

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN RENEWAL

City of Atlanta

NOVEMBER 22, 1957

PUBLIC HEARING

ON

BUTLER STREET URBAN RENEWAL AREA

A meeting of the Redevelopment Committee of the Aldermanic Board was held at 2:00 P.M. on this date in the Aldermanic Chamber on the Second Floor of the City Hall.

The following members were present: The following members were absent:

Hamilton Douglas, Jr., Chairman
Jesse Draper

Ralph Huie
John A. White

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Hamilton Douglas, Jr. Mr. Douglas first stated the purpose of this meeting; i.e., to hear our planners present the re-use studies on one of the Urban Renewal projects --- Butler Street --- and also to give the public an opportunity to express their viewpoints on said matter.

He explained substantially as follows:

There are three Areas in The City which have been designated for Urban Renewal treatment. One of these is the Butler Street Area which we are going to talk about this afternoon. The City has applied to the Federal Government for financial aid in planning for the area. The Federal Government has been asked to set aside money for each area to help us develop them. This was done eighteen months ago at which time the City asked the Atlanta Housing Authority to act as the City's Agent. The Atlanta Housing Authority, acting as the City's Agent, has hired many experts to draw up the tentative plans for the re-use of the land in the Butler Street Area. Associated with the planning of the re-use of the Butler Street Area are; Robert and Company, Harland-Bartholomew and Associates, Hammer and Company and the Atlanta Housing Authority. What we are going to hear at this time is the tentative, not final, plans for the "Buttermilk Bottoms" Area. Due consideration will be given to suggestions brought forth for this area while final plans are being drawn up. This hearing is held, not only for the benefit of the public, but for this committee of the Aldermanic Board to let us see what has been done in our name. These plans which will be presented to you at this time are tentative plans only for the purpose of giving you an idea of the planners concept for this area. At such time as final plans are drawn up for this area, you will be given another opportunity at a future public hearing to comment on these plans. If, at this time, you give us the go ahead the plans will be presented to the Board of Aldermen for their approval and they will send them to the Federal Government for final approval. If, after the presentation, you have inquiries, questions or suggestions please put them before the people here to answer after the presentations.

First Presentation Speaker.
Col. Malcolm D. Jones, Director
Department of Urban Renewal

PRESENTATION OF BUTLER STREET BOUNDARIES *** ORIGINAL AND REVISED

The original boundary of the Butler Street Urban Renewal Area was established in 1956. (At this point, he explained the original boundaries). These

boundaries were adopted by the Aldermanic Board and presented to the Federal Government for approval. (At this point, Expressway Interchange right-of-way within the project area was explained.) This area as just outlined was approved by the Federal Government. This divided the Area into three major portions, none of which was big enough to make one complete plan, thus making it possible to prevent recurrence of future blight after re-development. This consideration led to revision of boundaries.

PRESENTATION OF MAP SHOWING DELAPITATION OF PROPERTY IN AREA AS OF 1950 CENSUS;

PRESENTATION OF BUTLER STREET AREA - REVISED BOUNDARIES:

Certain specifications had to be considered in proposing revision of boundaries. First of all, the Federal Government had approved original boundaries. Second, it was determined that the original project boundaries would have to be changed and the revised boundaries presented.

Contract planners were called in to discuss the proposals for the new boundaries. The result of this was the now existing boundaries. The two were compared at this point. It was stated that the areas included in the two boundaries are approximately the same size. The reason for including the lower southeast section instead of the upper north portion was explained at this point. The North Area is proposed for consideration in a larger Urban Renewal Project at a future date. It was explained that these are the boundaries as they exist today and have been approved by the Federal Government.

Mr. Douglas

(At this point he introduced the members of the Committee present and also Mr. Sam Young, Vice Chairman of the Atlanta-Fulton County Joint Planning Board, who was asked to attend the hearing).

Next will be the second of the three presentations of the Urban Renewal Team to tell you something of the general scope, concept, and responsibilities in development of plans.

Second Presentation Speaker.

