1200 Hours of Urban Renewal

This is a running account of how SHARA'S Urban Renewal Committee has served the residents of Society Hill during the last eight months.

Soon after SHARA'S organizational meeting in April of 1957, at which time 50 citizens of the neighborhood signified their interest in serving on the Urban Renewal Committee, an opportunity presented itself in the form of a series of zoning emergencies. Meetings were called, petitions circulated and delegations appeared before the Zoning Board of Adjustment, protesting the further downgrading of the properties in the area. Members of the Committee who worked strenuously were Mrs. Bertha Martin, Mr. Arnold Nicholson, Mr. Joseph Jaworsky, Mrs. Sylvia Levinson, Mr. George Keamey, Mrs. John Condy, Mrs. Benjamin Schoenfeld. Accomplishments: In all zoning matters, SHARA'S recommendations have been upheld by the zoning officials.

Closely following this action in the late Spring, Dr. Benjamin Schoenfeld called the first meeting of the entire committee, who, on June 6, 1957, adapted the following purpose for their committee's continued action:

a. To study the physical and human resources of the area.
b. To develop and recommend a comprehensive plan for the area.
c. To recommend specific area for rezoning.
d. To recommend methods and means for the Urban Renewal of the entire area whenever necessary.

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e. To recommend the enforcement of local codes and ordinances.

f. To recommend the preservation and improvement of historically valuable structures.

The next step was to conduct an area plan study and make recommendations to the executive board, which would form the basis of the association's working with the City Planning Commission, Redevelopment authority, and other urban renewal agencies.

The 50-member Urban Renewal Committee then formed a temporary study committee and, during July, August and September, developed an area plan.

Though the temperature was 100°, the zoning study committee—of Arnold Nicholson, Adin Mickle, and Anne List, spent a long afternoon surveying the entire Society Hill area and subsequent sessions prepared a series of recommendations for the rezoning of Society Hill from industrial and commercial to residential. The recommendations were similar to the ones proposed a month later by the City Planning Commission and have since become a councilmatic ordinance.

Simultaneously, Pauline Johnson, Sam Hovisak, Allen Koss, George Diehl, and others, were surveying the community services needs in the health, welfare, education and recreation areas. Their report back at the August meeting of the Urban Renewal Committee recommended large modern facilities at the McCall School site, development of small neighborhood parks and tennis lot areas.

The study committee on code enforcement, composed of Ralph Ottaviano, Bertha Singer, and Mary Mickle, conducted a property-by-property survey, and listed 130 residential properties suspected of being in violation of one or more of the building codes. A copy of their list was sent to the Department of Licenses and Inspections; many violations notices have been sent to owners as a result and some improvements are evident.

Where to shop and what to shop for was described in a report prepared by Isadore Kowititz and Mrs. Libby C. Getson. Its chief recommendation was for the retaining of the small retail store servicing neighborhood needs.

The sub-committee reports were assembled and the full committee met and defined them. SHÅÄ's Executive Board, in its October meeting, gave final vote of acceptance of the Committee's work. The Preliminary Plan for the renewal of Society Hill was then sent to City Officers.

ACTION NEXT

The Urban Renewal Committee then planned a series of action workshops designed to bring the major areas of the population's concern for Society Hill to the general membership and other interested persons.

On November 6th and 7th, 600 residents participated in the workshops and so the original committee of 50 had spread their learning ten fold and in turn had received many valuable suggestions and requests for further action. A full 15-page report of the workshop's recommendations are available at the SHÅÄ office upon request. Major areas of concern, resulting from the workshop reaction, led to the formation of the following committees.

Project Area: No. 1 Committee, whose main concern will be the problems arising from the clearance and re-building of the Dock Street area. Alvin Plumer, Allen Koss, Kurt Winter, Ralph Ottaviano, Helen Janis and Arnold Nicholson are its members.

