do not have any playgrounds.

Mr. Barber stated since the cul-de-sac at the end of Sweetbriar was discussed he has received a little flack. That this was thrown in and they were not prepared for that; the people on Sweetbriar want the improvements - sidewalks, gutter and drainage, but they are afraid of the turn around at the end of Sweetbriar. They have enough traffic in that area now; they recommend that this cul-de-sac at the end of Sweetbriar be done away with. That is the recommendation of the people on Sweetbriar.

Mr. Barber stated they would like to have a little more input into the public improvements for the designated areas for where the sidewalks will be placed. They know the City of Charlotte has engineers, but the people walk on the sidewalks; they would like to see some of the sidewalks closer to the schools where their children are walking. He stated they did not get what they asked for; they did not expect to get all they asked for, but they know where the trouble spots are in their neighborhoods - they have lived there for years. Two or three streets that could be mentioned would be 35th Street, both sides. There is a walk in school at Highland Elementary; Plaza Road School is a walk in school. They would recommend sidewalks on one side of Davidson Street, up Herron Avenue, all the way to the Plaza.

He stated they were talking about buying that property between Herron Avenue and 36th Street. The value of that property is \$1,800 - to buy the property is \$3,850. He is like Councilman Gantt - he wants every dollar that can be spent in North Charlotte to be used for improvements. As one of the leaders in the North Charlotte Action, they want to work with the City. He commends the City for the job so far, and they look forward to this, and they will be on top of everything happening in North Charlotte.

Mr. Max Webb stated he would like to commend the Community Development staff on what they have done so far. This is one effort the City is making in the right direction. They want dollar value for dollars spent; it is the only way it will help their community. Shoddy job, shoddy work, shoddy planning will not work. It is their understanding that the loans and grants will follow capital improvements. The people have been waiting patiently for these loans and grants. They would like for this to be scheduled forward instead of delaying it until after capital improvements. They understand that they do not want to do some work, and then have to tear it up; this can be worked out.

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Mr. Webb stated some of the projects are \$212,000 - they would like it expedited by a penalty clause in every contract above \$25,000. They want the specifications drawn and the Engineering Department to see that they followed in every detail. They would like for City Council to hold these agencies responsible to see that the work is done properly. Mr. Sawyer replied the City's Public Works Department will be responsible for all the capital improvements in the area.

Mr. Webb stated the neighborhood is 8 to 2 - the two being black and the 8 others. From what has happened in the past, under the Neighborhood Improvement Program by the City and others, there have been unfavorable results. They have been successful in protecting their neighborhood against speculation - land and housing - that does not have the interest of the neighborhood at heart. They expect the City Government to help defend their neighborhood against these past occurrences happening again.

He stated they would like to hold the City to dislocate and relocate anything that comes into the neighborhood to change the ratio; this does not have racial overtones; it is to protect the neighborhood from what could happen. They have seen it and they know it. It will take every effort to keep this from happening in their neighborhood. He stated they accept this program and he commends the City. It is one direction taken that is the right direction for the City.

Reverend Paul Horne stated he is a member of the North Charlotte Action Committee. For the last seven years they have been working to improve North Charlotte. According to the Board of Education, in 1970, they sought to have them fulfill the requirements of the '67 School Bond Issue which allocated \$550,000 bond money to the Highland School improvements. In 1970 their children were housed, some 650 to 700, in a school built for 400. They went to the School Board and asked them to enlarge the school.

The first thing they were told was that the City had already considered North Charlotte area a slum area. The people were indigent. These people bought their houses as mill houses and through the years improved them and made them homes they hope to retire in and live the latter years of their lives in comfort and a good community.

They realized the community was going down; they began to do a little improving and they began to improve their property even more once the School Board made this known to them. The School Board said they would not put any more money in North Charlotte area because it was already designated a slum area by the City. Three months later they came back as to what they would do, and the School Board informed them that the City had projected by the year 1975, which is this year, all of North Charlotte would be zoned industrial. The citizens said this cannot be; the people got together and began to look at their situation, and they were desirous to do so, and they have done so.

Reverend Horne stated they have not come to City Council on any issue for any problem without first having gone through the channels which are open for redress. When they have not gotten satisfaction, they have come to Council as Council makes the final decision. It is on the basis of this understanding of community cooperation that the North Charlotte area has sought to improve itself and to get Council's help to see that this area is improved.

A year or so ago they asked for the NIP Program, and asked for it on the basis that they needed some help and there were many who needed the city's help. They did not want help on the Belmont basis; they had their own plan they had worked out with the City, and if monies had been available, they would have been in that. Then the NAP Program was suggested and they were in the process of working with the City on that program, implementing some improvements in the North Charlotte area with the limited funds the City was going to provide.

