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## ADVOCACY AND URBAN PLANNING

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Together with urban activism of all kinds — with the possible exception of neighborhood community organizations — planning advocacy has experienced a kind of “hunkering down,” a period of learning to make do with limited resources of money and public support. The year 1977 will, we believe, establish a demarcation between this time of stabilization and one of renewed exploration into new territory. The reasons are obvious: an end to a swing of the business cycle, one which has been especially sharp and painful to urban enterprises; and a new national political landscape, with a renewed commitment to public intervention on behalf of the poor and the powerless.

### HISTORY: ADVOCACY'S ROOTS IN PLANNING PRACTICE

The American practice of urban planning began in the 1900s as an outgrowth of an elitist concept of urban political structure: the “good citizens” would swing their influence behind the formation of a Planning Commission for the city which would make long-range

decisions about city growth and design, insulated from the crass self-interest and short-sightedness of the corrupt political machine. This 19th-century hangover was a salient feature of planning thought and practice right through the Kennedy Administration, which, in its Urban Renewal programs, wrote large the idea of the Master Plan drafted in the Public Interest, and channeled federal money into the execution of the experts' vision of the downtown commercial, real estate, and banking interests' plans.

City planning, traditionally, was oriented toward the physical city. Its history in our country and elsewhere has been centered on the physical approach, looking at the physical structure of the city, the means of transportation, the use of land. It looked to the capital budget rather than the operating budget, to the structures required for the facilities in which government would create its services. Until very recently urban planners were not concerned with the services to place within the facilities, only with their locations and physical characteristics and the ways in which the locations of public and private facilities could assist in meeting certain social, economic and political goals.

The ideal to which planning as a discipline, and practicing planners, looked was an ideal of the "highest and best use" of the physical space of urban communities. The ideal community was a community of orderliness, of hierarchy, in which land and buildings were used to their "highest" potential. The Daniel Burnham Chicago Plan of 1893, reflecting the Beaux Arts movement of Europe, was widely imitated; it relied on aesthetic perceptions of symmetry and order and of appropriate symbolism to create an urban plan expressive of the dominance of urban society by city government, big business, banks, and commercial establishments. At the same time, planning thought and approaches were influenced by the housing and settlement house movements, and the muckrakers and social critics who looked beneath the marble facades of the Beaux Arts plans. Mumford, Wright, and Stein and the Regional planning Association of America were writing in the 1920s about the need for a planning approach which dealt with the economics and social structure of an urban national society (Sussman, 1976).

During the period from 1900 to 1950, as planning departments and commissions became a standard feature of city governments throughout the United States and the Department of Housing and Urban Development came into being, the dominant tone of planning was of

civic design and civic improvement, elevating the physical appearance of cities by tearing down the ugly and "unplanned." Social concerns, including the development of a sense of a "just society," were far from central to the common practice of urban planning.

Beginning in the late 1950s, city plans began to address service issues — issues of social planning. That was a healthy and, we believe, an important change in outlook. It took place during the course of the war against poverty and the civil rights movement, when it became increasingly clear that it was impossible for city planners to be concerned with the physical environment while ignoring the social repercussions of events that took place within that physical environment. After a period of years of pressure within the profession, a broadening of the definition of the role of planning took place.

Corresponding to this expansion of the scope of planning during the 1950s and 1960s, the planning profession, having grown considerably in size and in its independence from its origins in architecture and civil engineering, became concerned with the problem of self-definition. The complaint rose that there was very little thought in the field and in our graduate schools; planners had no concept of what they were about; and what it was that was planner-like about us. There was concern with how planners could improve their ability to deal with the issues of the urban community. The search for self-definition turned up a belief that Meyerson and Banfield (1964) had pronounced earlier, and that Herbert Simon (1976) and others had discussed. They took what was essentially a managerial or rational decision-making approach that planning was a process by which decisions could be made about how the resources of the future could be allocated and utilized in an effective manner to achieve the aims of the society. The planning process was viewed as a kind of recipe or set of instructions which identified the potential goals that were available to the body politic, urged the society to make choices among its potential goals, clarifying and making explicit what its goals were. Having made the goals explicit, the plan then could search for the appropriate means to achieve those goals. The goal-setting part was seen as a very important part of the planning process, because in the absence of specification of the goals to be achieved, it is very hard to follow through on planning. How does one know what one wants to achieve if the goals, the aims, are ambiguous or vague? The goal-oriented view of planning said that the rational process is to identify the range of means that are available to

