

December 7, 1976  
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Community Development Hearing

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, met on Tuesday, December 7, 1976, at 7:30 o'clock p.m., in the Council Chamber, City Hall, with Mayor John M. Belk presiding, and Councilmembers Betty Chafin, Louis M. Davis, Harvey G. Gantt, Pat Locke, James B. Whittington, Neil C. Williams and Joe D. Withrow present.

ABSENT: None.

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#### INVOCATION.

The invocation was given by Reverend Paul Horne.

#### HEARING ON THIRD YEAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS.

The scheduled hearing on the Third Year Community Development Block Grant Application process was called.

Mayor Belk stated he would like to thank everyone tonight who is interested in a Community Development target area. We have had some real good results since this program has been changed, and he thinks this is due to two things. It is due to the working systems from the staff; that he thinks we have received some good results from them. That he hopes we will be able to continue and to satisfy as many people as possible in this third year.

Mr. Sawyer, Director of Community Development, again reviewed the reasons for the hearing on the third year block grant application.

Councilman Gantt stated he thought he heard Mr. Sawyer say the same thing yesterday - that at this point we have already been allocated the funds for the first four years of the Program. He asked if this is right? Mr. Sawyer replied that is correct; the first three years it was \$30.0 million; the fourth year it was approximately \$7.5 million. We receive it on a declining balance so that the fourth year there is a significant decline and the fifth year another one. We are in the fifth year, and that is why we are falling from \$7.5 million to \$5.5 million. The final year it will be something like \$4.082 million.

Mr. Sawyer stated we are allocating the fifth year's money because we have to have a current three year plan at the beginning of each year. The first three year plan was for the years 1975, 1976 and 1977. The second year's plan which is the one we are currently in, is 1976, 1977 and 1978, and is the fourth year, so this year's plan will be 1977, 1978 and 1979. That gets us into the fifth year's money.

Mr. Burkhalter, City Manager, stated it might be well to remind Council and others the reason we are getting this money is because Charlotte had urban renewal. If we had not had the urban renewal, our allotment would have been around \$9.0 million rather than \$30.0 million; and it would have been \$3.0 million this year instead of \$10.0 million. The whole basis of our allotment was based on urban renewal contracts that we had.

#### Bill Convey, Accounting Aid Society Inc.

I am Bill Convey with the proposal concerning the Accounting Aid Society, Inc.

The Accounting Aid Society, Inc. a non-profit Corporation, provides free help with income tax, small business problems, and money management to

low income individuals, older Americans and disadvantaged businesses. Our office is located at 910 North Alexander Street in space provided by the Neighborhood Centers. In addition to income tax aid, we also represent taxpayers at IRS hearings throughout the year, as well as prepare amended returns for them when necessary.

There is a current problem with individual taxpayers effectively representing themselves before the IRS in connection with office audit examinations. This problem may seem more apparent than real for taxpayers engaged in professional representation. We believe that the problem is very real to lower income taxpayers who cannot afford professional advice. Instances have been noted where improper adjustments were proposed during the course of an office audit by reason of misunderstanding of facts and law by both the taxpayer and the IRS agent. In cases where professional representation was available, such misunderstandings were many times avoided. Right now, we have a woman in the CD area that we are trying to assist whose income was \$3,200 during the year 1975. She has nine children and the IRS has assessed her \$324 claiming that the refund she received last year was not correct. We also just had a call from the Legal Aid where a man was out at the IRS, a disadvantaged business man. They have assessed him several thousand dollars and he has no representation. They have now seized his car and are about to seize his house. Legal Aid has come to us to ask us if we could be of some assistance. This coming year, beginning January 1, 1977, will be a very difficult one both for our organization and the taxpayers.

The income tax forms, especially 1040A are no longer simple or short. Both Sylvia Porter and IRS Commissioner Alexander attest to that fact. This will result in many more taxpayers seeking assistance than the 700 we served last year.

Under the new Community Development program whereby \$178,000 was provided to the Neighborhood Centers Intake Division, numerous taxpayers will need referral for tax aid for which we have no funds to render. Our only source of income at this time is approximately \$3,500 from Centralina Council of Government earmarked for the older Americans. Our staff consists of only one employee who is on a temporary basis from Manpower through the CETA program. In order to serve the Neighborhood Center's Community Development Intake Division as a supportive agency we urgently need a grant of at least, or approximately \$7,000, for the period from January 1, 1977 to June 30, 1977.

Councilwoman Chafin stated she would hope we could find a way to help the Accounting Aid Society. That she thinks most of us know they have had some Community Development funds in the past, but were not able for a variety of reasons to serve during their program period a larger number of target area residents. She stated she is familiar with this agency and knows as volunteers they have been helping low income residents of the target areas for a number of years. She hopes we can find a way to assist them.

Councilman Davis stated it would be nice if someone could contact our Representatives. It seems kind of ridiculous for us to be giving money to Accounting Aid Society to help people in target areas to get their tax money back that the federal government is sending down here trying to take their money back from them on the one hand and trying to give them money on the other hand.

Joe Grier, Attorney for E. P. Nisbet Co. & Nisbet Oil Company

I am here on behalf of E. P. Nisbet Company and Nisbet Oil Company, two of the very oldest residents of one of the target areas that is cherished. Apparently in the third year plan is now a proposal, so we understand from the press and inquiries we have made, to acquire the land on which the Nisbet Companies are located, and to make a public park out of the land. The Nisbet businesses have been there for nearly 40 years. The land on which they are situated is known appropriately for such business. As far

as I know, having some familiarity with the business, it does not make any great amount of noise or any offensive odors; it is situated in such a way that it is almost obscured from view as you go along Baxter Street. It seems to me it would be a misapplication of the intention of these programs to undertake to move these businesses out of that area in which they are situated. It would obviously do a great harm to the business. There is no way under the condemnation law where businesses can recover the full damage done to it if it is forcibly taken away from a place in which it is doing well and requires it to locate in some other place. This is a good place for that business to be both from the point of view from the people who operate the business, and the people it serves.

A great many of the people that are served by that business live in the area around the business and it facilitates service to their customers to be able to get from where that business is, up Queens Road, up to Morehead Street, and into those areas. It would be very difficult to find another location that would be suitable far from the large experience that would be involved in relocating. It seems it would be very expensive to the government, and it would take a good proportion of the amount of money that is available for purposes in this area if this project were carried out. It seems it would also be very detrimental to the business.

I would like to suggest to Mr. Sawyer and the members of the Council that some further consideration be given to the suggestion which has been made, and that it be eliminated from the program. It may be that my appearance here is in a way premature because so far the plan which would have included the Nisbet Company, and its relocation has not yet been submitted to the Planning Commission, and has not been approved by it, and is not yet to you. But as a lawyer who has had a bad experience in this is like a burnt child, I am very careful about it. I came over here one day to protest the closing of Myers Street which kept the Law Building from being a corner lot location and made it an interior location. And the person who sat then in the center chair said - "well we have been planning to do this for two or three years. Why didn't you come before." I would like to make it a matter of record that on behalf of these two customers, let it be know that we vigorously protest any suggestion for relocation.

Mayor Belk asked if they are planning to relocate Nisbet Oil? Mr. Sawyer replied he thinks Mr. Grier has accurately described the status of it, and that is that it is to this date just a proposal and it has not been presented in a planning proposal. It has not yet been presented to the Planning Commission nor has it been presented to the Council nor has any public hearings been held. The subject was brought up in one of the neighborhood meetings, one of the neighborhood planning meetings in the Cherry section. It has been recognized by the residents out there as some interruption during the night. He believes it does provide 24 hour service, a lot of truck traffic. Mr. Grier replied that is not true. Mr. Sawyer stated that it was represented to them in that way; they will investigate, but that the people also feel it presents a hazard because of the storage of oil. Mr. Grier replied that is not true either; it is true there are some emergency people on duty and he supposes in some instances they might have to go back in and get some equipment; but they do not operate out of the place; the company operates 8 to 5, five days a week, except for emergency situations. The property is located on Baxter Street. That part of the plan as they understand it is to close off a portion of Baxter Street. Mr. Sawyer replied that is correct. Mr. Grier stated they would find this very injurious to the business, and he would think the citizens at large. It has not been many years since traffic consultants engaged by the City were going to widen Baxter Street, and make it a thoroughfare to provide traffic feasibility out into that area. That might have been an error to think of widening and making it a main thoroughfare. It does seem there is enough general traffic on it to warrant it as a street and the amount of traffic on it does not seem to be enough to really do any detriment, but to a neighborhood in there, and he would ask that this be looked into.

