

Report

(Continued from 4-CC)

land to the end as well that the caliber of merchandise displayed there was beyond the means of those who attempted to patronize the center.

Downgrading of merchandise was observed and proved successful. No loss of trade to Northland was felt by Birmingham merchants.

Believing that some of the better stores could profitably establish branches in the community even those now represented in Detroit or Grosse Pointe, we embarked upon an ambitious program to locate sites in New York and Chicago merchants.

A considerable amount of time was spent in New York city in 1962 and 1963 gaining audience with and soliciting the principals of these firms to consider opening stores here. Among those solicited were: B. Altman, Sax 5th Avenue, Lord and Taylor, Best and Company, F. A. O. Schwarz, George Jensen, Hammacher Schlemmer, Carson, Pirie, Scott, Neumann-Marcus.

Peck and Peck, Bloomington, Bergdorf Goodman, Plummer Limited, Franklin Simon, Frank Brothers, Russak's, Von Lengerke and Antone.

The required areas for building and parking were not available within our community to some. In other words their operations, in their experience, to be successful, had to be very large. But many did come here following several meetings.

SEVERAL OBJECTIONS

Quite naturally they were interested in the purchasing power known to exist in the metropolitan area but for the most part were dismayed by the (1) general appearance of the community and the had housekeeping in the Central Business District, (2) the vehicular congestion which hampered free pedestrian movement, (3) the woefully inadequate parking.

They readily understood the inability of a property owner to provide on-site parking with the high land values that existed and wondered why the community at large had not provided parking commensurate with the potential of the trading area.

It is interesting to know that a single one of those solicited went any further than preliminary negotiations. A full record of these negotiations and meetings is available.

Birmingham has no industrial area of any moment to support its required services as do the cities of Troy, Warren, Royal Oak, Detroit, Pontiac and others. Its business district, therefore, is of utmost importance for tax revenue. Should that district decline in value the resultant decline in tax income suggests that services must be discontinued or that the costs be borne by the residents of the community alone.

This community cannot expand—very little single residential construction can take place because the number of sites available is extremely limited. Residential growth can only take place via the multi-unit dwelling route and with high-rise buildings—(Note: certain parts of our zoning ordinance must be changed to permit such construction.)

It appears to me, therefore, that the successful development of our Central Business District is of first importance. You have stated in your memorandum to me and in agreement with me that I have espoused that it is a community affair and not to be accomplished by assessment against the merchants and property owners in the business district. If the latter were attempted, the result would be all out of proportion to the returns that could be paid or obtained.

A DUST GATHERER

It seems to me that the Central Business District program which has been gathering dust since it was presented in 1961 should, at least in part, be implemented. My suggestion is that simultaneously the parking and access and egress parts of that program be initiated in some such manner as follows:

1. Double deck existing municipal lots, which is a cheaper method of increasing the deficiency than the acquisition of more land.
2. Take the tolling out of the Willis-Oakland crossing and of the Brownell-Forest crossing of Woodward Avenue, making them one-way streets and eliminate parking therefrom, connecting the two at Chester at the west end and Brownell and the continuation northerly thereof at the easterly end.

This should provide all of the essential traffic flow in and about the community for years to come and eliminate the necessity for widening those streets to provide two-way traffic. This is hazardous as well as expensive.

3. Require the property owner, by giving notice, to remove obsolete frame structures (mostly old

residences not any longer useful for the purpose for which they were designed, from sites in the Central Business District.

Eliminate as rapidly as possible the need for overhead power and telephone lines.

Promoters of shopping districts are aware of our deficiencies and have already solicited our principal merchants to become tenants in proposed shopping districts to be built east and west of our community. The city of Bloomfield Hills has on its drawing boards a plan similar to that proposed for our Central Business District.

It is not inconceivable that should their plan succeed a wholesale diversion of interest in Birmingham could take place for the reason that there are upwards of 45 acres of relatively cheap land along the routes proposed in Bloomfield Hills which would provide all of the facilities necessary for a successful shopping venture and in a location not too far removed from the center of our trading area.

Birmingham has the advantage in that merchants are now here and I believe, basically, loath to move out but, over the years, I am confident that those merchants and others who might be introduced will elsewhere unless proper facilities are supplied by this community.

SPECIALISTS NEEDED

So far reaching a plan must, of necessity, be the objective of all elements in the community. There should be active representation on the committee of men and women representative of officialdom, commercial and industrial activity, professions, the educational establishments, the churches and the citizens at large are at stake. The increasing congestion in the area does not contribute to economic stability or the realization of the forenamed factors.

To implement a community project as comprehensive as suggested there should be a planning expert, and a public relations specialist competent to interpret to the public generally the concept itself and its importance to every element of the community.

The need for the professional touch is to make clear to Tom, Dick and Harry just where his interest lies in support of such a program. We are all familiar with the designation of Birmingham as a "bedroom town" too readily accepted. I think, as an explanation for failure to arouse public interest in necessary developments.

The men who are active outside of Birmingham and the surrounding territory nevertheless have similar interests such as churches and clubs, and various family considerations.

The need is to reach them with a coherent and intelligible plan, the alternative of which could be shrinking values due to the disappearance of the amenities they sought when taking up residence here.

Apart from this segment of the population, I believe there is a need for impressing the business elements with a sense of objectivity. Some of the first opinions held with respect to re-

stating effects on individual enterprises need to be broadened to embrace the ultimate good from ventures undertaken in the interest of all.