achieve a given set of goals; to compare the set of alternative means and try to evaluate the consequences that would flow from the implementation of these sets of means, in terms of which would be most suitable in achieving the goals sought. Meyerson and Banfield go to great length to identify different types of consequences, intended and anticipated, unintended and unanticipated, that planners can examine in searching for a comparison of alternate means. Having completed the process, the planner may divulge a best means, or a set of means. The next step is choosing the process by which those means can be implemented and overseeing the implementation to make certain that there is a constant pursuit of the goals through the means employed. And finally, there is the overall appraisal, or feedback mechanism, for the reconsideration of goals and means and methods of implementations.

This recipe for developing a rational pursuit of goals was very important for the development of planning theory in the historical setting of the late 1950s. In the time of Eisenhower and of Senator Joseph McCarthy, the language of societal movement and change had to be neutral, technical, and devoid of reference to discredited ideologies. A critique of the then-dominant standard master plan, the plan for downtown urban renewal, had to be couched in noninflammatory terms. It would be very important back in the 1950s and early 1960s to identify and make clear to the public what its alternatives were, because, in fact, the planning system and the urban development and urban renewal system weren't doing that. They were coming in with the answer, the way to do it. Those of us who were attuned toward thinking that the social and political system would be better served through redistribution of wealth, power, and access to social good and who saw no redistributive emphasis in planning and renewal proposals, came to the conclusion that a way to begin to explore the opportunities for redistribution was by working within the system to expose the opportunities that could occur through alternatives. The exploration of "alternatives" was an effort to find a way to open the system to more choices than the rather conservative system of the late 1950s was providing.

The rational pursuit of goals and of means and methods of implementation gave rise in planning thought to what now seems an obvious point: the method by which urban planners and theoreticians selected the issues to be chosen for study was itself culturally biased. It was necessary not only to explicate planners' biases and perspectives,

but also to try to move beyond their biases by giving expression to the full range of choices in the rational pursuit of a better urban community. Planning issues were not matters of objective techniques or factual conditions that would automatically suggest appropriate courses of action. Planners had to understand that their perceptions were subjective and that their determinations of appropriate courses of action, too, were subjective, value-based, and, in a sense, political.

Another important issue of planning theory in the post-World War II period was the problem of creating a democratic planning process. The whole concept of planning was under strong attack in the 1930s and the 1940s. The argument was not against city planning, it was against national economic planning. In the American reaction against the Bolshevik Revolution, the concept of planning — the very identification of a plan of government — meant the denial of freedom to participants in the society. A plan meant that citizens had to adhere to the plan if it were to be carried out. These criticisms of planning (Hajek, 1944) as the opening wedge of totalitarian coercion are still valuable critiques of the nature of planning.

Planners continue to be greatly concerned with the question of reconciling planning with the norms of a democratic society. The realization that all planners make proposals in terms of their own personal, subjective evaluation of the urban situation was immensely important in a process of establishing the requirements for a democratic planning process. Planning is not a neutral, "scientific," technical process; it is a process of making and implementing subjective judgments about what is good for an urban community. A technician could perform a useful role by contributing information and analysis as a background to decision making. But no expert could come forth and prescribe a plan, because a plan should be a product of a democratic decision making process. No single person's or agency's judgment could be proxy for a democratic process of urban decision making — planning. As in other aspects of the development of advocacy in urban planning, Herbert Gans' (1962) book, *The Urban Villagers*, contributed valuable insights into the way that apparently neutral, technical decisions about the "best" use of parcel of urban land could be seen as exercises of bureaucratic insensitivity and even tyranny.