Mr. M. B. Satterfield,
Executive Director
Atlanta Housing Authority

Mr. Satterfield stated substantially as follows: That the Atlanta Housing Authority went into a preliminary planning stage, after Federal approval, for two-thirds of the net cost allocated to the project. The main purpose of this plan at this time is to get it into order so it may be presented to the Federal Government for approval. This does not mean that changes cannot be made in the final plans as they are being made. The preliminary reports show:

STATISTICS CHART:

These statistics show the acreage of this area which is to be given Urban Renewal treatment. It shows the number of structures and the number of sub-standard structures as compared with the total number. It gives the approximate number of families now living in the area as compared with the total number of families that will live in area after the Urban Renewal treatment and also the number to be relocated outside the project area. These statistics also show comparisons of net cost, the two-thirds share of the Federal Government and the one-third share which the City will undertake and the estimated increases in annual taxes.

BOORUM & PEASE "NOTEAR" ®

BOORUM & PEASE "NOTEAR" ®

The Planners who have worked on these Urban Renewal Plans are the ones who must take into consideration another important phase and requirement of the Federal Government, and this is; that, the planning of an Urban Renewal Area must fit in with the over-all planning of the City. These plans before you (the public) are the result of numerous discussions and conferences between the planners and City Officials who have undertaken the planning of this area. He then briefly discussed several visual aids as follows:

PICTURE OF SCHOOL:

This is a picture of a school similar to the one to be erected in the project area. (Presented for the hearing by the Board of Education of the City of Atlanta.)

CHART OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

This chart shows the crowded, unsanitary existing conditions of this area today.

STREET PLAN:

Map showing the desired street pattern which might be developed in this area.

ONE OF SERIES OF STUDIES TO SHOW WHAT MIGHT BE DEVELOPED IN THIS AREA:

Chart shows proposed buildings, apartments, etc.

PROPOSED PUBLIC PROPERTY:

A recommendation of schools, playgrounds, and parks.

CHARTS AND PICTURES SHOWING WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN ANOTHER CITY:

At this point, Mr. Satterfield asked Mr. Hammer to explain some of the charts and maps further.

Third of Presentation Speakers
Mr. Phillip Hammer, (Planning Sub-contractor)
Hammer and Company

Mr. Hammer asked that the public try to keep in mind this area and the vast change that will take place by Urban Renewal and the tremendous Expressway for the future which is part of the Interstate Highway Program and explained that behind the Expressway development there will come about great planning.

EXPLANATION OF EXPRESSWAY AND MAJOR STREET PLAN:

Map showing the major portions of the Expressway. Mr. Hammer explained the effect of future East Expressway, North and South Expressway; that because of conditions of the Butler Street Area it was decided that while we were going forth with our Interstate Highway Project, we could also be eliminating some of the City's worse slums. He explained that the Expressway would relieve some of the congested traffic problems of Central Downtown Atlanta.

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED LAND USE MAP:

Our major problem is to protect the Central Downtown portion of the City. Expansion for this area is urgently needed. One of the main problems is keeping

this area centrally located. At present, it is going farther and farther out Peachtree. This area will not be practical for Government Buildings as they are not conveniently located near the present buildings used for Government offices. This location is not suitable for retail purposes as it is off the main Peachtree ridge. These are things we do not think we will get in this area. This area would be suitable for hotels, motels, transit operations, permanent housing for people who work in Central Downtown District, such as single people, working people, childless couples, certain types of office buildings (more specialized for home offices), for parking and for certain types of entertainment purposes. Specific examples:

1. High Rise Apartments for White collar workers, 500 units.
2. One or two hotels or motels in this area, because of Interstate Highway System.
3. Specialized office buildings. Primarily for Home offices.
4. Entertainment facilities.
5. Automotive facilities.
6. Private enterprise Merchandise Markets.
7. Transportation Center.

The above is preliminary planning for Westside of Expressway in Butler Street Area.

