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Getting Smart

BY WALTER L. SMART
Executive Director
National Federation of Settlements
and Neighborhood Centers



Congress and the Executive Branch must be accessible and responsive to the people. Many interpret this as just the ability to write letters and receive a mimeographed response. It must mean much, much more. In order to make our government more open, we must learn how it works and then learn how to effect change through it.

C. Wright Mills, Robert Dahl, Douglas Heilbroner, Stokely Carmichael and Lerone Bennett have spent the major part of their lives studying power — how it is developed, protected and used. In the short period of about nine months, the public has learned more about government than could be read in the thousands of books written about it.

Watergate, its press coverage, its mystery story-like unraveling, its unending developments, has shown us how many major decisions are made and the ruthlessness with which those decisions are carried out. Most of us should now generally understand the awesome power the President holds and how a few men control and sustain it. The nation continues to have a very expensive civics lesson.

Now, more than ever, there is the need for all of us to make a more inquiring look at Washington and our representative government.

On March 24th through 26th, 1974, community people from all over the country will

converge on the capital to attend the 1974 NFS Washington Legislative Seminar. At this Seminar, Senator Edward Brooke will give the opening address and lead a discussion on the federal government and how it works for and against the poor. Such a conference will prove vital to anyone seeking input into our national law-making process.

The conference will be divided into workshops dealing with areas of lobbying, the Executive Branch, and the effect major pressure groups have on decision making.

It is hoped that this conference can in some way redirect the way we relate to and influence government and the governing.

We must begin hard, cold investigation into how the government works. It is only with this kind of hard work can we be better able to make our feelings known and acted upon.

The NFS Washington Legislative Seminar will be an opportunity to touch, feel and watch our government at work. Don't miss this opportunity to meet your Congressman and express your position on local and national issues.

For further information about the Seminar, contact the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, 232 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Union Avenue businessmen unite

Minority businessmen and others who live and work on Union Avenue (between N.E. Broadway and N.E. Columbia Blvd.) increased their chances of obtaining a piece of the action when the Union Avenue Redevelopment project moves from planning to real business activity. They did this by their attendance and spirited discussion at a morning meeting at Fred's Place on December 13, 1973 where the formation of a Union Avenue Businessmen's Association was discussed. It must be emphasized that only the first step was taken there: the businessmen present voiced the hope that an organization would be formed.

Harvey Rice, Director of MEDIA, Inc., said, "It needs to be understood fully (let's make it perfectly clear) that without an organized effort, i.e. unless the Union Avenue businessmen, especially the small businessmen, band together into an economic-political association, their interests and needs will not be properly served as the Union Avenue Redevelopment program moves forward. In fact, it can be categorically stated that without a well-organized citizens' pressure group, the small businessmen, particularly the minority businessmen, will be pushed off the street and will experience dislocation and loss from the Redevelopment Project."

Herman Brame, employed by the City of Portland as the Community Involvement Coordinator for the Union Avenue Redevelopment Project, was at this meeting. He stressed that the planning for the rejuvenation of Union Avenue had just started, and that the project's planners are most desirous of any suggestions — from neighbor-

hood groups. This could include a Union Avenue Businessmen's Association — if such an organization comes into being. He pointed out that input into the planning effort must come from the people along the corridor if a sound program of redevelopment is to result.

A second fundamental requirement for a Union Avenue rebuilding program is a large fund of money which is set up to provide long-term, low interest cost loans, as well as equity investments. Without such a fund, the small businesses and would-be small businesses will not be able to acquire property, rebuild or expand their present structures, or invest in the capital equipment necessary to develop, in sound business ways, the economic opportunities which the Union Avenue Plan will make possible. Without such a fund, only the large corporations, with their ability to tap mortgage money and other capital from the banks, savings and loan companies, and other large money lenders, will be able to take advantage of the great business opportunities that will appear along Union Avenue during the next ten years.

Rice provided leadership in the creation of a Union Avenue Businessmen's Association. The first meeting was a result of his efforts. Rice is now making plans to establish the investment pool of funds mentioned above. The idea is to set up a Small Business Investment Corporation (SBIC). Such an organization can borrow money at low interest rates and pass this low cost on to the small businessmen from the federally-funded Small Business Administration. Presently, a paper outlining

the idea, prepared by Donald C. Jones, Chief Management Consultant for MEDIA, is being circulated among the leaders of the financial institutions of Portland, city officials and other interested persons. It is expected that a sufficient number of the Portland business and political leaders will see the merits and necessity of such a Union Avenue investment corporation, that the organization of it can proceed during this period that the Redevelopment Program is taking shape. As progress in the formation of this investment corporation occurs, MEDIA will make reports to the Union Avenue businessmen through this paper, and through other communication channels.

Working to insure that this investment fund for small businessmen is set up should be a major program objective of a Union Avenue businessmen's association. Jones feels the need for this investment fund underlies the importance — in fact the necessity — for such an association.

