

SOCIETY HILL NEWS

VOLUME 1 - NO. 2 - MARCH 1958

PUBLISHED EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE

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 Kearney, Mrs. John Canny, 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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SHARA IN THE NATIONAL NEWS

ACTION

American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods

Philadelphia Group Patterns Clinic After ACTION Sessions

PHILADELPHIA — Patterned after the ACTION Regional Urban Renewal Clinics of the past year, the fall meeting of The Society Hill Area Residents' Association (SHARA) drew over 600 citizens to two nights of workshops and other sessions here recently. SHARA's objective, "to make and keep Society Hill a safe, attractive and friendly place to live and work," was the theme of the local clinic, at which speakers and consultants answered questions in addition to leading discussions.



THEY BRING YOU THE SOCIETY HILL NEWS

Left to Right: Scouts Ed Schenecke, Pat Reed, Joe Mormello, Bud Sobel, Paul Winececil.

SHARA ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 28th

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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 104° , 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 Howizak, 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 tot 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 Rugowitz and Mrs. Libby C. Getsow. 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. SHARA'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 proposed ~~renewal~~ 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 SHARA 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 rebuilding 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 SHARA have led the way in organizing opposition to this use. A series of meetings with representatives of the Spruce 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 Gogolski, 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 Barranca, Mrs. Stephen Baughn, Martin H. Baumholtz, Newton N. Berger, Arnold N. Blumberg, Charles Bowers, Joseph Broderick, Mrs. Helen Buerklin, Elba Cardenti, Mrs. Mary Cieslak, Mrs. Rose Diamond, James Edmonds, Willard Elfman, William Groves, Miss M. L. Jarden, Anna Lavin, John Levins, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Martin, Miss Mary Mickle, Maureen Murdoch, Phoebe Patterson, Charles E. Peterson, Samuel Rosenberg, Harry Segal, Paul Silverstein, Alfred J. Spause, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Strenk, Mrs. Ida Weintraub, Mrs. E. G. Wolff, William Zagadkin.

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 bear 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.

Sharafact



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

XXX CONGRATULATIONS to Allen Koss for his exhibition of paintings at the Art Menagerie, 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 29th, 111# Inf. Armory, Broad and Wharton Streets.

XXX SHARA's Public Relations Committee meets Wednesday, March 19th at 8 P.M., 321 South 4th Street. If you have any items send them to "SHARAFAC", 321 South 4th Street. Deadline for April Issue, Fri. March 28th.

Dear Fellow Member:

Help your "SHARA" 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



HEAR YE! HEAR YE!
Residents of Society Hill

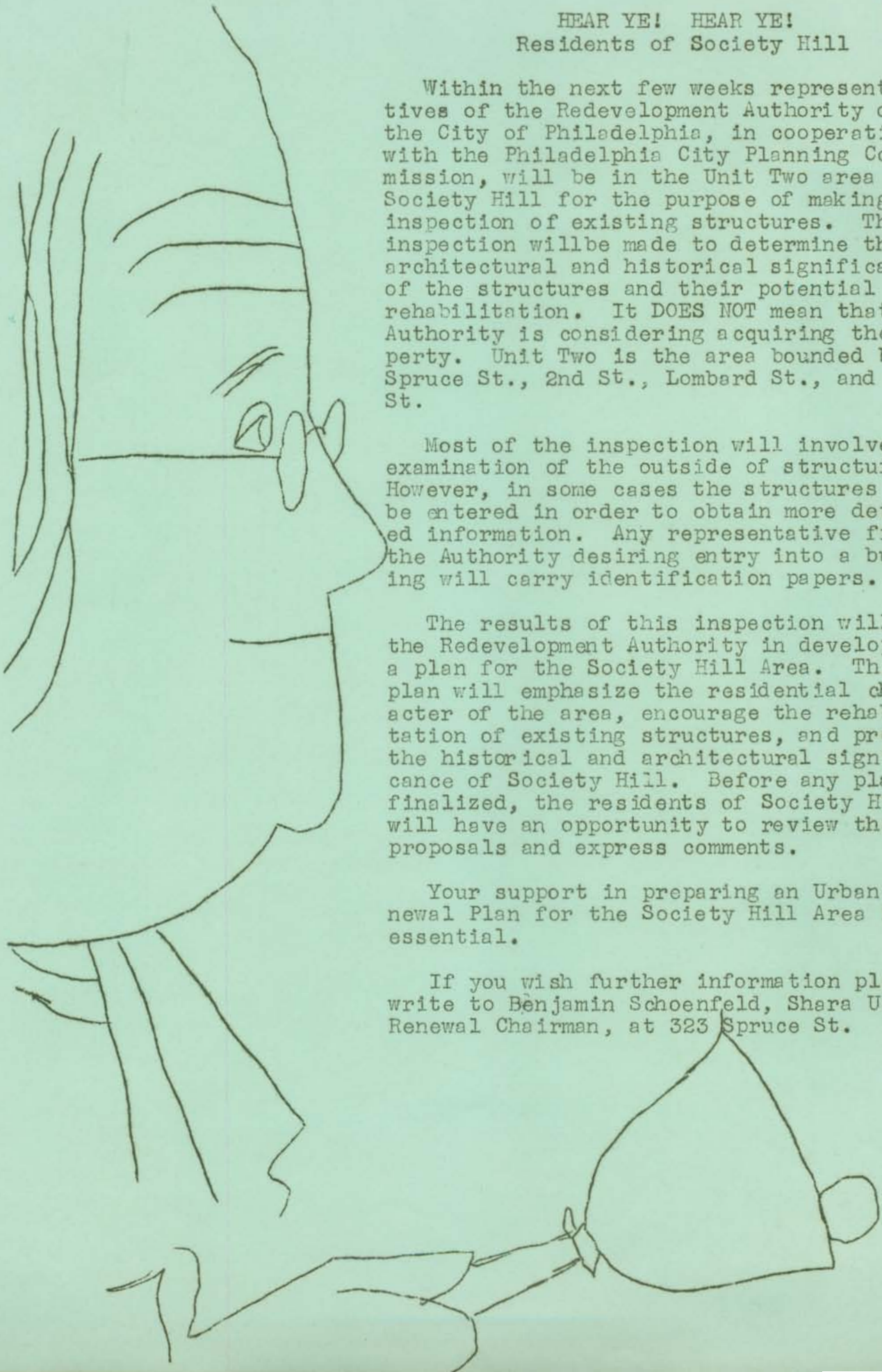
Within the next few weeks representatives of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia, in cooperation with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, will be in the Unit Two area of Society Hill for the purpose of making an inspection of existing structures. This inspection will be made 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, Shara Urban Renewal Chairman, at 323 Spruce St.