- 1) To summarize, I think that the concept should be broadened beyond the Central Business District study;
- 2) I believe that to the fullest extent possible it should be a project of national character, having not only the blessing, but the support of official boards in the cities and townships of the areas involved;
- 3) The project should be staffed by professionals;
- 4) publicity should be set in motion at an early date to be before the public the facts with respect to the traffic dilemma and the threat that that problem presents to the prosperity, security and comfort of the community; and last, to take every step necessary to impress on the public mind the idea that such a plan is not parochial in its implications, but for the good of all.

City

(Continued from 4-CC)

elementary pupils in the area now served by the Baldwin Elementary School. The board recently invested substantial funds in renovating this building and currently is planning a long-term use of the building for school purposes. If Baldwin were not to be used as a school, it would be necessary to provide a new structure at an estimated cost of \$550,000. In addition, it would be necessary to acquire and renovate a site which, according to the standards of the National Council of School House Construction, should be ten acres in area.

3. If the Hill Building were not to be used as a central administrative services center, a new building would have to be constructed for such use. The survey report estimated a 40 per cent growth in school enrollments at saturation and estimated a cost of \$850,000 for the construction of an adequate administrative services center. Again, a site would need to be acquired and developed which would provide space for the building and parking facilities for 150 vehicles. Currently, the board of Education has no plan for the construction of such a building.

The members of the board of education recognize that further study of common problems might suggest alternatives which could be considered; however, it seems clear that changes in the board's present plan would require substantial additional funds.

We realize that this is also a common problem and, of course we are pleased to join in the cooperative study as suggested by the mayor.

Local Volunteers

(Continued from 1-CC)

Additional Talent

The year 1959 brought another Birmingham woman into active participation in the Con-Con battle. Mrs. John Bryant innocently accepted the position of editor on the Michigan League board, expecting to produce four copies of the newsletter per year. With the advent of the petition drive she found herself designing and writing brochures and flyers to explain the proposition as well as disseminating information to the press throughout the state.

Following the successful petition drive, the organizations which had worked to obtain the signatures formed the Constitutional-Convention Coordinating Committee under the chairmanship of George Romney. Mrs. Bryant was one of five League members elected to serve on this committee. She wrote and scheduled speeches for the committee, designed and produced their visual aids. So intent was she on the details of the Committee that the words Con-Con headed the vocabulary of her small daughter!

November 1961, found two stalwarts again in the fray as Mrs. Loomis and Mrs. Marshall joined Birmingham League members in the march to the polls, carrying banners in the freezing rain. When non-partisanship triumphed and Con-Con won, Charlotte Marshall returned to the board of the Birmingham League as chairman of the Con-Con committee, with Kathryn Loomis and board member Barbara Bryant as members. Mrs. Bryant aided in the preparation of the presentation given the Convention by a League of Women Voters testimony team. The Birmingham League was responsible for supplying observers at the convention

two days per month and one day each month found Mrs. Marshall an official and intent observer.

With the completion of the Convention the Michigan League of Women Voters obtained consensus of its members in favor of adopting the proposed document and the campaign began again. Mrs. Marshall called the first meeting of citizen-group representatives, who formed the Oakland County Non Partisan Committee for the New Constitution. She presided at the organizational meeting and was made chairman of two vital committees. Mrs. Bryant served as organizational secretary and is now a member of the publicity committee. All three women are members of the Speaker's Bureau of the Birmingham League, which has averaged twenty speeches per month since January.

Friendly League Goes to Theater

The Junior Friendly League of southern Oakland County held a benefit theater party Feb. 14 at St. Dunstan's Playhouse where the current play was "Thunder Rock".

Among those attending from the Birmingham area were Mr. and Mrs. Earnest Cole, Mr. and Mrs. John Dunkel, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Hannah and Mr. and Mrs. John Sutton.

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CHERRY PIES 72-0Z. 29¢

SAVE 6¢ ON 3—KROGER RED TART FITTED

PIE CHERRIES 2 303 29¢

SAVE 12¢—50 EXTRA TOP VALUE STAMPS WITH COUPON BELOW—BORDEN'S CREAMED

COTTAGE CHEESE 30-0Z. 39¢

SAVE 10¢

BISQUICK BETTY CROCKER BRAND . . . BOX 59¢

CALIFORNIA SEEDLESS

NAVEL ORANGES 79¢
DOZEN

JUMBO 72 SIZE

REACHER CRISP

FRESH GREEN BEANS . . . 19¢

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APPLES—Golden Delicious 3 LBS. 59¢

BAG

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SAVE 9¢—KROGER FRESH CRACKED

Wheat Bread . . . 1 LB. 18¢

SAVE 11¢ ON 3—DOSE

Pineapple Juice 3 40-0Z. 89¢

QUARTS

1/2 Gallon Milk . . . GLASS 37¢

ALL PURPOSE CASCADE . . . 30-0Z. Pkg. 49¢

WATKINS BRAND

WAX PAPER . . . 100 FT. ROLL 23¢

QUICK-DRAWING

DISHWASHER DETERGENT . . . 3-1/2 GAL. 79¢

DUFFOY BRAND

FABRIC SOFTENER . . . QUART SIZE Pkg. 89¢

HANDY DETERGENT TABLETS

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