Councilman Gantt asked if it is possible for Mr. Grier's clients to attend some of these planning meetings with the neighborhood residents. We have a situation here where you have a neighborhood business, and you have residents with certain goals in mind. It might help if they can express to the residents some of the reservations expressed here tonight. Something might be worked out.

Mr. Grier stated he thinks that is a good idea and he will try to have someone at the meetings.

George Battle, Five Points Area

If you should have any questions concerning this report I would be happy to answer them, but I don't know of anything immediately that I can tell you that I have not already told you about what we are trying to do.

Mayor Belk stated that the statistics you have on the first page speaks for itself.

The Gethsemane Enrichment Program is a City of Charlotte Community Development Department project designed to "significantly increase the academic performance, and the communicative and expressive skills" of approximately 200 pre-school and school age children of the Five Point, Third Ward, and West Morehead Community Development Target Areas of Charlotte. There have been three separately funded programs to date: one which ran during the second half of the '75-'76 school year, and one during the summer months, and the last one, which began with, and is running concurrently with the '76-'77 school year. The cost factor for the program is \$1.01 per child per hour. I would like to say here that is the program amount that you approved, but we have 278 students, but we can only talk about the ones that we have approved.

We are justifiably proud of our accomplishments and cite the following areas as examples:

Since ours is a youth oriented program, we have used two crime reports, juvenile arrests and property damage, to show the program's effect on area crime rates. Our latest statistics are for the summer months of June, July, and August, 1976, and have been supplied us by the Charlotte Police Department. Compared with the same months of last year, the figures show:

Five Points

- a 38% decrease in juvenile arrests
- a 42% decrease in reports of property damage

Third Ward

- a 66% decrease in juvenile arrests
- a 40% decrease in reports of property damage

West Morehead

no records are available for this specific area.

The academic performance is as follows as you can read in terms of what we have been able to do. We are very interested in the First Case. These were typical cases of students in our area. Before we worked with the child his grade point average and reading level was about 1.8 in reading, and he read orally about 10 words a minute. After we worked with him for 1 and 1/2 months he was reading on a grade point 3.1 level in reading, and he read orally 91 words a minute. I must say here that we are very happy even though the lady is not here. This lady that taught our reading and

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directed our reading program was from Minnesota, she was a Nun and she has promised to come back and work with us this summer. We are carrying on the same work that she started with us this summer.

The rest goes for statistics for the organizations and agencies that we use here in the City of Charlotte. I would like to say that these agencies that we have listed have been more than helpful to us at the time we are trying to meet the needs of our community budget.

John Gray, 1726 Washington Avenue - Absent

Sally Thomas, League of Women Voters

I am representing the League of Women Voters. The League has not attempted to monitor closely Community Development funding or the way it has progressed, but we do have some observations and suggestions to make at this time. We appreciate the opportunity to do so.

We would like to commend you first of all for funding such an innovative program and for Youth, Homes Inc. program of group homes for youth. We feel that this treatment model is very effective and we are really pleased to see that it is a part of Community Development Program and hopefully you will consider and will continue to fund this program.

It disturbs us to see that money earmarked for satellite medical services has not been spent. We feel that many target area citizens are in dire need of these services, and we urge you to move ahead with this program right away.

We realize that you have been struggling with the problem of how to attract the absentee land owner, and are glad to see that attention is being paid to this area and hope that you will continue to work on it. We feel that it would be very helpful to the program to begin to involve more of the residents of that area in the planning.

Drainage and flooding problems are common to all parts of the City, but we are glad to see that Community Development funds are set aside to work in this particular area. We hope you will move ahead as soon as possible and hope that you will be able to get some media coverage too, because we feel that people all over the City see this as a real need and as long as you are working on the area perhaps you can get some real good support. Support for Community Development. People see that flooding is being handled by Community Development funds.

In your preliminary plan for expenditure of Block Grant funds, we note that a number of groups representing certain target areas have requested community centers in their areas. We feel that such centers might prove to be a cohesive factor in the development of a true community, and we are a little dismayed to see such a lack of response to these felt needs on the part of Community Development leaders. We hope you will give special attention to these requests for community centers and before you turn them down really try to come up with what are some very good reasons.

We have reason to feel that people in a target area do not know what services are available to them. We hope you will begin to give some real attention to this problem.

Mostly we just hope that you will be able to listen to the needs as they are expressed by the people and citizens who live in the Community Development target areas and adapt the program to these needs. We feel that perhaps more home visits, I know that a number have been done I believe 1,704 or some large number like that just since July, but in these areas we feel there are a number of elderly people as well as very poor and uneducated

people who do not really respond to the group meeting method of getting together to attack a problem so if more home visits could be done we feel would be very helpful for input into the program.

Councilman Davis asked what we have to do with satellite medical facilities in this program?

Mr. Sawyer stated to Mr. Davis this was a program that was recommended and included in the First Year Plan and it was recommended that it be worked out or undertaken by the county with a combination of the health department, mental health and the Department of Social Services. We spent a great deal of time working on that concept and trying to get that concept into operation and we propose to do it. The attempt now that we are making is to work with the neighborhood centers on the one hand. Mr. Michie is closer to it than I am and perhaps can give you some greater detail. We are working on it. Part of the reason for transferring our Social Services unit to the neighborhood centers was to set up the intake and outreach portion of that program and get it ready, and the other I think Joe do we have a schedule for getting the medical service itself in the recommending stage.

Mr. Michie stated there is a meeting in the morning at 10 o'clock with some health officials. Wylie Williams, Carol Loveless and some others are working on to get the necessary help and statistical data from the census tract so that we can adequately plan for the medical services. We have been working very closely with the Alexander Street Center Clinic that is in operation now. It has been an extremely slow process in getting all of the data that is necessary for it and getting the necessary cooperation from the county and medical community to bring all of this together.

Mr. Sawyer stated that he thought it is safe to say this has been the most complicated program that we have had to deal with. You just can not rush out and set up some medical services as some of us believed we might be able to do in the beginning.

Councilman Davis asked if there is some CD money going into these medical centers that operate out of the neighborhood centers? Mr. Sawyer replied none so far.

Mayor pro tem Whittington asked Mr. Williams, Assistant City Manager, to elaborate on that briefly.

Mr. Williams stated with relation to medical facilities the only one that we have been involved in is the Alexander Street Center. We provided the \$63,000 to purchase the building that houses that Alexander Street Center. One of the things we are looking to now is the best way to provide health care for the CD target areas. The development needs analysis to find out whether we need go to a mobile medical facility or whether we need another center for the treating and referral. Our studies and our discussions with the Health Department will show us the best way to go. When we have those we will get back with the Council to discuss our moves from there.

Reverend Paul Horne, North Charlotte Action Association

Reverend Horne stated they have been involved in this for several years, working for some time to get these things done; that they are beginning to see some progress. The community is beginning to look better; sidewalks which were asked for have been finished; one drainage problem is being taken care of; paving and curbing of most of the streets has been taken care of - yet there are still some things in their original request.

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He listed the following programs the North Charlotte Action Association requests for implementation in the Third Year Program of Community Development:

Capital Improvements - Continue street improvement such as paving, curb and gutter work originally planned and not yet done. This is a program which demands constant attention, up-to-date care and maintenance.

