CITIZENS PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NORTHWEST PLANNING DISTRICT
Ms. Elaine Burnett, Chairman District 5 Barney Roberts, Vice-chairman

SUMMARY OF THE JANUARY 11, 1996 NORTHWEST CPAC MEETING

Committee Members Present
Northwest

Elaine Burnett, Chairman
Edith Green
Louis Dinah
Mary L. Jones
Adam DuBois
Renora White
Christopher Smith
Mary Jones
Christina L. Campbell
Barney Roberts
Ida J. Denson
Lou Myers

OTHERS PRESENT

Paul J. Jenkins
Edwin K. Maynerd
Eileen Simpson
Daniel A. Johnson

City Staff/Officials Present

Dan Haskell
Regulatory & Environmental Services

Gerlieve Oliver
Duval County School Board

Ken Avery
Sr. Planner, Planning & Development

Floretta Green
Planner, Community Development Division

Mark E. Bowen
Sheriff's Office

Sgt. Senterfitt
Sheriff's Office

Dan Weimer
Parks and Recreation

The Chairman, Elaine Burnett called the meeting to order at 6:09 P.M., introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year. Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance. She indicated she would like to change the traditional invocational opening. The mere fact that everyone is in attendance and volunteering their time speaks to their concern for the community and she would hope they would consider this one year long prayer.

Presentation to Outgoing Chairman

Ms. Burnett presented Lou Myers with a plaque and a resolution was read commending him for his dedication and commitment to the CPAC and to Jacksonville in general.

The Chairman introduced guests in the audience, including Sargeant Dwayne Senterfitt of the Sheriff's Office, along with officers in the COPS AHEAD Program.

Presentation by Sargeant Senterfitt - COPS AHEAD PROGRAM

Sgt. Senterfitt gave an update on the Sheriff's COPS AHEAD Program. He indicated his squad is composed of nine (9) individuals and they work in a clearly defined area. They operate under a federal grant and as such they have some strict guidelines. They are bounded on the south by 20th Street; on the East by I-95; on the North by Trout River and on the West by U.S. 1. It is a community policing effort and they want to be involved in the community as much as they can. They are in the community to help the citizens address the crime issues and to act as a liaison between the citizens and other agencies in the City. They can contact other agencies to assist with things like cleaning up abandoned houses and things like that. There is some training taking place this week for what will be called the DART TEAMS which is a nuisance abatement watchdog team and they will target houses or businesses that are a nuisance to the community. A lot of the houses being used for illegal activities are rental houses, and under the COPS AHEAD Program they will be able to fix some of that responsibility onto the owner of the property. He introduced the officers present with him and indicated they want to make the area the best it can be. They want the officers to be associated with neighborhoods where the citizens can consider them "their officer" and the person they can go to for help. A lot of times the problems the police perceive are not the same as the ones perceived by the people who live in the communities.

Presentation by Roslyn Phillips - Update on the CDBG Program

Ms. Roslyn Phillips, Chief of Community Development Division of the Planning and Development Department indicated they are very active in the Northwest area and have a number of projects planned. The target neighborhood project is the Royal Terrace area. The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) is a federally funded program that provides funding to entitlement communities such as Jacksonville to help in alleviating some of the many problems we face in our urban communities, i.e. deteriorated infrastructure, blighting conditions (vacant and abandoned houses), need for water and sewer upgrades and social services are important in the revitalization of neighborhoods and communities. There are very few limits on what they can do in eligible neighborhoods and service areas. Each year they request nonprofit organizations to submit applications to them for funding of specific projects and neighborhoods. Mr. Roberts and Mr. Dinah both serve on their Advisory Committee and both have been active over the years. Their communities have obtained some grants through the Community Development Division for specific projects. They did a patrolling program in Sherwood Forest and worked with Mr. Roberts. In Mr. Dinah's community they did some recreational projects. Last year they participated in the Paint The Town efforts in the New Town area. One of the things they will begin this month is going out into the community and getting input from the residents of community organizations as to what the gaps in services are and the needs. They asked for responses from the community in order to help them set direction and policy for the upcoming year. This year they hope to be able to use the CPACs as sounding boards for public input into the process so they will continue to address the needs. They have eight (8) target neighborhoods that were established back in the 1980's relative to infrastructure needs. The first one was Royal Terrace and they plan to complete that project within the next two and half years. They have tried to accelerate the previous timetable so they can go into other areas.

