

Urban Renewal:

What's It All About?

(Earl Newkirk, executive director of the city redevelopment agency, discusses urban renewal and redevelopment in these columns three times weekly. Suggestions, comments and queries are welcomed by the agency, whose office is in the city hall annex, 322 Church street, GA 6-0460.)

By Earl Newkirk

You will recall your redevelopment agency had a couple of public meetings not long ago. The purpose of these meetings was to give everyone sort of a "report" on what we've done, to briefly indicate the next steps to be taken, and to ask for criticism of our work for you to date.

The first of these public meetings we asked be reserved primarily for residents and owners of property in the San Lorenzo park project. It was held at the Business and Professional Woman's club located within the project area. It was well attended and, we hope, of some assistance to all who came.

Two nights later we repeated the identical program in the city council chambers. All citizens of the community were invited to attend and to express their views. A handful managed to show their interest by coming to this meeting. We never felt so like quitting a job in our life. Maybe there are a thousand excellent reasons in explanation of why so few managed to get to this meeting. If so, we'd like to know. On the other hand, if so few care about what you have put us here to do, or about how we are doing it, then why on earth should we continue to spend "Uncle Sam's" (that's yours and mine) well-earned money to do it? It's not enough that we hear of little or no opposition. How do we know your feelings if you don't respond one way or another?

If you oppose redevelopment of the San Lorenzo park project, then stand up, be counted, and give your reasons. If you don't think we're doing the job you hired us to do, then tell us so, and tell us why. But, believe me, without good reasons as to "why," we're not about to "give up." On the other hand, without any "whys" at all, you can hardly expect us to know how to improve. We can hardly take into account constructive criticism that never reaches us.

And what about the support of those who believe in the job you have assigned to your redevelopment agency? And support of the work we have produced thus far?

Seldom, if ever, have I seen such apparent apathy on the part

of so many. Your redevelopment agency board members serve without pay. They are busy people. Your executive director and his secretary are paid. Why waste precious time and money if the majority doesn't give a darn about improving our community?

We are going to have a total of three public hearings on the San Lorenzo park project. The first will be tomorrow night, Thursday, at 8 o'clock, in the city council chambers at the city hall. We've told you about it. We've told you why we're having this additional hearing. Do you support us or not? We are doing all we know to give you an opportunity to tell us. Come to the hearing. Yes, and take time to drop us a line—or a "book"—about how you feel. Earn that right to speak out at public hearings now, not later. The only criticism we hear "sneaks up" behind our backs, "wafts" around in intangible rumors that scarcely reach our ears. This is American?

Start by coming to the hearing. Write. Phone. Come to the office of your redevelopment agency. Complain, or compliment; damn or praise; approve or disapprove; criticize, pro and con. But don't expect sympathy, nor too much concern on our part, if you wait until the final plans are complete and presented for the last two public hearings.

Woman Catches Errant Husband After Long Hunt

Detroit (AP).—A frail little woman from Alaska says she finally caught up with her man after a 3000-mile journey.

Mrs. Rena Millard, 56, told Circuit Judge Victor Targonski yesterday it took her 3½ years to catch up with her husband, Lawrence, 48. She said he abandoned her and her son on tiny Gavina island near Ketchikan, Alaska, in 1952.

Learning her husband was in Detroit, Mrs. Millard flew here September 17 and located him after checking telephone directories and tracing down several old addresses.

Millard, a truck driver, was arrested for non-support and ordered by Judge Targonski to pay his wife \$25 a week.

Today, Mrs. Millard prepared to return to Alaska, commenting on her mission, "It was really nothing."

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