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# Civic Groups Endorse Location Of Proposed City Parking Lot

Dear Mayor Burgum:  
This letter is in reply to yours of May 23, referring to the Feb. 14 meeting on the Central Business District called by then Mayor (Florence H.) Willett asking whether the Board of Education is still of the opinion that parking in the southwest quadrant is best supplied in the block south of Shain Park.

The Birmingham City Commission last week authorized the purchase of eight parcels of property for a proposed municipal parking lot in the block immediately south of Shain Park. This proposed facility has been controversial subject the past several months. Here are four letters from responsible, community-interest organizations, voicing support for the City's plans. These letters, addressed to Mayor William H. Burgum, were included in last week's agenda and therefore constitute an official part of that meeting.

proposed lot will be developed without further delay.

Sincerely yours,  
**CHARLES MORTENSEN**  
Manager, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce

Baldwin Library  
Dear Mr. Burgum:  
In reply to your letter of May 23, I echo the opinion of the Library Board that more parking is needed in the southwest quadrant.

The experience of libraries in many other cities has convinced us that adequate parking near the library is a necessity if library service, so dependent on

convenient access, is to be an expanding vital force in this city.

As we stated at the Feb. 14 meeting, we would be equally pleased if a parking lot could be constructed on the site of the Board of Education's Hill Building but since that seems very unlikely at this time, we heartily support the proposed plan to establish a parking lot in the block bounded by Merrill, Henrietta, Townsend and Bates.

Very truly yours,  
**ARTHUR J. UNDERWOOD, JR.**  
president, Baldwin Public Library Board

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I have checked carefully both the advance statement on the board's position, prepared by Dr. (Otis M.) Dickey for the Feb. 14 meeting, and my own statement read that evening.

WE EXPLAINED that the Hill and Baldwin school properties are now definitely needed for school purposes and will be for the foreseeable future (at least Baldwin will be) and therefore could not be sold by the board to the city for parking, as suggested in the CBD plan. We did not make a statement concerning alternate parking areas.

Bennett Roof, in a recent letter to our board to the Baldwin PTA, of which copies were sent city commission members has phrased the board's attitude so well I'll quote him here:

IN CONNECTION with the peripheral route and all other matters associated with the Central Business District development the only concerns appropriate to the Board of Education are for the safety of children and for the continuing effective utilization of school property. . . . We are confident that our concern for the safety of children is fully reflected within the planning board and city commission. It is within these bodies only that the responsibility rests for planning, approval and execution of central business development.

The appraisal of alternatives in street design and traffic flow is something which our board is not qualified to do.

INDEED, in connection with school site planning, we have appeared in the past to agencies similar to our planning board and city commission for advice because they are more experienced and because they have established access to professional consultants who are expert in matters of traffic engineering and safety.

The Board of Education has confidence that the city commission will make good decisions concerning these difficult matters of urban development.

Sincerely,  
Kathryn T. Loomis  
Board of Education president

Community House  
Dear Mayor Burgum:  
As far back as Oct. 5, 1961, the City of Birmingham received a letter expressing our concern for more adequate parking and pleading our support.

You should also have on file two statements of support by The Community House of Birmingham for the Central Business District Development Plan. First was our letter of Dec. 27, 1962. Second was the statement read in behalf of our board of directors by Ed Larchen at the special joint board meeting at the Municipal Building on Feb. 14, 1963.

IN BOTH, we outlined our future plans and how the success of such plans hinged, to a great extent, on the fulfillment of the CBD plan, especially with relation to improved parking facilities and traffic flow.

We felt justified in expecting the City to provide these improvements as compensation for the facilities and programming which The Community House provides Birmingham at no cost. . . . facilities and programming which, in most communities, must be furnished and administered by the City.

AS EVIDENCE of our faith in the future of the Central Business District and the vital part we feel The Community House is destined to play in it, we are . . . announcing the selection of a firm of architects and our intentions to proceed immediately with the designs for expansion.

Let me reaffirm, we are counting heavily on the city proceeding with the plans for additional out-street parking that we were under the impression were resolved.

WE FEEL that the block south of Shain Park is the most logical site for such facilities, and our hope is that it will be developed as aesthetically as possible to justify the deep consideration we are giving our design program.

Furthermore, we feel that the inspirational contribution that the expanded Community House combined with the new parking facility will make to Birmingham at large will more than compensate for the

loss of a few old houses no matter how nicely they have been remodeled.

Sincerely,  
**ROBERT A. THOM**  
President of the Board  
The Community House

Chamber of Commerce  
Dear Mayor Burgum:

Thank you for your letter of May 23 inquiring as to our present position on the proposed municipal parking lot in the southwest quadrant.

Both our board of directors and our parking committee are more concerned with the proposed lot as it is needed and preferably as soon as possible. Benefit to our merchants from the proposed lot would be both direct for those closest and indirect for many others in that it would take some of the pressure off Lot No. 1. Beyond this, the lot would be a great benefit to The Community House, Baldwin Library and the Post Office, all of which are being threatened for lack of adequate parking.

WE REGRET the controversy which has developed over the proposed lot, but it is nothing new. There was strong opposition to the original establishment of Shain Park, opposition to widening of Woodward and of Maple, opposition to the development of Hunter Blvd., opposition to the widening of Lincoln and opposition to the development of just about every parking lot we now have.

In fact, just about every major civic improvement ever made in Birmingham has faced sharp opposition.

VERY FORTUNATELY for Birmingham its leadership over the years has been of the highest quality and the improvements were made in spite of opposition—for the greatest benefit for the greatest number.

Birmingham is today one of the nation's outstanding residential communities with a first-class shopping and service center and this is due in large part to forward-thinking and progressive city officials who had the courage to do what was best for Birmingham.

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By R. L. KILPATRICK, Manager

Congratulations to the Bloomfield Art Association for the wonderful Art Festival activities. The paintings, both in the downtown area and at the Art Center, plus the variety of programs in the Festival Dome will be remembered for a long time.

Good luck to Bill Roberts, Chairman of the Birmingham YMCA building drive. As you know, your YMCA is a dynamic lay association of voluntary members, cooperating to provide — for themselves and others — clubs, camps, church athletic associations, interest groups, informal education, sports, leaders for youth and opportunities for service.

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