Current activity in this area has been the opposition to the use of the northeast corner of 2nd and Pine Streets as the site for the Police Administration Building. This committee and SHÅÄ have led the way in organizing opposition to this use. A series of meetings with representatives of the Space St. Area Improvement Association, Center City Residents Association, Mr. Harry Batten of the Old Philadelphia Development
Corporation and Mr. Albert M. Greenfield, former chairman of the City Planning Committee.

As a result of the "Do it Yourself Workshop," many unanswered questions in the area of rehabilitating homes on Society Hill emerged. Mr. L. E. Martin, a recent rehabilitator is currently serving as Chairman of this Committee, other members being - Anthony Gogoleski, Robert Trump, Frank Graham, Damon Childs, Preston Andrade, K. P. Clark and Thomas Reber.

During all these months, this large committee of 50 neighbors have performed many tasks that must go into such a complex job as developing a citizens program for Urban Renewal. The list would include such tasks as writing letters, typing stencils, phoning committee members, circulating petitions, addressing and mailing notices, putting up posters, arranging displays, keeping records of the meetings, and always the job of telling their friends of what is going on in their respective sub-committees. In addition to the names already mentioned much of this work has been done by the following committee members:

Mrs. Anna Barrance, Mrs. Stephen Baughn, Martin H. Baumboltz, Newton M. Berger, Arnold N. Blumberg, Charles Bowes, Joseph Broderick, Mrs. Helen Burkin, Elba Cardenti, Mrs. Mary Cieslak, Mrs. Rose Diamond, James Edmonds, Willard Elman, William Groves, Miss M. L. Jarden, Anna Levin, John Levin, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Martin, Miss Mary Mickel, Maureen Murdoch, Phoebe Patterson, Charles E. Peterson, Samuel Rosenberg, Harry Segal, Paul Silverstein, Alfred J. Spade, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Strenk, Mrs. Ida Weintrub, Mrs. E. G. Wolff, William Zadkine.

The year behind has been one for the Committees of finding their goal, of building a team, of developing plans of strategy, and achieving some victories. As a result, the year ahead should be witness to the fact that only through neighbors working together can Society Hill become a safe, attractive, friendly place in which to live and work.

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XXX WELCOME to New Neighbors -
Clarence Albert, 210 Spruce,
Gretchen Becker, 238 Spruce,
The Richard Webbs, 325 South
3rd Street, William and Joan
Scracy, 321 Pine.

XXX CONGRATULATIONS to Allen Koss
for his exhibition of paintings
at the Art Center, Mount
Pleasant and Lincoln Drive,
March 5th through April 2nd.

XXX COMING UP - Community Services
Fair, The Health and Welfare
and Recreational Services of
South Philadelphia, two day show,
Wed. May 20th, Thurs. May 20th,
111# Inf. Armory, Broad and
Wharton Streets.

XXX SHARAS's Public Relations Comm-
mittee meets Wednesday, March
19th at 8 P.M., 321 South 45th
Street. If you have any items
send them to "SHARAFACT", 321
South 4th Street. Deadline for
April Issue, Fri. March 28th.

Dear Fellow Member:

Help your "SHAR" by asking
a friend to become a member.

$1.50 - Individual
$2.50 - Family
$10.00 - Contributing
$25.00 - Sustaining

Mail your memberships to Society
Hill Area Residents Association,
% Mr. Robert Levin, Sr., 271 South
4th Street.

Sincerely,
Dr. Meyer Gansky

MAIL
Residents of Society Hill

Within the next few weeks representatives of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia, in cooperation with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, will be in the Unit Two area of Society Hill for the purpose of making an inspection of existing structures. This inspection will be made to determine the architectural and historical significance of the structures and their potential for rehabilitation. It DOES NOT mean that the Authority is considering acquiring the property. Unit Two is the area bounded by Spruce St., 2nd St., Lombard St., and 7th St.

Most of the inspection will involve an examination of the outside of structures. However, in some cases the structures will be entered in order to obtain more detailed information. Any representative from the Authority desiring entry into a building will carry identification papers.

The results of this inspection will aid the Redevelopment Authority in developing a plan for the Society Hill Area. This plan will emphasize the residential character of the area, encourage the rehabilitation of existing structures, and preserve the historical and architectural significance of Society Hill. Before any plan is finalized, the residents of Society Hill will have an opportunity to review the proposals and express comments.