Sidewalks - There are still areas where sidewalks are needed which were not covered in the Plan for the first two years. Suggested were Alexander from 35th to Mercury Streets; Gaston Avenue from 35th to 36th Streets; Brookside Avenue, Lee Avenue, possibly Rich and Benard (some of these people may not want it, but they want to give them the opportunity because if you walk on those streets you have to walk in the middle of the street).

Drainage - They still have some drainage problems that were in the Plan but have still not been taken care of. 35th Street to the train tressel beside the Johnson YMCA property; Whiting Avenue to the Highland School area; in the Bearwood and Dinglewood areas although he understands some work has been done there.

Mr. Sawyer advised that the Highland Avenue drainage problem, from the Highland Avenue School to the tressel, was approved by City Council yesterday.

Another area which still has drainage problems is Alexander Street from 36th Street to 37th Street, and down Mercury Street toward the railroad. When it rains water comes down Alexander, divides at Mercury and 37th, turning left and going down through backyards on Highland, then down to the creek bank. They have tried in the past to get a larger drain put in there. In the past it has backed up rather deep in the yards on 37th Street toward Chestnut at the low end - he has seen it up to the front porches of some of the houses. In fact, he was working with a family near Graham Street who could not take care of themselves because of a heart attach and he had to wade through to get to them.

Housing Code Enforcement - They request that the program for inspection of housing, both residential and commercial, be speeded up. They need to enforce the requirements on vacant houses; make sure houses are not rented until they are brought up to Code. Some of them are not being taken care of. Those they have called in about have been taken care of, but the others have not and as a consequence the landlords rent the house to someone and the next time the person moves in the rent goes up and it is still a house that needs to be repaired before it is rented.

Loans and Grants - They request continued outright grants to those who meet the requirements, making more grants available. There is a need for more and better publicity about the grant program. They are constantly fighting complaints about City Council, communism - they say you want to take their money, find out what they have so you can mortgage their homes and take their property. They are constantly answering questions because somebody is going around telling this kind of stuff. He has assured them time and again that this is not true. These elderly people have no great income and they have saved up over the years; they have no insurance for health or medical bills. They may have a few thousand dollars in savings, but if they went to the hospital tomorrow it would all be gone in a week. They are afraid if they tell what they have, if they take this program, they will lose that money. One lady has called him three times about it and has talked to her neighbor five or six times; she finally told the neighbor the other day she is going to get back in the program. It is a grant, and they want this better explained to the people so that they can take advantage of it. Low interest loans should be made available as they have on back door labor. The people who have received the grants and loans are tickled pink. They invite him over to see their "castle". They are proud of the program but they need these recommendations and it needs to be publicized with as little

confusion as possible in explaining it. One thing he had mentioned before is explaining what a person could have in the way of income, securities, savings accounts, etc. in order to get it. As he understands, there is no limit as far as that is concerned; they can get it if their income is not above \$4,500.

Park Improvements - They ask continuance of the mini-park plans, where the land is available. There is not too much land available in the area for mini-parks, but the one on Pickney and Charles, the process should be implemented and plans made to go ahead and set up that one. Also in the Dinglewood and Bearwood area - this is a large area and there certainly is a need for a park there.

The walkway from Oakwood Avenue to Herring Avenue Park needs to be implemented for the safety of the children from the Plaza Road schools going to and from the park. There is an area that cuts through there which is City property which can be utilized as a direct path from Oakwood into the park on the back side to save the children from having to walk around Anderson and Academy to get in. This would facilitate the use of the park by the schools.

Social Services - Provide a hot lunch program for the senior citizens in the North Charlotte target area. They have one at Plaza United Methodist Church and one at Plaza Presbyterian Church. He has been trying for two years to get this program but it has been put on the back burner. They have the facilities and they have the people who need the service and would appreciate it. They hope funds will be provided for this service.

They have asked for a North Charlotte Center such as that in the Belmont Community to provide services for their senior citizens and for community activities. They are trying to work with the Y. M. C. A. The Y. M. C. A. has been a great improvement and they feel that under the present leadership they are going to see some real advantages for their children and the community with the program that they offer.

There are several other programs he feels ought to be initiated and funded in the North Charlotte area - Accounting Aid program to help senior citizens take care of their tax needs; Helping Hand program; Manpower program; Housing program that helps people who get in difficulty with the landlord and this type of thing. They trust that in all areas where funds are not spent and are not needed for the particular program, that these funds will be allocated to all the areas where there are not sufficient funds for their community.

Ms. Arleen Higgins - West Morehead Target Area

Ms. Higgins stated she is a program director at the U. W. C. A. on Park Road and is in charge of the Third Ward Citizens' Center on South Church Street, the area referred to by the City as the West Morehead Target Area. She was formerly a statistician at UNCC. For the past two months she has personally interviewed 63 families in that area to assess the living conditions now and make projections for their future needs. The figures she is presenting are not complete but she believes they do present a fair evaluation.

To present the general living conditions, she stated that over 80 percent of the area is zoned industrial; only 9 percent of the dwellings are owner occupied, most are owned by absentee landlords which makes the deterioration potential greater. Most units are over 55 years old and 80 percent have no central heating. 40 of the 63 families use a single coal and wood burning stove for warmth. 46 percent of the families survive on incomes below the national poverty level of \$3,743 per year. The population density is higher than the City average.



When she came on the job she had the understanding that the residents wanted to remain in the area. It is true that many of them have lived there for forty years and longer and there is a sense of community there and the people look after one another. Nevertheless, based on the interviews she has had, she stated the people are ready to move and are willing to move.

For the past two months, I have personally interviewed 63 families in the West Morehead area to assess the living conditions now and to make projections for the future needs of the residents of the area. The statistical figures I brought tonight are not complete, but do present a fair evaluation of these future needs.

To reacquaint you with the general living conditions, over 80% of the area is zoned industrial. Only 9% of the dwellings are owner occupied, most are owned by absentee landlords which makes the deterioration potential greater. Most units are over 55 years old and 80% have no central heating. 40 of the 63 families I interviewed use a single coal and wood burning stove for warmth. 46% of the families survive on incomes below the national poverty level of \$3,743 per year. 48 of the 63 families have incomes below this level. The population density is higher than the City average.

I came into this job with the understanding that the residents wanted to remain in the area, and it's true that many have lived there for 40 years and longer. There is a sense of community there and the people look after one another.

Nevertheless, based on the interviews that I did the people have had it up to here. They are ready to move and they are willing to move. They feel this way because the living conditions in the area have deteriorated to the point that they desire a more comfortable surrounding. Most especially expressed the desire to have central heating because I have seen them day after day, many are elderly, many are disabled. They consume a great deal of energy every day just finding enough fire wood. Scraping up enough coal just to keep warm and this is a day to day process. They don't have enough fuel for a week.

It is incomprehensible to me knowing that in 1976, an area like this still exist in Charlotte. One of the largest and most prosperous cities in the Southeast. But even more incomprehensible is that the people have already been told about a Three Year Projection for demolition, they live in a state of limbo and apprehension because they never know from day to day when they will get a notice saying that their house will be torn down. What is even worse is that I have just been told recently that it could be six years.

Councilwoman Chafin asked Mr. Sawyer to reply to this.

Ms. Higgins stated that is what upsets her and some of the people the most.

Mayor pro tem Whittington requested Mr. Sawyer to go back and relate to Ms. Higgins the problem in this neighborhood long before it became a Community Development Program, it was not under urban renewal. As you well know it became a Community Development three years ago. And then tell her what we have tried to do. Hopefully you can help us with the people who live there, and explain to them what we are trying to do to help them. Unfortunately, we will have to move them out of there in order to help them.