This recognition of the planner's necessarily limited role in formulating goals in a democratic society had a strong impact on the profession. In the Eisenhower and early Kennedy eras, with anticommunism and

anticollectivism approaching the status of a national religion, planners who were "liberal" in their political learnings felt safest not in confronting conservative attitudes on the part of elected public officials head on, but in trying to enlarge the sphere of discussion by identifying new alternatives so that the Master Plan could educate the public as to what the real alternatives were. The public could then engage in debate and in consideration of what its own desires were. Within the profession, it was assumed that the debate about the public's goals should take place within a planning agency. By definition, planning was something done within planning agencies.

The increasing intensity and frequency of opposition to decisions made by local public agencies involved in housing renewal and redevelopment in the early 1960s led to the next step—the creation of a connection between anti-establishment planners and urban movements of the poor and of racial minorities. Some planners found themselves participating more and more politically in challenging the right of established planning and renewal agencies to carry out their tasks. They found themselves in the role of antagonists to the planning process, trying to give assistance to those who were what we called the bulldozer in urban renewal, those who were pushed out of their slums. Frustrated planners tried to find a way to offer assistance to that class of the citizenry because they felt the agency was failing to do it. At the same time they began to build up a theory to justify their own actions. They built up a theory of planning concerned with the development of a role for the planner who wanted to work outside the public planning system, to counter that system if necessary. The name given to it was "advocacy." Planners would serve as advocates for interests that were not being given fair consideration by government agencies.

#### EMERGENCE OF ADVOCACY AS A PLANNING THEORY AND PRACTICE

In the 1960s planners began to engage in open debate not only within their agencies but between planning professionals inside the agency and those who were outside advocating special interests, such as universities, trade unions, and minority groups. The debate led to a suggestion that the problem in planning had been the dominance of a theory that planning should be monolithic or unitary, that there was an agency of government — a planning commission (in our cities), or a national planning entity (the Bureau of the Budget, in the United States, or the national Planning Bureau, in other societies) — capable of making plans for a whole city or a whole nation. Planners realized that

this conceptualization of the process of planning had seen it as a unitary process with one input, the agencies' input, and that this was particularly startling when compared with the political decision process. Political decisions were to be openly debated at least by two parties and frequently by many interests; but planners had not identified how those interests could become involved in their process.

The attack on single-agency, unitary planning was accompanied by development of a notion of pluralism in planning (Davidoff, 1965), by which it was meant that there should be more than one voice in the discussion of plans for the future of a community. Pluralism may have been conceptually of much greater importance than a concept of advocacy. What was urgently needed was a process by which there is created more than one plan for the community to consider — that there is at least one "counter-plan." Plural plans make it possible for the citizenry to understand something of the range of what is available to them and to compare alternative plans.

It was conceivable that plural plans could all be created by a single planning agency. The recipe for rational planning which preceded advocacy theory suggested that it was the role of the planner in the agency to identify a number of alternative plans, or at least alternative sets of means toward a goal. But, in the context of an opposition based in poor communities to the downtown renewal plans of the official agencies, the idea of an agency technician setting forth the available alternatives seemed remote and alien.

Municipal planners and renewal officers were upper-middle class, highly educated, and used to dealing with others of the same status; poor people and minority-group members viewed them with suspicion. A plan purporting to express the interests of the poor and the minorities could hardly emerge from such a source.

How could a poor, minority community obtain the technical expertise needed to produce its own plan in opposition to the official agency plan?

In an analogy to advocacy in law, the issue was posed: can you be advocate for your own case or should you obtain a disinterested professional who can do a better job of advocating another person's case? A recurrent problem in an agency advocating a range of alternatives was that the agency planner was not deeply committed to them, and many of the alternatives he would present would be straw men. A number of planning reports have put forth a set of alternatives

and then selected one. A client carefully reviewing the argument behind each of the alternatives can see that alternatives have been set forth merely to show they existed and have then been knocked down very quickly.