- *Eliz. Schoenfeld* Mary Louise Jarden*
- *Selma Levin* Earl W. Lovelace* Pat Reid*
- *Bertha VonMoschizsker* Harry Altman*
- *Catherine Phillips* Raymond Gogolski*
- *Howard Silverman* Sheila Travaglia*
- *Edward Scherneck* Marge Buerklin*
- *Danny Primo* Bernard Sokolick*
- *Anne List* Sarah Pausman* Ed Sobel*
- *John Sennot*, Staff Aide SHARA*

MID-SUMMER SPECTACULARS

Behind the scenes in redevelopment coun-
 ntils there has been a great deal of talk
 about some form of a pageant or spectacle
 for the nightly entertainment of the tour-
 ists who are being attracted here, each
 year in greater numbers, to the historic
 shrines we are redeveloping in and around
 the Independence Hall area.

It is inevitable that we have some sort
 of a pageant, play or spectacle to hold
 over our visitors several days. They thus
 can do their sightseeing more leisurely,
 have a chance to visit our shops and pa-
 tronize our restaurants. Then, too, there
 is no better way to rest up after a day
 of weary traveling for footsore tourists
 who have been tramping around all day long.
 We are liable to underestimate the val-
 ue of some sort of a pageant in an his-
 torical restoration center. Some sort of
 a show adds a new dimension to an histor-
 ical scene; especially for school children
 who enjoy seeing their history books come
 to life.

People come to American historic centers
 anxious for amusement more than we ordin-
 arily suppose. Nobody in Williamsburg, Va.
 even imagined Paul Green's "The Common
 Glory" would ever play, night after night,
 into now its twelfth year, and then most
 of these tourist hordes travel on for the
 other pageant by Paul Green "The Lost Col-
 ony" which is beginning soon its 18th year.
 Whenever the question of a pageant is
 brought up in this city some very pract-
 ical people start wondering where we could
 find an adjacent site big enough for such
 an outdoor spectacle. Crowded now, as we
 are for space, we might have quite a time
 finding any area of the down town section
 of the Independence area for a stadium or
 auditorium to accommodate these tourists.

Yet we have such a ready-made approp-

riate area that requires only a slight re-

adjustment of official viewpoint to make

it a reality. Stretching out from Indep-

endence Hall we now have

a wide Mall of lawn be-

tween 5th and 6th which

could be supplied with

temporary grandstands

adjusted each night to accommodate the

crowds expected. On this grassy sward th-

ere could be planned a very genial, live-

ly pageant of historical tableaux similar

to those we've seen cavorting up Broad St.

in our incomparable parade on New Year's

Day.

Far be it from any true Philadelphian to

suggest changing our hallowed New Year's

parade from its traditional date. But

there'd be no reason on God's green earth

why this fascinating parade, in a conden-

sed form should not be repeated in the

warm summer nights on the Independence

Mall in front of our State House with all

its glitter, string music and pageantry.

The nation long has seen our unique march-

past on TV and here would be a chance to

give our tourists a close-up view of these

triosome folks, under pleasant circum-

stances, and here's a chance for our num-

bers to earn extra money in the summer-

time, and there would be an historic pre-

cedent, and a ready-made catchy name for

all of this. Alfred L. Shoemaker of

Bethel, Pa. Long has been talking and

writing of those fabulous Spectaculars

they stage in the up-country Dutch areas

on summer nights in Lebanon county, north

of Indiantown Gap. We could borrow this

attractive name, making the whole Spec-

tacular a series of lively, tuneful tab-

leaux which would send our visitors back

home high in praise of the wholesome amus-

ing march-past they saw on a summer's

night in front of

America's outstanding

historic shrine, In-

dependence Hall.

* * * * *

SHARA
REHAB CLINIC

Monday March 11 - 7:30PM
321 S. 4th St.

Free Advice and
Information on
Planning and
Repairing
Your
Home



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, Brecher and Quarles. 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 28, 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 G. 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 - 1958
 Chair. Dr. B. N. Schoenfeld 323 Spruce St.
 Mr. Alexander Koss, 223 Spruce St.
 Mr. Leon Hall, 507 Delancey St.
 Rev. Joseph Cawley, SJ. 321 Willing Alley
 Mrs. Bertha Singer, 231 Pine St.
 Miss Selma 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.