Mr. Sawyer stated Mr. Mayor and Ms. Higgins, the conditions which you have described are well known to us. We have known about them for a long period of time. The only reason that the conditions have not been corrected or something has not been done to date is because of lack of money. The whole urban renewal program ran out of money and Charlotte used that money that it did receive as effectively as I think it could have under the circumstances in that program we cleared this Brooklyn area, a portion of Dilworth, Greenville, First Ward, and a portion of downtown. A combination

of circumstances has not given us the results in a residential way that we had expected. But, it was not until we received the Block Grant of Community Development funds that City Council was able to allocate some of those funds to correct some of those conditions which you have described. It is a matter of priority, but the plan does call for the clearance of that area. Most of that area that lies south of Independence Boulevard, between Independence Boulevard and Summit Avenue now, we have not planned to spend any of the money currently allocated North of Independence although we are aware that conditions up there are pretty desperate and pretty severe also. This portion along Jefferson Street, Winnifred Street, Palmer Street and those streets, money will be spent to acquire that property over a three year period. It may go into a fourth year. We don't know. Inflation takes its toll and money is still limited. Funds that have been allocated will be used to correct these conditions as soon as we can.

Would you get us a brief status of where we are with respect to acquiring the property scheduled to be acquired in this year?

Mr. Phillips stated he does not have the statistics with me on the number of properties purchased in West Morehead, but you remember the first directions we had was to buy the two churches which used up quite a bit of our first year money. We are now getting into the properties closest to Independence Boulevard and working in a southern direction.

Mr. Sawyer stated we have used about all the money we plan to use this year. All the money which has been allocated in this the first year fund.

Mr. Whittington stated Mr. Sawyer, Mr. Williams whispered to me that we condemned some of those in there. Could you tell us how many?

Mr. Sawyer stated you have approved condemning three or four there. You have approved condemning twelve I believe, all together in all of the nine areas.

I think he means the Clanton, Hill section which was for housing code enforcements which quite a few structures were demolished as a result of that.

Mr. Gantt stated were these people relocated under our plan? I think we have quite a bit of discussion on what would happen to the people that were moved as a result of code enforcement.

Mr. Sawyer stated most of the people who are concentrated North of Independence Boulevard are over here by the railroad Mr. Gantt. Because it was in a Community Development project area you passed a special resolution authorizing us to give them benefits, that is relocation benefits, but we did not acquire that property. It was condemned under the housing code.

Councilman Gantt asked if these people were moved and provided with these benefits? The answer was they have been.

Councilwoman Chafin asked if we can expedite this project? The answer was more money is needed.

Councilwoman Chafin stated this is a very desperate need in this city. It is one of the worse situations she has seen.

Mayor pro tem Whittington requested Mr. Phillips to sit with Ms. Higgins and help her any way he can tonight and later.

Ms. Higgins stated she would like to make more one statement. Since the people are in such limbo and the landlords are too, is there any way as soon as you

know something that each resident of the area and each landlord can be notified by letter about when so that the landlords especially can feel that fixing up these homes is warranted or is a waste of money or the people will have some peace of mind. It is a terrible way to live.

Mayor pro tem Whittington stated if she will get with Mr. Phillips he can help her with that.

Mr. Phillips stated he thinks there is a big problem here. He thought these people were already informed. We have a neighborhood assistant to work with these general areas and he was out at a couple of meetings very early in the program and the Neighborhood Assistants were working. Ms. Annie Parker is sitting in the back. Maybe she would like to talk to Ms. Higgins.

Ms. Parker replied that she and Ms. Higgins have been together and have been working together down in the Morehead area. They have been able to work together very much and will continue to work together in the future. But Ms. Higgins wanted to come and tell her plight about the people when she came new into the program. The program was already going when she came in. One reason that Mr. Michie and myself and several other people have been involved in Morehead, they have been telling us they wanted to stay together. That she thinks they have had about four meetings on that. Mrs. Parker stated this is what they have been telling us, and since Ms. Higgins and she have been doing a one-on-one study they found this not to be true.

Mr. Burkhalter stated there is one thing that went without notice here. She indicated these people were living in a state of concern and fear that they were going to be run off tomorrow or something. No one is moved out of a home in that area without a place first to move into. Is that not right? Mr. Sawyer replied that is correct.

Mayor pro tem Whittington stated he thinks it is correct to say, and unfortunately so, he does not know how you can prevent some of the fears and apprehensions and limbo, to use a term she used. He does not think there is anyone on this Council who does not know the conditions of that area. But, as it was pointed out it did not get into urban renewal.

Mr. Burkhalter stated the point he wants to make is nobody is going to go in there and move them out of their house with no place to go.

Mr. Sawyer replied that is right, and they are constantly counselling with them to stay put. They know the conditions are bad but they should wait until assistance can be given to them.

#### Michael Turner and Carolyn Edwards - Extended School Days Program

The Extended Days Program is an extension of the regular school day that addresses itself to students that have some problems adjusting to the regular day school. They come to school between 5:30 and 8:30 p.m., at four different schools that we have in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. One of those schools is Garinger High School, Olympic High School, Smith Jr. High School and the Street Academy. We are soliciting for your help the employment of these programs which would deal with 9th and 10th grade students. We have had a great deal of problem with students that are not in school during the day getting in trouble, having problems with the law, with their parents, and no constructive use of time. Most of them are desirous of employment. Through no fault of their own, our program is set up and we

are not receiving the same benefits as some of the traditional day school programs in relations to job programs. And, because of the age of these 9th grade students being 14 and 15 years old, there is a need to find some otherway to find employment for the students. We feel that the employment outreach program will address itself to these concerns and these needs of this particular group of students. We are hopeful with a three component program that the constructive use of leisure time during the day will be used to improve the job preparation skills, mental readiness for work, as well as being placed on jobs. We are submitting this program in a hurry because we found out about this meeting within the last couple of days. We hope that the Council will take it into consideration after its approved here.

Mayor pro tem Whittington asked if they are funded now?

Mr. Turner replied they are funded through the State.

Mayor pro tem Whittington asked if he is saying they are funded adequately? Mr. Turner replied that is right.

Councilwoman Locke asked if he has copies of the proposal?

Mr. Turner replied he has three copies and one is filed with the City Clerk

#### Carolyn Edwards - Extended School Day

I just might add the components of this group deals with survival skills, and community living skills, as well as the job preparation aspect of it. We feel the students needs some help to hold viable positions rather than just positions that have no professional goals for them.

Are you familiar with all of the general social programs that are now going on in the Community Development Program? You don't see any duplication?

We have talked today with the members of the Community Development Commission. Programs, for example, the Multi Media program may be filled but this programs entire entrance will be filled by working through the school system. We can correlate our efforts somehow. We do want to be considered in whatever planning for the action year. Here again on the short notice we have not been able to keep from duplicating programs. There is a need and these students do need the services of the job placement.

Ms. Edwards stated all of the present programs are designed for students that work, programs that are through the school system for students that are 10th graders and older. The 10th grade program is geared to only 15 students per school. That's the CWE Program. That is not even in all schools. I am almost certain that the 9th grade program is not in effect because 9th grade students should be in school all day and cannot leave school and go to work. Except that we have this extended school day program, and we have 30 students per class, we have 90 students who are not attending school during the day. These students are coming to us in the evening. This leaves a whole day they are out on the streets. Many of them are getting into trouble, many of them are getting into drugs, or alcohol and we have a number of girls who have babies. We have problems providing jobs for them. We are funded to provide jobs for the 10th graders and above.

What we are asking if there is some way to provide day service for these students that we can go into the target communities and serve them with job placement, with job training, and some way provide them services to get these students off the streets and into some kind of program.

Mr. Gantt asked if the current Manpower programs are not eligible in helping with the situation expressed. Are funds for student work programs limited to people or students that are 15 years and older. Are you familiar with the Manpower programs?

Ms. Locke stated we didn't fund that. We had a large discussion on it. They requested it and we denied it.

Mr. Gantt stated that's the one with Charlotte Area Fund.

Ms. Edwards stated some of them went out. They went directly to the schools. The schools have difficulty when they have 2300 students or 1300 students to go around that large population to say there is an evening school in operation, and we will just take ten of these positions to give to them. Logically we should fit in with that, but we don't.

Mayor pro tem Whittington asked if they are with the schools, and Ms. Edwards replied both of them are.

Mr. Sawyer stated he presumed this proposal is included in the transcript given to the City Clerk.