The challenge to advocacy became the need to develop a process whereby an interest group whose concerns had not yet been voiced in the construction of an official master plan could obtain expert planning advice and proceed to develop an alternative plan. Poor and minority communities, civil rights groups, residents of land "needed" for slum clearance or highway construction, all needed a formal process by which they could rely on, or develop themselves, the ability to prepare elements of a master plan serving their own concerns.

Pluralism and advocacy were bolstered by the concept, developed in the early 1960s, of client analysis. Planners talked about a "client-oriented" approach (Reiner, Reimer, and Reiner, 1963) — an interesting contrast to today's emphasis on the "consumer" as the sovereign figure in social activism. The concept of client-oriented social services was a response to the paternalistic approach of which social workers were said to be guilty. It urged providers of social service to give respect and attention to the views and values of the people they served. It urged professionals to be wary of the imposition of their own values on their clients, and to give presumptive legitimacy to their clients' views.

Advocacy was seen as a way in which the planning profession could give assistance to the client. Planners would open offices in parts of the city accessible to ghetto residents; would make themselves available to meet with poor people and minority groups; would help members of these communities articulate their concerns with the physical shape of their neighborhoods and the ways in which city services were provided to those neighborhoods. Planners would help residents shape proposals or responses to official proposals, would appear as expert witnesses in suits opposing highway and renewal plans destructive to poor neighborhoods; would use their knowledge of urban planning, renewal and redevelopment, capital budgeting, service programming and budgeting, and other urban processes to advance the interests of their new clients.

The development of the idea and practice of advocacy led to a new issue: who dictates the terms of the discussion, the professional advocate or the client? What is the role of the professional working with a client organization, a neighborhood group, in trying to develop a plan? To what extent does the professional lead; to what extent does he follow?



The proper client-advocate relationship was, of course, simultaneously a topic of debate and exploration in other professional fields, notably social work, medicine, and the law. In the law, a client hires a lawyer to advocate his case before the bar. The client is assumed not to have the ability to make a presentation of his/her own case, under the ground rules of the courtroom. In line with that analogy, the attack on advocacy has been presented that it leads to a form of professional elitism such as we have in the law in which the lawyer makes the argument and the case, even identifying for the client what the client's interests are.

As the idea of the sovereign consumer has developed in recent years, the elitism of the client-professional relationship has been tempered by the notion that the consumer-client should establish his or her own goals and should require the professional to state a method of achieving those goals within the consumer's cost constraints, which include money, pain (in medicine), risk of failure, time, and other factors. And if the consumer's goal is not achieved, he can lash back in legal attacks on his professional helper. The rising costs of malpractice insurance are a testimony to the increasingly high performance standards of what used to be a passive client body.

If, however, the client-professional relationship is based on mutual respect, sharing of goals, and an appropriate balance of consumerism and expertise, the planning advocacy of making it possible for a community to participate in developing its own range of options can become a tremendously powerful educative device. The citizenry becomes aware of its potential to create, to plan, to change its conditions of life. New vistas open up. People become aware that almost everything is possible at some given cost. An advocate plan could propose that New York City could become a potato field, its residents fully employed in a primitive form of agriculture. Any plan can be set out for discussion, as long as the costs of carrying it out are set forth. The range is not really free, however; society is limited and constrained by technology, the available resources, the natural environment.

A further theoretical constraint on advocacy is the inevitable problem of irreconcilably clashing interests. Successful advocacy requires the forceful expression, in planning terms, of particular interests: those of neighborhoods, interest groups, ethnic and social groups within an urban community. The issue then arises of what person, agency, or

force is in a position to referee or judge the proper resolution of irreconcilable plans?

If the city of New York opens up a neighborhood planning office in Bensonhurst, and the Bensonhurst community decides that it wants to prevent more black families from entering the community, is the planner's job as a representative of the city of New York in Bensonhurst to give representation to the views of Bensonhurst or to the views of the black and other interests of the larger entity, New York City? The answer could lie in either direction. The city determines that there ought to be an advocate for each neighborhood; then the planner's job would be to represent the views of Bensonhurst, which are to exclude blacks. There would lie the ultimate extension of the advocacy viewpoint, that would professionalize the process of neighborhood exclusion and mutual antipathy.