Your support in preparing an Urban Renewal Plan for the Society Hill Area is essential.

If you wish further information please write to Benjamin Schoenfeld, Shera Urban Renewal Chairman, at 323 Spruce St.
Day far be it from any true Philadelphian to
suggest changing our hallowed traditions for a
temporary grandstand in the middle of Broad St.
Why should not this exciting event, in its
entirety, be enjoyed as it is, without any
change for the sake of curiosity? It is far better
to enjoy the event as it is, without any
change for the sake of curiosity.

For the benefit of all, the Society Hill News
has prepared a special section for:

**MID-SUMMER SPECTACULAR**

Behind the scenes of the July 4th parade, the
traditional history of the Independence Hall
area is brought to life. This year, the parade
features a special focus on the history of the
area, with floats and performers highlighting
the rich heritage of Philadelphia. The parade
starts at 10 am and concludes with a
celebratory fireworks display at the Independence
Hall. Don't miss this historic event that
honors the spirit of Philadelphia.

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In the second section, the Gazette of the Society Hill Area
announces the upcoming events for the month of July.

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And in the final section, the Gazette highlights the
upcoming events for the month of August.

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For more information, please visit the Gazette's
website or contact our office at 123-456-7890.
MID-WINTER MEETING

There must have been a wee bit of Post Office blood in the veins of the fifty brave souls who trudged through "rain and cold and snow and dark of night" to our Mid-Winter Meeting at Carl Schurz Auditorium. Those who ventured were richly rewarded by hearing Mr. Charles Peterson's inspiring slide-talk and Mr. John Robin's (Old Philadelphia Redevelopment Corp.) talk and question-and-answer period concerning happenings about to happen here. Also, we had the privilege of meeting in one of the Old City's historic buildings, and many of us were happy to have the opportunity of viewing the interesting exhibits in the meeting room.

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POLICE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Most of SHARA members are pleased to note that a site has been determined for the new Police Administration Building - outside the Society Hill Area. Mayor Dilworth last week announced that it will be erected on the block bounded by Race, 7th, Cherry and 8th Streets, and will be designed by the architectural firm of Geddes, Bocche and Quarels. Plans for the Society Hill site originally proposed for the Police Administration Building call for a residential development which is certainly more in line with the City Planning Commission's announced objective of maintaining and retaining the residential character of Society Hill.

INTRA-ORGANIZATION

On Friday, February 23, the Citizen's Council on City Planning met at a luncheon in the Sylvania Hotel to hear the new chairman of the City Planning Commission, Dean C. Holmes Perkins, discuss past, present and future projects of the city's planners. We are glad to report that Dean Perkins made a very strong point to the effect that while scientific approaches to traffic, clearance, rehabilitation and development have their place, the human element must not be lost sight of. No city is well planned and maintained unless it takes into account the living, recreational, educational and spiritual needs of the citizens. Also in a letter to SHARA Dean Perkins wrote "I look forward to working with the Association towards making Central Philadelphia one of the finest residential areas anywhere in the land."

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THE COMING ANNUAL ELECTION

As is called for in the Constitution and By-Laws, the President has appointed the following members to be on a Nominating Committee, to prepare a slate of officers to be voted upon at the Annual Meeting, which is planned for April 28th.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE - SHARA - 1966
Chair: Mr. E. E. Schoenfield 329 Spruce St.
       Mr. Alexander Kosse, 223 Spruce St.
       Mr. Leon Hall, 507 Delancey St.
       Rev. Joseph Cawley, SJ, 321 Willing Alley
       Mrs. Bertha Singer, 231 Pine St.
       Miss Solma Levin, 507 Spruce St.
       Mr. Phillip Valardi, 258 S. 4th St.

Members of SHARA are asked to inform the Chairman of the Nominating Committee or any other member of the Committee as to a choice for any office. To be elected are a President, 3 Vice Presidents, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and 10 Members-at-Large.