#### Bill Williamson - Fourth Ward As A Target Area

I am representing the Arts and Science Council. My purpose is to discuss Fourth Ward and having asked you to designate this as an additional target area for funding by the City Block Grant of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1974. I have copies of this proposal I would like to give out.

Those of us who have been working with Spirit Square and a new Science Nature Museum, known as Discovery Place, have clearly shown from public actions produced thus far, that we consider the development of our objectives for the blocks between 6th and 7th Streets, Church and College as the most important catalyst in attracting people to the central city area both day and night.

For example these types of works put forth on the Corporate Action Plan that was passed by the City last and the Spirit Square work which has been done and presented to you earlier.

We are especially aware of the concept introduced for Charlotte's inner-city Fourth Ward area by the public spirited citizens who produced "Stained Glass and Gingerbread" with which all of you are familiar. This booklet was prepared a couple of years ago which describes what the Fourth Ward area is like and what can be done with it.

The Fourth Ward area between Church Street, 10th Street, and 5th Street and the Southern Railroad has been established as an eligible urban renewal area by our Planning Commission.

In our opinion no specific program could do more for all the citizens of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County than to move forward to carry out the long range plan adopted by the Planning Commission for this area. (The maps illustrating these plans are submitted along with "Stained Glass and Gingerbread" and the two reports prepared for Spirit Square and the Arts and Science Council).

We urge that the Council add two blocks to the Urban Renewal Plan areas; these two blocks are bounded by 6th and 7th Streets and by College and Church

Streets. With this addition we would have a "C. D." area which would make possible the funding of any number of important actions relating to the Spirit Square block and the block immediately to the West. (Between Tryon and Church and between 6th and 7th Streets).

We will if we did this, have in a sense two areas; one eligible under the General Statutes of North Carolina, 160, 454, etc. and one eligible under the eligibility criteria of the 1974 Housing Act.

The addition of the C. D. area as defined herein would place in your hands the tools needed to move forward with constructive activities in the Fourth Ward area. We can think of no single action which would be more important for the future of up-town Charlotte. The Arts and Science Council would wholeheartedly support the addition; our Planning Commission will be able to see some of its adopted objectives moving to completion; certainly those who have and are investing their funds and their lives in rehabilitating some of the fine residences in the area would be grateful. Lastly, we think that the way will be opened to see the development of a growing and prosperous up-town restricted area.

All of the Cultural Activities we already have underway at Spirit Square and those which are to come will see the entire area "come alive" to the end that the broad purpose of the Cultural Action Plan will be achieved as the City carries out its own long range plan for the Fourth Ward area.

The City has since 1962 with the "O'Dell Plan" and the 1971 Ponte, Travers Wolf plan and its own plan for 1995 have looked forward to the development of Fourth Ward at an orderly pace.

In summary then, we urge you to consider making Fourth Ward and the two blocks containing Spirit Square and the proposed Discovery Places a C. D. target area. This will enable all of us to strengthen our efforts to revitalize and enhance this area of our City.

Mayor pro tem Whittington thanked Mr. Williamson on behalf of Council and in fact all of the citizens of Charlotte. He wants to thank him for what he had done for that area of Charlotte and ask you now that what you are saying now, I believe, is that you want to extend the C. D. area already designated to cover those two blocks between 6th and 7th Streets between Tryon and Church Street. Is that about right?

Mr. Williamson replied he is asking the Council to name the Fourth Ward area as now defined under urban renewal and add those two blocks and declare it a target area. It is not a target area at this time. None of that area is eligible for programming or any other future monies that may be available under the C. D. programs.

Councilman Gantt stated he has some real difficulties trying to picture in his mind why Fourth Ward would be eligible for these kinds of funds. He thinks when he looks at the nine areas that have been designated and hears about other areas such as Hoskins in view of such socially - economic characteristics, then he has some difficulty seeing funds allocated in that direction. There is no question that a lot of what has happened in Fourth Ward happened due to private initiative in many cases, but the City has certainly helped in that area regarding zoning, in regard to the park development that we are going to see through to the end. Personally he had some difficulty seeing some of this \$37,000,000 allocated for that purpose. He may be way off base and there may be some stipulations in the statutes that allow that fund to get some funds, but the way we used it up to this point have been largely in areas that he doesn't think that without substantial help from the public treasury you would have neighborhood revitalization. He suspects that what is good about Fourth Ward is that we are seeing a lot of that done as a result of private initiative. Even though we have put in some capital in the area he doesn't know that these are the kinds of objectives for consideration.

Mr. Williamson stated he had the same considerations when this idea first came to his attention several months ago. In reading over the Act, or at least the summary that he saw, many cities throughout the country have used some of these funds in historic preservation. Maybe when we were thinking this thing through several years ago, when we started, we did not realize that we could use some of it in that area. It may be of benefit to the entire community. All he is asking is that the Council and staff look at this again under the present light of the situation.

Councilman Williams asked if it were so classified what would he recommend doing that is not already being done?

Mr. Williamson replied he thinks the type of things that go on in that area would be, it would be certain amounts of land acquisition that could be speeded up. Other improvements such as sidewalks and types of things that are not already allocated. You could also do programming in there that would be generated through Spirit Square, for example, for that neighborhood and other neighborhoods would benefit from it too.

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Mr. Humphrey Cummings - Legal Aid Society.

I came tonight because I am primarily concerned with the aspect of housing in the Community Development proposals and planning. Especially with the proposed relocation of housing. I share Ms. Higgins opinion that it does not seem to be moving fast enough and I would also like for Council to address what would be done in terms of providing additional housing for people to be relocated too. Are there any plans for construction of housing? Many of the residents in the target areas are currently in unsafe and unsanitary, poorly heated housing and we have occasion to deal with them almost on a daily basis. My concern is where will they be relocated? When will the necessary housing to furnish this relocation be available? What steps and means are being taken to secure decent housing for people in the area?

My second primary concern is the comprehensiveness of the things I have heard at the two hearings in terms of characteristics that seem to be prevalent throughout all of the target areas. Such as, overcrowding, lack of owner occupied dwellings, low income, low levels of formal education and so forth and so on.

It seems to me like all of the social service agencies I have heard of are singularly staked out on some particular aspect, but I see no comprehensive onslaught into these various indicia of a target area. It seems to me by not addressing this in a more comprehensive way the Council is only touching something that is not getting to the root, one of the roots being decent, safe, sanitary housing. If all of these factors that are listed in this book through the proposals which were first drawn up, exist in all these nine areas, it seems to me like the Board knew of what could be done to get rid of these totality conditions. Also, it is my understanding that the City has an inter-graded municipal information system. How is that system being utilized to red flag areas that might easily and readily become in the same state or situation as these nine areas. The target area nine today could be target area fifteen tomorrow, and it could happen without Council knowing it, simply because of the lack of monitoring and coordination. Also, one of the things that disturbs me in terms of coordination and comprehensiveness is the various city agencies that are interacting in these areas. At the same time they don't seem to be doing it in a comprehensive way, or an organized way. Zoning being one of the things - many of the areas are zoned industrial and/or business which leads and adds to the deterioration of a neighborhood, and also, which makes living in that neighborhood worse than would be the case without that type zoning. Those problems you don't seem to be addressing.

In terms of the possible hearing procedures; it seems to me that I have heard many social agencies come before the Council in these two nights. I have seen very few, if any, of the residents of the area. I have heard talk of the residents not understanding various programs, various services that are available to them. My feeling here is that this could be improved, or that, or the feeling from the fellow at North Charlotte, I believe, of the feeling of fear of the Council itself. If perhaps hearings could be held - yes, in addition to the ones Community Development has had by the Committee of Council who oversees the Community Development, I believe it is the Public Works Committee, in these areas and actually hear what the residents have to say.