The Mayor has put together a task force looking at targeting neighborhoods and providing support, to see if all of the City's forces could enter one area and make a difference. They've had a couple of meetings and John Crofts is heading it up on the staff's side relative to the directions of the Mayor which set up the prototype neighborhoods. An announcement should be made over the next few weeks identifying some of the neighborhoods and the plans for those neighborhoods.

Question: **If an organization wanted to apply for a block grant for a specific program, are there deadlines or timeframes?**

Ms. Phillips stated there will be an ad notifying the public when the applications become available. There's a thirty day response period from the time the application is mailed. The applications should be available by the first week in February. Ms. Floretta Green is the planner that heads up that effort.

Question: **Are the qualifications for the organizations limited to those that have a track record?**

Ms. Phillips stated they would like for the organizations to be able to show a track record or experience and ability to carry out a project. That's not to say they won't work with an organization that's doing a first project if they have staff or members that have experience. Their real concern is that they have some assurance they have the ability to meet the objectives and handle the grant funds.

Question: **Could you identify a couple of programs?**

Ms. Phillips stated there's basically just two requirements for CDBG funding: either it eliminate slum and blight or it will benefit low and moderate income persons. To that end, they're currently doing renovations to community centers; purchasing park land in some areas; housing rehabilitation; day care centers; tutorial programs; Boys and Girls Clubs; the Cornerstone of Jacksonville; The Bridge; security and policing. They work with neighborhood organizations who want to buy radios and that kind of things for patrolling. Also, in the past, they have funded activities to train people to take leadership roles in neighborhood organizations. There's really not many limits to the types of programs; however, when they have the public hearings they try to prioritize the projects. The three areas that received bonus points last year dealt with economic development, neighborhood revitalization and leadership development.

Question: **Will that change this year?**

Ms. Phillips stated based on the public hearings and input, it may change some. Over the last three years it has not changed very much. Infrastructure in '92-'93 was a key priority because of the needs of the neighborhoods and there hadn't been any real effort to address those problems. At that time they began setting aside approximately two million dollars a year for infrastructure improvements.

Question: **Are the funds available for construction?**

Ms. Phillips stated they have constructed community centers in the past. She would say, however, that really has to be looked at and they work with the City's Adult Services and Recreation Departments on that. You can build a structure, but then you have to have programming, staffing

and the other things, so where the CDBG Program may have resources to build the facility, they don't provide the staffing and programming.

Question: **What about the status of the organizations; do they have to be chartered?**

Ms. Phillips indicated in the past one of the requirements has been that the organization should be a 501C(3) Not-for-profit organization. They have worked with organizations that are not 501C(3) that were members of the Neighborhood Leadership Council (NLC) and they used that status in order to apply for the grant. They encourage all the organizations that are not 501C(3) to try and attain that designation.

Question: **Is the Neighborhood Leadership Council still active?**

Mr. Roberts stated yes, they are, and he can be contacted for more information.

Question: **Will the ad for the applications be in the paper?**

Ms. Phillips stated yes, but she will also send a notice to the CPAC's as well. They will give the CPAC planners a copy of the application form so they can have it available at the meetings.

The Chairman asked Mr. Weimer to give an update on the Northwest Regional Park.

Presentation by Dan Weimer - Status of Lonnie C. Miller, Sr. Regional Park

Mr. Weimer stated they had the dedication ceremony and had an excellent turnout. The park has three reunion size picnic shelters with barbecue pits and chimneys for large gatherings. They want this to be a very active place and they want to make sure that groups can get the permits to use the facilities. More than one group will be able to use the facility at one time, sharing the common play area. They have been working with Councilman Holzendorf for the last few weeks on his ideas for expansion to a Phase II. They have only developed about 25% of that space, so there's a lot to go. All of the play equipment has a sand base and it would work a lot better with a different material. The park is handicapped accessible and they have state-of-the-art rest room facilities and play fields for everything from volley ball to flag football.

Question: **I attended the dedication of the park and was very impressed with the facilities. However, I have some concerns. Downtown the parks had a lot of trouble with vandalism, especially the cooking equipment. What plans have been made to police the park and the equipment?**

Mr. Weimer stated the equipment is built out of concrete block and it would be very difficult to move. They are using the new cast iron type grills.

Question: Will the groups using the facility have to sign in?

Mr. Weimer stated yes. Individuals coming to use the playground or just walk around the park will not, but groups that want to rent the picnic shelters for reunions and things of that nature will have to follow the established procedure which includes getting a permit.