Mr. Hammer explained to the public what could happen in this area without Urban Renewal. He further explained:

The area to north of Auburn Avenue will be primarily residential but in the form of redevelopment. There will be a school and playground to serve this area.

The south portion is a large residential area which is in good condition. This area will be treated as a Rehabilitation area. Along the southern strip of area there will be industrial planning to protect it from future blight.

A retail shopping center is contemplated to serve the Eastside.

These plans are the preliminary planning for the re-use of the land in this area. They have been prepared for you by the Planning Consultants and Planning Engineers designated for such work by the City.

Mr. Douglas:

At this point Mr. Douglas explained that the floor was open for inquiries, suggestions, and questions and that the three people who presented the plans would be available to them for answers. He again explained the preliminary stage of the plans presented.

Mr. J. H. Calhoun (President, Atlanta Chapter, N.A.A.C.P.)
237 Auburn Ave.

Asked, To what extent have these plans been definitely established?

Mr. Douglas:

Explained that these are tentative plans and have not been definitely set up to the extent that they cannot be changed.

Mr. Calhoun:

Asked, Did Citizen participation enter into this phase of planning? and Has there been a Citizens Advisory Committee established?

Mr. Douglas:

Explained that several groups such as the Central Atlanta Improvement Association has participated but that the general public had not. He explained that no Citizens Advisory Committee had been appointed by the Mayor to this date but would definitely be done sometime in the near future.

Mr. Calhoun:

Mr. Calhoun stated that as a right of a private citizen the property must be of a public need and the property owner must be paid for said property. He stated that he understood that the slum clearance program should take the worse slum areas first and that the original boundaries of the Butler Street Urban Renewal project area contained more of the worse slums for that area than the now existing boundaries. He further asked, Why were the worse slums in the original area omitted and better housing in the southeastern portion included in the revised boundaries?

Mr. Douglas:

Mr. Douglas explained that Urban Renewal did not have to consider the very worse slums for their first projects; he also explained that these present boundaries did include some of the worse slums for that area. He stated that our lawyers have proposed what we have done is legal. He further explained that in the opinion of the architects and the planners that neither the north or the south areas were complete neighborhoods as they stood in the original boundaries. The reason the south portion was adopted was because the slums did not extend as far south as they did north and that a stabilizing substantial boundary exists to the south; and, at this time, we did not have the money to extend Urban Renewal boundaries to the foremost northern end of the slums.

Mr. Calhoun:

He stated that he had no further questions at this time.

Tom Antonis
333 Highland Avenue

Is the City going to buy the property in this area and resale it to private investors?

Mr. Douglas:

We (the City) are not going to buy every parcel of property in this area. Only property that needs redevelopment treatment.

Mr. Antonis:

After property is bought and cleared, will present owners be given opportunity to buy it back:

Mr. Douglas:

This problem has not been worked out at this time.

BOORUM

BOORUM & PEASE "NOTEAR" (R)

"EAR" (R)

Mr. Jesse Draper (Alderman):

Explained substantially as follows: I think condemnation will be considered as a last resort by which the City will obtain property.

Mr. Antonis:

Asked, Will owner be allowed sufficient time to get his house or building in condition before Urban Renewal considers taking the land for redevelopment?

Mr. Satterfield:

Explained, some of area which will be purchased has already been acquired in connection with Expressway acquisition. The Re-use may dictate that the sale be in a larger parcel.

Mr. Douglas:

Explained that we (the City) are going to improve property and therefore it will not be sold at same price for which it was bought.

Mr. J. A. Austin
219½ Auburn Avenue

What happened to the first proposed plans for Butler Street some years ago?

Mr. Douglas:

Stated that he did not know that this had been earlier proposed.

Mr. Draper:

It was proposed several years ago but when the Urban Renewal program came about it has been handled through this project. Mr. Draper explained that this plan conformed with original plan.

Mr. Austin:

Explained that we want the best for our City and we are also concerned with the Auburn Avenue Area realizing that this area is dilapidated we wonder why the northern portion was not considered for renewal first. He said he could not understand why the area in the south portion was considered for a rehabilitation program when the north portion was in need of complete renewal?