Lastly, it seems to me that there has been -- well, when I got here my concern was housing. My concern is broader than that to say the whole physical versus social dichotomy, if there be one, while the proposals speak of sort of a goal in terms of expenditure of funds which are good. It seems to me like it is sort of a chicken and egg proposal, whether the environment contributes to the social decadence or ruin, or whether the social decadence or ruin creates or leads to the environmental problem, or the physical environmental problems. I have no answers for that except to say again that I think that through more comprehensiveness and through better organization, cooperation among the various elements of the city government, that these can be better rooted out. But, when the Community Development Department is operating in one sphere, and zoning is operating in another sphere, and when the citizens or the people of the area



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do not understand either sphere, it seems to me that the problem of Community Development, or I don't know, maybe the intent is have a continual every year allocation from the federal to the city to the neighborhood. But the idea is to eradicate; there has to be a more universal approach, or targeted way of dealing with it.

Councilwoman Locke asked how long he has lived in Charlotte? Mr. Cummings replied it has been an off and on thing; that he got here in 1964.

Councilwoman Locke asked how long he has been back? Since we have had the Community Development Department? Since we have had Community Development hearings? That we have proceeded with these hearings for three years now. She asked if he realized how the Community Development people came to Council, and about the neighborhood organizations. That she thinks he misunderstands. In the target areas they have numerous meetings and they have from the very beginning. In some they have had 60 or more and that is just in one target area, and they have people on board all the time counseling with these people in target areas. She stated she thinks some of his problems we need to address, but she thinks there is a lack of understanding, and she thinks Terry Roach, his Director, understands. Perhaps he should come down and talk to Joe Michie and Vernon Sawyer and let them help him understand better how we operate.

Mr. Cummings replied he thinks if she will note he said in addition to what Community Development has done in the area of hearings, the problem the gentleman addressed from the North Charlotte area with citizens feeling these are for Council, not the people who are on the site, even though there is some of that. Though he understands what she is saying, and it may be a good response to what he has said, his position still stands.

Mr. Art Lynch - Youth Council Multi-Media Workshop.

Council Members, I would like to first thank you for two things. One was reappointing me to the Area Fund Board of Directors, and the second was for your unanimous support of our program, The Charlotte Mecklenburg Youth Council Multi-Media Workshop.

What is being passed out to you now is a very brief draft for the proposal of services for fiscal year beginning July 1, 1977 through June 30, 1978. At the present time we are under contract with the Community Development Department. It was begun November 18 of this year and will terminate June 30 of this year.

As it states in our objectives, we will be working with 200 students who will receive comprehensive evaluation and direct counseling services in the areas of academic remediation, career orientation, career placement, post-secondary educational opportunities, social service referrals and follow-up services. Students will also be afforded the opportunity to take supplemental academic courses in T. V. and radio broadcast production, photography, journalism, offset press operation, reading and language art workshops and personal development.

Additionally, we work with 250 target area students who will be involved in a program designed to increase their interests and participation in the actual development of recreational, social, business and home activities for themselves and other target area residents.

We have a total project participant goal of 450 students and parents and it should be noted that these objectives and activities will be similar to activities currently being provided by contract between the Community Development Department and CMYC, and also with this program budget.

I would like to state concerning the Extended Day Program, its representative spoke earlier, their program deals specifically with as they said, 9th and 10th grade students. Mr. Gantt asked the question - there are very limited funds in the areas for employing students, for career orientation work, for work experience. Each school, I believe, elementary work, junior high school and high school, is only allotted 15 slots for the entire student body and just

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at the Youth Council, with 9th and 10th grade students from target areas and non-target areas, we have had over 400 students who wanted to apply for CMYC jobs. We have 350 job slots available for the entire Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. It is a very large problem. Plus, if you consider the rate of unemployment among adults who are now competing for jobs that youth could take it increases that problem also. Our organization primarily tries to tie in resources and opportunities to make them available to all target area students or all students in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. We receive funding from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to work with Junior High School students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg; we receive funding from the Centralina Council of Government. I believe Ms. Locke has reviewed some of our proposals to work with students within the county areas. We receive the Community Development funds to work with target area students.

Our program last year was to deal with 250 students. We dealt with 975. Program goals were met by 379 percent for reduced costs. Two reasons primarily we were able to do this - we worked the crud out of our staff, and we were also able to get additional staff persons through the CETA Program. Utilizing CETA staff, we were not only able to serve target area residents which were included in our reports, but we served over 1500 students in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area, target area and non-target area. We did not come into conflict with our contracts because we were able to use outside staff, CETA personnel, to work with other students. I do not think I have to document the need in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. Especially the areas of youth. Our philosophy is that the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow, and unless we are able to channel opportunities for them to develop this natural resource which is the most valuable natural resource our country has, it will be as if we open up an oil well and just pump the oil out into the ocean.

I will have to state this candidly. The number of students that we work with under our contracts is very small compared to the number of students of the families in the target areas who need program services. Because of budgetary limitations, the amount of funds that are allocated for contractual services, and also staff limitations, it is almost completely unfeasible to think that one agency, or two agencies could provide all of these services. In the past year we have coordinated our program services with the school system and other Community Development agencies and non-Community Development agencies, to try to provide services to students and their parents. We feel that we have been very successful. Again as I state, we feel that because of the number of parents and students who need program services, referral services, and academic remediation. Persons who already know how to communicate will learn how to read, write, or get some survival skills.

We are just basically scratching the surface. It is a long tedious process to try to uplift persons in the target areas, but it can be done, it has been done, and we have done it.

I would like to hope that we can continue to have support of Council, and to try to work with City Council and other governmental agencies to try to eradicate the needs that exist in target areas.

Mr. Quinton Boulware - Grier Heights Community.

Members of the Council I come before you on behalf of the Grier Heights Community to speak to that precious part of community development that is called citizens' input or citizens' participation. Be it one or the other, we take it to mean it is our part of the program that enables us to have some voice in which is to be done in our community. After the tedious work and consideration on both parts, we the community of Grier Heights can expect a stake of a request to be honest. With that in mind I come before you not only for the third year input, but for the Community Development Program for Grier Heights. For the impassionate request to ask this body that you do everything in your power to have those requests we have submitted for the past three years honored as soon as possible so the situation will not be one of the programs, shelves full of requests and no completions.

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Since I have spoken of the past year's performance, let me briefly state some of the things that have not proceeded so smoothly, and hope this efficient body will help in any way that it sees fit or can.

Physical Improvements - All of the proposed new streets and sidewalks agreed upon the first and second year be completed as soon as possible. All the physical structures requested the first and second year be built.

Relocation and Economic Development - The remainder of residents left to be relocated in Grier Heights be relocated in Grier Heights if they so desire.

The businesses in Grier Heights should be given some kind of a plan for them to be relocated in a new commercial structure proposed for our community.

Social programs now in existence, activities be increased in what manner they can. What manner they can to speed it up.

Mr. Mayor and Council, if remarks have been heard and understood correctly, we would like to have the following things done by the community under the third year for the Community Development Program. We request the following:

1. To reserve itemized physical improvement until our first and second year improvements materialize.
2. We request that the Community Development program present to us the target date for completion of those physical improvements already approved, both first and second year, so we may help in suggesting additional improvements.
3. We request that the Community Development Department meet with us, with suggestions and plans they think will help us to make our community a better place to live and play also.
4. That some of the things they include in these suggestions and plans be things of beautification in nature.
5. We request the amount of money to be spent under Physical Improvement, Relocation and Economic Development, Human Services and Rehabilitation be submitted to us for the third year.
6. We request also that the Community Development Department work with the Community Improvement Department on a concentrated effort to clean off all trashy and overgrown lots.

We highly commend the Community Development for completion of the following improvements:

1. Completion of a portion of the first year street improvements.
2. The rehabilitation of a number of senior citizens owner occupied homes.
3. The urgent returning of residents located in the Rock area.

Mayor pro tem Whittington asked if the Rock area apartments have all been demolished? Mr. Sawyer replied we have not demolished any of the Rock apartments. We have purchased them. We are relocating the families gradually. Sadie Jordan is here and can tell us how many are left.

Ms. Jordan stated some have been relocated - they have relocated all except three of the tenants that resided in the Rock Apartments; to date they have relocated 33 families and individuals out of Grier Heights.