Question: **What would you suggest for the residents that live in Golfbrook or Hilltop apartments in terms of recreation?**

Mr. Weimer stated they have Golfbrook Terrace Park which is on the master list of parks in poor condition. They are working on procedures to improve the landscaping, playground facilities, etc. Also, they're planning work for several other parks in the Northwest area Lonnie C. Miller Park is a regional park and it was designed to serve this entire region. The park is located at the intersection of Moncrief and Soutel Drive.

Mr. Myers indicated he was at the dedication ceremony for the Lonnie C. Miller Park and was one of those that lobbied the City Council very hard to get the City to buy that property. He's very impressed with the fact that its coming along so well and its a good first start. He's looking forward to having a family reunion there this year.

Ms. Green indicated she also attended the dedication ceremony and spoke with Mr. Holzendorf about her ideas for the youth in the area and he was very interested.

Question: **Do we have any kind of anticipated target date for total completion of the park?**

Mr. Weimer stated no. They can't do that because they don't have all the funding in place. The master plan for the park had four phases. The first phase cost around $1.5 million. The other phases probably won't cost quite that much. They have applied for a State grant of $400,000 which will provide some matching funds.

Question: **Since it's a regional park encompassing more than just this area, can they draw on some of the funds from the other Council districts that make up the region; or is it all coming from the same pot?**

Mr. Weimer stated in regards to the Revenue Bonds given to the individual Councilmen, they control how that money is spent - its entirely up to them. As far as other types of funding, they don't have any other funding sources.

Question: **What was Phase I?**

Mr. Weimer stated Phase I included the three picnic shelters, the infrastructure (roads and water), rest room facilities and playground and play equipment. Phase II was to include some ball field development, improvements to the fishing pond and a nature trail along the Ribault River. Phase III was to build up the central portion of the property with additional playing fields and Phase IV was the possibility of a 9 hole golf course.

Question: **What happened with the Urban Fishing Pond Program?**

Mr. Weimer stated that still exists and they will work with them.

Question: **The Department of Parks and Recreation still doesn't have permanent funding - is that right?**

Mr. Weimer stated they've never had a dedicated funding source for capital improvements. Every year the City fathers appropriate monies for operation and general maintenance. The only funds they've been able to generate have been from bond programs and those funds have gone a long way in helping them get done what they have so far, but there really has been no dedicated source that they could count on. They're planning processes have been stifled because of the lack of dedicated funds.

At this point (6:50 p.m.), the Chairman called a short recess to allow the members to interact with the COPS AHEAD Program representatives.

The meeting reconvened at 7:03 P.M.

The Chairman announced Juanita Baker is not in attendance today due to illness and she asked the members to call her.

The Chairman stated she will present her ideas to the members pertaining to future plans. They should do something that is substantial that is in writing that people could use in their own communities. The Committee has been in existence for two years and they've talked to a lot of different City agencies and have done things in the community. The members also have access to City agencies and she's proposing that the Committee use the existing subcommittees as vehicles to go out and collect information to organize into a written format to be made into a brochure or pamphlet that can be given to people. It won't be totally comprehensive, but they can pull together the resource information that now exists, such as the presentation made by Ms. Phillips on the CDBG Program. A lot of the City agencies don't have the budgets to go out and contact resource people, and so far, there's no central agency or location to get data to help the neighborhoods. We have contacts with the Chamber of Commerce. We can go out and actually pull people in to make presentations on such things as development on the Northside and the infrastructure needs, i.e. roads, sewers, etc. We will not only be teaching ourselves, but will serve as a vehicle to help the communities. She doesn't know of any one place where this information can be found.

Mr. Myers stated he thinks that's a good idea to gather that information so it can be used as a ready reference.

Sgt. Bowen stated he thought the City already had that information in a pamphlet form that lists all the City services and who to call.

Mr. Avery stated he's referring to the "Who To Call" pamphlet.

The Chairman stated that's not what she's talking about; she's talking about a citizens' guide to planning or economic development. She's really talking about summarizing community activism. She cited examples of the types of things the Committee members have been exposed to, including "Take Pride In Jacksonville" and other things. When Mr. Shellhorn was here he told them how difficult it is to coordinate clean-up's throughout the City, and that's what people need to know. She's not thinking of something totally comprehensive, but maybe six areas of concern which would help people get their programs going.

Ms. Denson stated she would like to see some type of brochure that explains what a CPAC is and how you go about becoming a member of a CPAC; what areas do the CPACs cover; what are their boundaries and possibly within that, highlight some project that each CPAC has done. Each CPAC has its own flyer or brochure, but we need a consolidated one.