Reverend Horne stated when they began to talk to North Charlotte about their area, they suggested that it include the area on Dinglewood and Eastway. He stated the Dinglewood Area is predominately black. Mrs. Alexander, who lives over there, called him last Fall, and asked him to come over and talk to them about a Community Center she was trying to get for the area. That he went over and they were trying to do something to help out. However, discouragement came, indifference, and even those in the neighborhood did not feel they should waste their time for a youth center in the area. It was dropped. When they began to talk to them about the Community Improvement money, Mr. Webb, Mr. Barber and he went over and talked to Mrs. Alexander and went through the area, and they presented some of the needs they had of drainage, a park, some improvements in the streets. They have backed this, and have sought to get some input on it. They have encouraged the improvements to the drainage in their suggestions to the Community Improvements Division.

Reverend Horne stated the YMCA park which was mentioned, to the little business area at Davidson Street, has been filled in by the Y and they are using it as part of their recreational activities. He stated they have gone to the Y on several occasions and asked them to work with them on the program in the community. They were informed by the Y that they have their own program, and they would prefer to stick to their own program. He stated without malice or anything, the Y does not basically serve the people in that community because the fees they charge cannot be paid by many of the neighborhood people. A goodly number of the people who are in the Y program are people who do not live in the area; they pay their fee; they have a good swimming program and several other good programs.

Councilman Whittington stated the reason he brought the little park up was that over the years they have shown the city the need to put that ditch into a culvert to get the water into Sugar Creek. That he was not aware that they were not cooperating with the North Charlotte residents, he thought the youth program was the area's program.

Reverend Horne stated most of their people cannot pay the fees for membership; this is no disrespect to them; it is just a fact. If it were ditched out as he suggests, it would enlarge that area pushing the water on down Sugar Creek, and giving them a little larger area for recreation.

He stated the Sweetbriar cul-de-sac is a short street, and the people who live on the street feel like it is a turntable; this would create a problem of people rushing down here, spinning their wheels to get out, and someone is likely to get killed. There is no need for it as there is not that much traffic in there to warrant a cul-de-sac. If it were put in, it would be an avenue for the hot rodders to whip around in. This is the reason they

requested that it not be done; it butts into the railroad tracks; if it were a through street, it would be different. The only traffic using it is a garbage truck going in and having to turn around. He stated they feel they need the outlet from Sweetbriar into The Plaza. They did recommend that this be left as it is and consider it again in a year to see what can be worked out.

Reverend Horne stated they feel they could use the \$11,000 for the park at Holt Street for more essential things. Take that money, along with some other monies, and use it for a youth center; a place to get together to do their things. There are several buildings in the downtown area of Davidson Street which are vacant, and with a little bit of money, could be purchased and renovated and made a very good youth center. They would like to recommend to the Community Development group that they look at these buildings and see if there is some monies to do this. This would be one step more in keeping the kids off the street.

Councilman Short asked about the Johnston Y as the contractor for this and Reverend Horne replied this could be done if the funds are available. He stated they are trying to put this money into practical things. He would suggest there is a problem which needs to be solved and it deals with Traffic Engineering. The big trucks come up 36th Street and turn at Davidson and you wonder why no more people have been killed; there is not enough room for the trucks to make that turn without taking a telephone pole. He asked that the Traffic Engineering Department check on this to see if there is anything that can be done.

Councilman Short stated there was a very low underpass out there and there was talk of closing this. Mr. Phillips stated the proposal was to close it before you get to the railroad tracks. They discussed this with the area residents and the decision was for the first year to do nothing, but to look at it for possible action the second or third year. No decision was made for the first year. Reverend Horne stated this was the feeling of the residents. It is a dangerous underpass but they decided to wait this year to see what happens.

Councilman Short stated many years ago there was some interest in having a Southern Railroad underpass approximately where that flood culvert is shown. This would be about 37th Street. Reverend Horne replied you do not have the traffic in there on 36th Street now that Matheson Avenue is open.


Councilman Whittington stated most of the people still think Herron Avenue is a vital link across there to the Plaza. Reverend Horne stated it is if something is done for the children who have to walk in there.

Councilman Short asked if an underpass at the foot of Herron Avenue, under Southern Railroad, would be of any value? Reverend Horne asked if he is talking about opening up Herron Avenue to Tryon; if so, this would put industrial traffic in there.

Mr. Barber stated there are two parks in there and the children going to school use this park. They would suggest sidewalks on Herron Avenue for the children walking to school without being in the road; most of the people are in favor of closing the underpass under the Norfolk-Southern - some are not.

ADJOURNMENT.

Upon motion of Councilwoman Locke, seconded by Councilman Whittington, and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned.


Ruth Armstrong, City Clerk