Mayor pro tem Whittington stated he asked that question because his memory tells him this is the place they wanted corrected first.

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Mr. Boulware stated he knows the decision will help somebody's credibility. It could be theirs because they had no idea it would take this long to put in a traffic light. He won't say too much about it yet since they have made a start on it. If they give them too much praise, it may take another year and a half. Mayor pro tem Whittington advised it is being put up today, he agrees it took a long time. Mr. Boulware replied he is glad the communication door has been kept open so they can come to Council.

Councilman Gantt stated they have had two or three people from the neighborhoods so far and he thinks there has been a kind of interesting thread running through a lot of what they say. On the one hand, he thinks they are grateful and pleased with some things that they see in the community - the rehabilitation of some of the homes in the area and some of the street improvements that have been made, but one of the things that bothers him though is that our staff people say that they make the best effort in the world to see that all of the people in the neighborhoods are informed. Council is aware of a number of public hearings that go on from time to time and occasionally get by to some of these just to see how it works, but apparently there are a number of people who still do not know what is happening. Apparently, from Mr. Boulware's comments he feels that he is still not getting the opportunity to fully communicate. He asked if he could tell him why he would suggest that kind of thing?

Mr. Boulware replied he suggests in essence that in the recommendations and requests they not go so far ahead. It is difficult to say what they want in the third year, or work out a plan when they are so far behind in the years No. 1 and 2. Councilman Gantt stated he agrees, he thinks that is a very valid point. It has been explained to him and others that is just the way the federal programs work. We have not even had time to get No. 2 going and what he suggested is that they do not want to see anything done in terms of physical improvements in the third year if we cannot get the first and second years totally done.

Mr. Boulware stated if they get the third year involved in the first year, and they have not touched the second year, then they go ahead making plans for the third year. They would like all energies and efforts to be directed to the first and second years. Then after they have gotten that far, then consider the third year.

Councilman Gantt stated he thinks there is a question as to whether there is some lack of communication in terms of what the people in the community approve as their program and what Council ultimately makes a decision on as the approved program for the community. He is hoping that the staff people who relate to the people in the community make it clear as to what Council ultimately approved after hearing them, after hearing their reports, after looking the whole situation over, so that there is no false expectations on anybody's part as to what is finally approved. Sometimes there is a difference between the neighborhood group's wants and what Council actually approves for a specific year.

Mr. Boulware stated sometimes Community Development brings them information and sometimes they feel it is very slowly - maybe if they could get some of the information first hand. Councilman Gantt stated he thinks they ought to be able to come to Council anytime they want to.

Councilman Withrow stated he thinks where they are "missing the boat" is that it takes time for a lot of the things they come to Council and ask for to be done. A lot of the things are on contract and they have just not gotten around to doing them but they will be done before this program that they are talking about tonight. It just so happens that federal government operates slowly and you have to send in your requests a way ahead of time, but that does not mean that these things that have already been approved are not going to be done. They have not been done yet, but they will be done. They had to get the people out of the Rock homes in order to demolish those. He thinks they will find that the program is their program and most of these things they are talking about are going to be done, it just takes time.

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Mayor pro tem Whittington stated he thinks the first thing that all of them have to understand is that this is a fault of the system. That he thinks he is correct in saying that whatever the Grier Heights Community Association came forward with, that is the plan, the plan that the Re-Development Commission staff presented to City Council. He does not think it has changed any. He asked Councilman Gantt if he meant to imply that?

Councilman Gantt replied that what he meant is that often in community meetings requests are made to build a community center and do a couple of other things that people would proceed with that as a type of plan and that is not the plan.

Mayor pro tem Whittington stated he thinks without question that while we are behind, he does not know of any section of the city where they are more in step - the government and the people - in the plan than they are in Grier Heights.

Mr. Boulware stated they feel too that maybe it is a lack of communication. They know that the type of person that needs to be present never attends a meeting. They thought maybe some agency through negligence in reaching these people has caused so much anxiety for them. It is bad to hear word-of-mouth from the streets hearsay; instead they think they ought to hear it from some official agency.

Adale Garris, Southside Park Area.

Ms. Garris stated she is speaking on behalf of the Southside Community. They request the following things in their community in the third year Community Development Plan:

1. We request that all vacant structures located in the Southview area be torn down to prevent fires, vandalism, and death.
2. We request a study be made of the street crossing "problem" we will encounter on Remount Road for our children going to school and to the park, and a solution in the form of a push button traffic light or pedestrian walkway.
3. "No Truck" signs placed at strategic entrances to the heart of our community.
4. All trashy and overgrown lots cleaned off; we will help in identifying these lots.
5. We request that the Economic Development section of Community Development do everything in its power to help develop a commercial site along with Tyson's Grovery for neighborhood shopping.
6. We request that Housing Code enforcement be implemented on the east end of Fairwood Street.
7. We request that street lights be placed at locations in the Brookhill area that are badly needed. We will help in identifying these locations.
8. Request that regular street cleaning services be increased.
9. We request that in addition to proposed improvements already made to our park, that lights for night recreation and baseball games be installed.
10. We request a fence be installed along Remount Road adjacent to our present park to protect kids while playing.
11. We request a full time worker or coordinator to keep the community aware of all city functions. This person will serve as a referral worker.
12. Upgrade present mini-parks in both Brookhill and Southside.

- 13. We request a \$30,000 program for tutorial and day camp during the summer months of 1977. We will follow up on this by presenting the mechanics to operate such a program in the near future.
- 14. We request that all future reference to our community or name of our community be referred to as Brookhill-Southside Park Community.

Councilman Gantt asked if she means they want a name change, they do not want to be called Southside? Ms. Garris replied she thinks it should all be included, Southside and Brookhill.

Councilman Whittington thanked Ms. Garris for bringing this request and discussing the needs of Southpark, Brookhill, Southside communities with Council. He requested Mr. Phillips to talk with her tonight and see what he can do to help her open up better lines of communication.

Councilman Williams stated that many of these requests strike him as being very practical and modest requests and he likes that.

Reverend A. Rudolph Hendricks - Southside Park Area.

Reverend Hendricks, 107 Walnut Avenue, stated he is grateful to Ms. Garris because he has been wanting the people of that area to speak to the need and this is what she has done; that Ms. Ann Parker always keeps that community aware of what is going on about City Council.

He is also very grateful for the persons assigned to his area to work with them. At the same time he is a little disenchanted that his questions have been somewhat answered. He thinks also that they have not done what they said they were going to do in (1) and (2), but he understands why. Therefore, they are hesitant to propose things for (3) and (4) and (5), but being a Presbyterian minister he is ready, willing and able to do it.

They have many children in their area; they do not have enough parks to do anything near enough. There are a lot of houses that have been the cause of a lot of crime. He need not jog their memory about the incident that happened a couple of weeks ago where a man had been living in a house and had burned up and no one knew that he was there and the dogs were pulling his body from the place. He will not preach a sermon, but he thinks they are aware of it. They would like for these places to be torn down. He is ready, willing and able to go with them and point them out. A lot of traffic goes down Remount Road and for a long time he thought that the committee was doing something when the street began to be widened. But it dawned on him, no, that is the vote that they passed to get that done. So, he thought he would apologize for that thought hoping that they will get the fence up for the playground area. They need toilet facilities - they do not have any conveniences like that in that area.

For the past four or five years they have had a day camp program each summer provided by the Presbyterian Church with help from the Charlotte Area Fund. Last year they had two sites involved - one at South Tryon Presbyterian Church and the session at Clanton Memorial Church allowed them to use their building. He does not know how long the church will be able to do this because their funds are limited and they have other areas that they could move into that are not as good but need to be approached. They would like to see a day camp program provided for in that area for the children and for all ages - senior citizens. Their church is trying to provide for some of their needs. Bethlehem Center is participating also, but they would like to see a structured program where they will have something to look forward to - not seasonally like a Christmas basket or a turkey at Thanksgiving - but something all year round. He is not caught up in name changing, because what's in a name, but for some sense of identification, they need the name that has been indicated to them, changed. He would like to see some things happening. If there is any opportunity that Council thinks the information is not getting out to the people, give it to Ms. Parker or give it to him.