The Chairman listed the areas she felt the Committee could look into. Its based on the initial meeting when they went around the table and asked each other what they were concerned about:

1. **Beautification**

2. **Infrastructure**

3. **Education**

4. **Child Care**

5. **Transportation**

6. **Recreation**

These were major concerns and problems experienced with the quality of life in Jacksonville. She's calling it Economic Development because if the community itself doesn't initiate the revitalization of its community, it doesn't have a hope of going out and attracting other people to come in with developments. It seems to her the impetus has to come from the energy of the community. The Subcommittees would go out and actively gather the information and put it in a format that's easy to understand. A second idea was to have a specific project for the Committee for the year. 45th and Moncrief is an area which they thought could benefit from some tree planting and clean-up and it would help the CPAC get some visibility.

Mr. Myers indicated he thinks that would work well because the City is going to kick off a clean-up campaign next month.

Mark Bowen with the Sheriff's Office indicated he, Sargeant Senterfitt and the COPS AHEAD Program officers would be glad to help with the clean-up project. Their specialty is scrounging stuff up from the business community. They've worked with HABIJAX and helped build several houses in the 45th Street area. They would be glad to come out and help with the clean-up.

The Chairman stated she was hoping that once the paper is completed and ready, they could present the paper in the form of a workshop and open it to the community.

Mr. Dinah indicated when the Neighborhood Leadership Council (NLC) was first founded, the goal was to have it serve as the umbrella with the neighborhoods. At the last count they had 25 community organizations under that umbrella.

Mr. Roberts indicated the NLC used to depend mostly on donations and 80% of the funding was coming from HUD. They were denied the last grant and that slowed them up in terms of having people on the administrative staff. Now they're cutting down on the number of times they meet. They're tentatively scheduled to meet again in April. The NLC was developed for neighborhood presidents to have someplace they could go to fellowship and discuss their problems and ways to solve them. The NLC dealt with problems on the Northside and Westside. They are still alive and functioning.

The Chairman stated she's thinking he knows about NLC; why couldn't the pamphlet have a page about it. She doesn't want to duplicate what other agencies are doing - just some basic ideas of what people have done that's successful to either reduce crime; reduce blight; improve education, etc. The point is whatever the members learn they can pass on. Her thought is that the Subcommittees take the subjects and think about it; find out what agencies would be helpful and gather the data and maybe come up with something readable by April.

Mr. Roberts suggested the Education Committee could get with the other committees throughout the City and put together a nucleus of information. In our community they can deal with the HIV issue, teen pregnancy - both of which are not going away and need to be continually addressed.

The Chairman went back over her list of topics:

- **Health** - AIDS, teenage pregnancy, parenthood skills, home security, neighborhood safety and public safety.

- **Natural Environment** - river clean-up, air, flooding, landscaping, lead and gases and illegal dumping.

- **Transportation** - buses, car pools, horse and people trails, shuttles, bicycling and walking

- **Recreation** - parks, children, improved lighting, seating, etc.

- **Civic Involvement** - the members' experience with community groups and some ideas on visioning; how do you get organized and started.

The Chairman stated she will put the list in a better form and have it sent to the members prior to the February meeting. Mr. Myers will serve on the Beautification Committee, Mr. DuBois on Economic Development, Ms. Denson on Civic Involvement, Ms. Green on Children and Education.

Ms. White indicated she would prefer to work on Special Programs. She's very project oriented and would like just one task to work on that has an anticipated completion date.

The Chairman asked the members to try and have their thoughts in writing before the March meeting. Some of what they put down in writing will help when Mayor Delaney comes in March. Each Subcommittee should meet however many times needed to get the work done. They should try and involve anyone in the respective communities to help.

Mr. Avery asked Mr. Haskell if he had any comments.

Mr. Haskell indicated once they develop the subject areas and what is needed, between him and the Planning and Development Department they can put the members in touch with the right individuals. He and Mr. Avery can get together and formulate a list of contact people related to the subject areas.

The Chairman asked that the members send their ideas, in writing, to the staff before the second week in March.

In response to a question about the Mayor's visit, Mr. Crofts indicated the Mayor will make a presentation on whatever he wants to emphasize but its a time for him to respond to inquiries and questions from the citizens; its part of his outreach plan.