Mr. Douglas:

Explained as he did when question was put forth by J.H. Calhoun.

Mr. Austin:

Stated that he did not understand why we did not want to clear the area which is already dead first.

Mr. Fred Moore, Chairman,
Atlanta Traffic and Safety Council

Read a public statement from his group explaining the needs and desires of his group for an extensive area for Expressway Parking in the Western Sector of the Butler Street Urban Renewal Project Area. Enclosure #1.

Mr. W. R. Cochran:

Stated there is a widespread feeling the Urban Renewal is not getting the worse slums of Atlanta. He asked, When these apartment buildings are completed, what guarantee of racial occupancy will be preserved for colored people?

Mr. Douglas:

There is no legal guarantee of racial occupancy.

Mr. Satterfield:

We have not contemplated any major changes in racial re-use as there will be a Negro school, playground and park for this area. Most of the high rise apartments will be built on the Westside of the Expressway near the downtown location and will be for White occupancy.

Col. Jones:

There has been no thought of changing the racial occupancy of the eastern sector from anything but what it is now.

Mr. Douglas:

Mr. Douglas completed the answer to the question by stating that we (City Officials) do not have the answer to give you today.

Miriam T. Williams (former Robert & Co. employee)
State Planning Commission:

At present, ownership is subject to being bought up by City. I would like to say that the portion for clearance has not yet been determined. I also understand that if these people happen to be in a rehabilitation project they may maintain ownership?

Mr. Douglas:

Explained that if it conforms with the re-use plans this is true.

Miss Williams:

Will property owner be allowed to keep property in re-use area if he wishes to clear land and put it in conformance with the re-use plans?

Mr. Douglas:

Explained that he thought it would be very beneficial for present owners to participate in re-use plans.

Mr. Morton Rolleston
Heart of Atlanta Motel

Explains that they would like to be given consideration in this area for an addition to the present Heart of Atlanta Motel. We are in hope of having a bus terminal for this area. We would like parking facility considerations in the form of multi-deck parking.

Mr. T. V. Williams:
855 Hunter Street

Mr Williams talked about how Urban Renewal was sold to the citizens of this country. He read statistics taken in slum areas and explained the percentage in comparison with non-slum neighborhoods. He read statistics pointing out diseases, delinquency and crime in such areas. He stated that it seemed to him that the Expressway had moved a good many of the slums but there was still a large number left. He wanted to know, if that had been taken into consideration?

Mr. Douglas:

Mr. Douglas explained to him that the only question seemed to be the general location of the area. He explained the general concept of the area and the dilapidated structures located in both areas.

Mr. Donald L. Dannerman
Dee's Supermarket

Asked if there is a specific plan for a shopping center in this area?

Mr. Hammer:

Explained that there is no definite proposal for shopping center. We merely have stated what could take place in this area.

Mr. Sy Gordy:
Central Atlanta Improvement Association

Presented a formal resolution by the Board of Directors of his association endorsing the proposed plan. Enclosure #2.

Mr. J. H. Calhoun:

Stated he is very much interested in Citizen participation. He requested that no formal approval of these plans be given until the citizen's committee has been appointed and given an opportunity to approve of the plans.

Mr. Douglas:

Informed Mr. Calhoun that nothing will be done for quite some time as concerns final adoption of plans and he stated that he felt sure there will be a committee established long before that time.

Mr. Douglas then called for other speakers at this time and as there were none he gave the floor to Mr. Satterfield.

Mr. Satterfield:

Explained to the public that they were invited to come up and examine the maps and charts. He explained that he and others available would be glad to answer any questions upon inspection of these plans.

Mr. Douglas again called for speakers and as there were none the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Malcolm D. Jones
Malcolm D. Jones, Director

Encl. #1. Urban Renewal proposal submitted by the Atl. Traffic & Safety Council.
#2. Endorsement of the proposed plan by the Central Atl. Improvement Assc.