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Elizabeth Crawley, Cherry Community

Mrs. Elizabeth Crawley of the Cherry Community, stated they would like to request the following things for their community in the third year Community Development Plan:

A community center to house all the badly needed community services desired by the elderly and children. They have a lot of elderly people and there is nothing for them, hot lunches and things like that. For the children, there is really nothing at all in the community for them, no day care or anything like that.

That the Community Development Department re-submit to the Community Improvement Department the list of vacant lots in need of clearing off in their community, or they will follow up and re-submit the list again, because nothing has been done about it.

In the second year plan, they request a street light and a street sign be placed on Lee Court. There is a necessity for the people living there because although it is a street it is like an alley, there is no sign to tell anybody that it is there.

That the ditch at the intersection of Cherry and Baxter Streets be enclosed in some kind of way. It is a drainage ditch, but when it rains it overflows. There was a fence or something around it, but when they put the sidewalks in they took it away and it was not replaced. Some of the small children could get hurt or drowned.

That the vacant structure located at the corner of Luther and Lillington Streets be torn down. It has been vacant for a long time and it has a tree or something growing out of it. There are so many weeds you can hardly see the structure from the back.

That a meeting of the Planning Commission be arranged so that they can brief them on the 1985 Comprehensive Plan for the improvement of Charlotte and what it has in it for Cherry so that they may be better able to request some improvements for their community.

In addition to these requests, they would like to reserve time before Council for additional requests for the third year input for Community Development. They had a meeting last night but a lot of people did not know what was going on. They did get something together to let Council know they are interested, but they would like to know more about it. They have talked about the grants and loans that homeowners can get, but most of the homeowners are older people and they do not understand, they need to know more about it, they need someone to sit down and explain it to them.

The requests they made the first and second year they will expect to be honored once the legal and administrative red tape has been cleared. She does not know a lot of the things that were requested, but she knows the sidewalks and inspection of the houses, they only started the inspection last Thursday. She asked why sidewalks were only placed on one side of the street? Councilman Withrow replied so they could get more sidewalks on different streets. They only have so much money. Councilman Whittington stated the sidewalks were primarily placed where they were requested by the schools. Mr. Joe Michie stated part of the problem is the matter of right-of-ways - in some cases they could only get enough to put sidewalks on one side; in other cases they tried to keep some of the existing trees - there are some beautiful trees in this area and they had to be careful where they put the sidewalks.

Councilwoman Locke stated she knows that the Cherry community has asked over and over again for a community center and she knows that there has been a lot of discussion with the School Board about using the Morgan Street School. She asked Mr. Michie to explain what has happened and why they are not able to use the school.

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Mr. Michie replied that the community did discuss and at one time requested to be on the agenda of the School Board to lay out this particular problem to see if at least the lunchroom portion of Morgan School could not be used or converted over to a community center. Through some kind of miscommunication he does not believe the community had the opportunity to make that request formally to the School Board.

Councilwoman Locke asked if the Community Development Department could "take the bull by the horns" and do something about it? Mr. Michie replied the CD Department had really tried to stay out of that one with the School Board - they felt that the community itself - they are organized and have a very good organization - could probably have the ear of the School Board better than Community Development staff.

Councilwoman Locke stated they need a community center and she thinks something should be done.

Councilman Gantt stated he knows it takes time to do these things. Here they are talking about community improvements and they haven't even acted on the sign yet. He thinks Ms. Crawley ought to understand that is one of the frustrating things he finds about this whole process - what you think might happen in a reasonably short period of time takes years just to get the plan approved. That Mr. Sawyer gave a presentation before Council a couple of weeks ago and had a bulletin board wrapped up with red tape. He was trying to demonstrate all the problems he has trying to cut through that red tape. When the program first started Councilman Gantt stated he wanted to have a small amount of funds allocated to jobs for people who would be in what they call administrative roles if possible so that they could have as much of those funds go to directly benefit the people in the community. The more he listens the more it sounds to him like they need more people to communicate the information that is going on; that we need probably a compliment of people to work in Community Improvement which is our standard department because there are accelerated requests for clearing property that is weeded over and there are houses that need to be torn down, and apparently we need more people to do those kinds of things. Maybe what we are saying, in addition to cutting the red tape, in order to get a lot of these things done, we may have to put more people to work in some of these areas to accelerate it.

He is sorry that there may not be the kind of comprehensiveness that we would like to see, for example, on physical development items at least in the minds of in the perception of Ms. Crawley and others, and that if there is a problem in CD with community improvement type issues, that Community Improvement cannot be made to respond more quickly to these areas. Building Inspection, for example, a reporter came the other day and discussed the problem of vacant houses standing open for long periods of time not boarded up that presented problems of health and safety to people in the community. Those are legitimate concerns; we have procedures that we go through; sometimes he suspects that we can do some more about getting them to work a little faster.

He would be the last person to say that they can perform miracles overnight, but he thinks there are a lot of things they can do.

Ms. Crawley stated that simple things like street lights and street signs are things that should have been there in the beginning.

Councilman Whittington stated that Mr. Sawyer, Director of Community Development says this is the first time they have been informed of the request for the street sign and the street light. He says that he can handle that for them. Ms. Ellis stated she is vice-president of the Cherry Action Committee and it is not the first time, it is the second time. She heard somebody say a few minutes ago about the sidewalks was a school program, but they were given to understand that the sidewalks were out of their first year's money.



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Mr. Sawyer replied those that were located in the area had been from Community Development money.

Ms. Ellis stated when they were putting the sidewalk at Cherry and Baxter, they put the sidewalk over the drainage and they did not put the fence back over the drainage. If anybody falls in that drainage they will come out at Kings Drive or Charlottetown Mall. Mr. Sawyer replied he has made a note of that and they will look into that right away. Ms. Ellis stated they have trash on the streets and leaves piled up. Councilwoman Locke stated she has that in front of her house too.

In response to a request of Mayor pro tem Whittington for him to comment on any programs that have already been approved for these areas, Mr. Sawyer stated he cannot recall the exact schedule for each improvement, but in just about every area, including Cherry - not to the extent that it is true in Grier Heights, North Charlotte, Southside and some of the other areas, but in all of these areas the improvements that have been approved are underway in one state or another. Some of the public improvements take some engineering studies and preparation of engineering plans before contracts can be let to accomplish the improvements. All of the smaller items that can be done without complicated plans have been done - in North Charlotte and Grier Heights he can say for sure - some of the programs for the second year have been moved up and done in the first year.

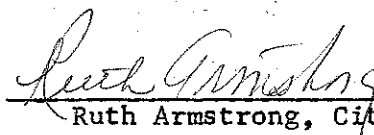
Ms. Ellis stated the only thing they have seen done in Cherry was they put those sidewalks down, they put some blacktop on the streets. Mr. Sawyer stated Cherry has a peculiar problem that some of the other areas don't have and that is that the first year they were not able to get the study by the Planning Commission completed in time to do the plan that included a redevelopment plan and which under State law gives the domain the power to condemn property. That is included in the plan that is in preparation now and which will go to the Planning Commission very shortly and after that, if the Planning Commission approves it, it will be presented to the City Council. They have not had the plan that gave them all the powers they need to accomplish all of the improvements that are programmed for the area.

Ms. Ellis stated in their second year, they are supposed to have mini-parks where the land is available. Mr. Sawyer stated he knows they are acquiring some land and plans are to extend the park which they have there. Mr. Michie added there is just the one park in the plan and that was to extend Morgan Park and they have already purchased that land and are in the process of closing part of Main Street now so that park can be expanded. The design is complete, the land is purchased but they have not started construction yet.

Ms. Crawley stated at the last meeting in the new plan that was being taken before the Planning Commission, there is a mini park that was asked for by the steering committee.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor pro tem Whittington thanked all of them for coming and declared the meeting adjourned.

  
Ruth Armstrong, City Clerk