Presentation by Gerlieve Oliver - Status of School Situation

Ms. Oliver indicated the problem of desegregation has been with us for 30 years and she can't stand here and say we're anywhere near the answer. The answer is out there but it takes people of faith on both sides to do the right thing and being honest with their emotions. Mr. Roberts talked with her about the schools that are on the "Schools of Distinction" list that the State put out. The State decided there were certain criteria that all schools should meet at a minimum level. For elementary

schools it included progress in Reading Comprehension and Math Applications on a nationally norm test. Our nationally norm test is the CTBS (California Test of Basic Skills). All 4th graders should be at certain efficiency levels on the Florida Writes Test which is where a child gives a sample of his writing and its scored and they must score at 3 or above. Those same criteria work in middle school at grade 8, so when you hear people saying the schools are failing, they're talking about 4th grade and 8th grade. In high school the standards are the High School Completion Test which is given in grade 10 in Communications, Math and the Florida Writes. Its a major part of the curriculum because we want to be able to say that our students can achieve at that level. When you say they're not producing, you need to realize that its 50% of the children who have to score 3 or above. A very telling statistic is that every single one of our schools (elementary and middle) where children are in schools that have been classified as low achieving, they are schools with a high poverty level - 85% and above are at the poverty level and they are eligible for Chapter 1 full school services. That doesn't mean she's saying if you're poor you can't learn in school - she knows better. She grew up poor and she learned and did very well in school, but she had a home where a father and a mother thought education was important and they made it a priority and that makes a difference. If you're in a home where you're at or below the poverty level, you're negatively impacted because if there is just a single parent they're struggling trying to survive and there's not a whole lot of time for parenting, nurturing and sitting at the table to do homework with the child. She's only saying that so the members can understand how they can play a role in this picture. There is no way with the resources that we have in the public schools that we can provide the kind of assistance the children need to be successful. The thing that research has told us time and time again that works with low achievers is significant contact with one significant adult - one to one tutoring. Over at Northwestern they've begun a program in connection with the City and they're finding mentors who come to the school during the school day to tutor the children and help him learn his reading and math. When you look at the test results, our children are more alike in kindergarten than they ever are again and then the gap gets wider. If you don't have something to build on you learn slower. People are mobilizing to help the schools by volunteering of their own time two or more hours a week to work with the children. They've put extra money into the schools in the form of computers, computer programs, and test materials in an effort to close the gap. You can't close it totally unless you do something like differentiated funding. The funding needs to be greater where the needs are greater. At home if you're plumbing goes out and you need new draperies, you buy plumbing and look at the old draperies another year or until you can afford to buy more. In a school system where children are needier we need to put more in; and not just money. Many of our children come to school prepared to play and not work and its a difficult task to handle discipline before you can ever get to the point where you can teach. There are ways for the members to help in terms of volunteering some time. The children can't learn if they aren't motivated to learn and you get in the way of other people when your motivation to misbehave is greater than the motivation to learn.

The Chairman asked for clarification of differentiated funding; is that something the School Board is looking into?

Ms. Oliver stated its one of the things that has been put into the Academic Achievement for all Students Plan. Its a plan where they talk about what is a negative impact. They know, based on research that low parent education is a negative factor; low income; single parents and how many times a child has to transfer. Whether we like what we know or not is another discussion. So, they look at the number of children in Exception Education; the number of over age children. If you take 20 children in a room and they come from homes where they haven't opened a book until they start school and put them with children who have been reading and playing with computers since they were two - who will have the higher load factor and the better opportunity to learn. That's what

they call "load"; how many things are present in the child's life that negatively impact the opportunity to learn. Where the load factors are high they think there ought to be more resources.

Mr. Myers stated there's a bill in the Legislature now requiring a B average or better to get into the community colleges.

Ms. Oliver indicated its almost like we're closing the door. There are a lot of good C students that turn out to be fine adults. She remembers when UNF opened and got permission to be an upper level university and they said they wanted to be a community university and take those students who cannot get into other universities. Now, you can't get in UNF unless you have a 950 on the SAT. Those are the kinds of things that make a two-tier society. We're becoming more and more the haves and have nots. The haves will be able to buy the education and get the scholarships and the have nots will be out causing problems in the community. We pay up front or we pay later and its better that we pay up front. Mr. Roberts asked about having a meeting in a school and the only requirement for having a meeting in a school is completion of a building utilization form and as long as you aren't raising money or doing anything immoral or illegal, you can use the school.

The Chairman stated Ms. Oliver's presentation reminded her, again, of why she wanted to do the position paper. She then read **"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world - indeed, its the only thing that ever has".**