The businessmen concluded the December 13 meeting with a request that the Union Avenue Redevelopment planners meet with them to explain what planning has been done so far, and to answer questions that the businessmen might have. That meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held somewhere in Area IV (Ainsworth to Columbia) of the Business Survey Areas. All Union Avenue Businesspersons and Union Avenue property owners are welcome. For further information, contact Herman Brame, Community Involvement Coordinator, at 5329 N.E. Union, Room 2, 288-8261, extension 46.



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Commission seeks Citizen Involvement

L.B. Day, chairman of the Land Conservation and Development Commission, announced that the Commission will soon form the State Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee, required by Senate Bill 100, to assist the Commission in obtaining widespread citizen involvement in all phases of the planning process.

The Committee will be responsible for recommending to the Commission a program that promotes and enhances public participation in the development of statewide planning goals and guidelines. The Committee must also review the proposed citizen involvement programs of local government submitted by the counties and the Columbia Region Association of Governments, and recommend to the Commission whether or not the proposed program adequately provides for public involvement in the planning process.

The Commission will appoint a committee of 9 to 11 members broadly representative of the geographic areas of the state and of interests relating to land use and land use decisions. The members will serve for a one-year term, and may be reappointed for subsequent terms.

The Commission is asking for suggestions of individuals who would be willing to serve on this committee. Suggestions are needed before the Commission's December 13th meeting, when they hope to make the committee appointments. Recommendations may be sent to L.B. Day, Chairman, Land Conservation and Development Commission, 240 Cottage Street, S.E., Salem, Oregon 97310.

The Commission is also interested in any suggestions regarding citizen involvement programs. Day urged that anyone who has recommendations for citizen involvement to send them to the Commission.

Student aid available

It appears there still may be some student financial aid available winter term at Portland State University, says Richard Streeter, director of financial aids at the University.

The types of aid available include Supplementary Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) and National Direct Student Loans (NDSL).

Streeter also said there still is time for first-time, full-time freshman to apply for aid under the new Basic Educational Grant program operated by the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The deadline to file for BEOG funds is February 1, 1974. Application forms for all types of financial aid are available in the Student Financial Aid Office, Room 192 Neuberger Hall (724 S.W. Harrison).

Financial aid is awarded primarily on the basis of need.

Snow crews ready

The Portland Department of Public Works is ready for a sudden snow or ice emergency, according to Commissioner Lloyd Anderson, and he is asking all Portland area residents to help by making sure their cars are prepared for any major winter storm.

Noting that it was just a year ago this month that a surprise snow storm paralyzed downtown Portland, as well as major roads around the City, Anderson urged all motorists to carry tire chains or to equip their car with studded snow tires and to make sure to always drive with their gas tanks at least half full.

"The latter point is especially important during the present fuel crisis," Anderson said, "but motorists should be cautioned against carrying cans of gasoline in the passenger compartments of their cars."

In reminding drivers to have their antifreeze and batteries checked, Anderson observed that "The greatest problem during last year's storm was the tremendous number of stalled cars. Such traffic jams only hamper our efforts to sand streets and remove snow."

Anderson stressed that "Despite the fact city crews are prepared for emergency operating conditions, a heavy or sudden snow fall could still catch many motorists flat-footed if they haven't taken the minimum precau-

tions we've recommended, especially during this severe fuel shortage."

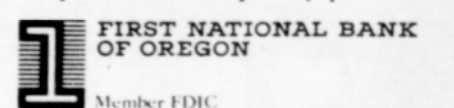
Anderson stated that under the City's snow and ice control plan, priority is assigned to give access to (1) hospitals and nursing homes; (2) schools; (3) bus routes; (4) bridge approaches; (5) business districts; (6) streets with excessive grades.

The emergency plan also provides for the temporary closure of 26 selected street areas for sledding and for drainage control in the event of a quick thaw.

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Rail study progresses

Portland Mayor Neil Goldschmidt and Multnomah County Commissioner Mel Gordon released a preliminary feasibility study of light rail transit at a meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Transportation. The study provides an overview of five potential rail corridors in the Portland metropolitan area which might be developed as part of the regional public transportation system.

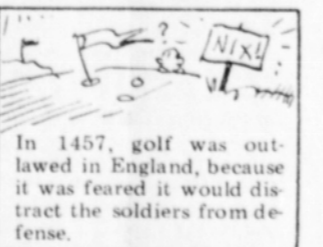
The report was prepared at the request of the City and County by the Railroad Division of the Public Utility Commissioner's office, under the direction of Assistant Commissioner Lon Topaz.

Both Goldschmidt and Gordon stressed that the study is only a "first look" at the

possibility of light rail transit, and not an immediate action plan for implementation. The cost figures reflect ball park estimates, said Goldschmidt, to provide a starting point for comparison with other modes. Gordon pointed out that the study indicated that energy consumption for a light rail system would be significantly less than for automobiles.



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