The city also determines, however, that all community interests should be fairly represented in the planning process. By assigning staff planners to work with communities throughout a city, the central planning body assures ~~expression~~ of divergent views, engendering further debate and discussion, enlarging the fact that there is a clash of interests. An advocate's view of the democratic tradition is that those differences have to be explored as explicitly as possible so that all parties can take the most intelligent position.

A cynic might argue that the ultimate resolution of an elaborated process of conflict among groups over planning decisions will always result in the victory of the forces that were strongest in the first place (and that might have proposed a single plan "in the public interest"). We believe that even relatively weak groups fare better if allowed to organize, develop viable ideas, exert pressure, and search for points of leverage even within a lopsided balance of power (Mazziotti, 1974).

Thus advocacy as a process leads to an analysis of pluralism in describing the contending planning viewpoints: a planner can be placed in any number of advocacy positions, setting forth any number of possible alternative substantive views of proper urban policy choice. The planner can choose for whom to work, or be assigned to a particular interest group by a central agency concerned with full representation for alternative views.

#### ADVOCACY AND MONEY

One measure of the political viability of an interest is: can you

find somebody who will support it? In American practice, there exist enough liberal and conservative foundations to sponsor both interests *on the right and on the left of a relatively radical nature*. But not every group gets support, and a continuing reliance on foundation or public support is antithetical to democracy itself; it is like saying that those who have great wealth can choose who they want to support.

In the end, taxpayers pay for foundations, because they supply the federal revenue that is foregone through giving tax exemptions to the wealthy families and corporations which establish foundations. And taxpayers pay for the more complex, and more expensive, operations of a public planning agency that chooses to elaborate its field staff, sending representatives and resources out to formerly underrepresented communities and groups. The near-complete reliance of advocacy planners on public funds controlled by political authorities, or on foundations controlled ultimately by public tax policy as well as more immediately by their boards and wealthy donors, produces further moral dilemmas of the actuality of control over the advocacy process by the clients of that process. In addition to concern for dominating the process through advantages of education, verbalization, and status, the advocate has to be concerned about distortion of the available planning choices by reliance on foundations or on elected authorities. (The moral dilemmas, however, seldom trouble us to the point of refusing the support.) The long-run, preferable form of action is to find a way to make advocacy self-perpetuating; to increase the advocates' and their clients' ability to raise money.

## URBAN PLANNING ADVOCACY IN PRACTICE

As advocacy developed a body of theory, it also generated strategies and techniques for practice. These were disseminated and used in planning practice. Possibly the earliest examples of advocacy were the consulting projects of the Walter Thabit consulting firm, based in New York, beginning in the mid-1950s. Thabit's alternative proposal for housing University of Pennsylvania students in small, scattered residential units so as to avoid creating "student ghettos" and clearing large numbers of existing low- and moderate-cost housing units was commissioned by Powelton Village Associates, a pioneer group of university-based younger faculty and graduate students who had carved

a rehabilitated residential neighborhood out of an old Victorian low-income district. The Thabit firm also conducted the studies that led to the West Village House in New York City, a new-construction, low-rise solution to a need for moderate-cost housing without extensive clearance or the creation of a single-income, high-density ghetto.

In the 1960s, advocacy practice flourished in a number of communities around the nation. Urban Planning Aid, an advocacy agency in Cambridge, Mass., carried through a number of sophisticated studies accompanied by intensive and successful community-organizing efforts that led to the halt of construction of a major highway project planned to go through inner-city residential neighborhoods.

In response to the increasing number and scope of advocacy projects and to demands for action within its membership, the professional society, the American Institute of Planners, established an advocacy office in the late 1960s. Planners for Equal Opportunity (PEO) was formed in 1964 and flourished through the rest of the 1960s as a gadfly to the planning establishment on issues of equal rights. Official agencies around the nation altered their staff structures to accommodate one or more professionals whose responsibility was to work with community groups to develop independent planning proposals and to respond to official proposals.

The federal Office of Economic Opportunity and the HUD Model Cities staff, imbued with the ideology of "maximum feasible participation" in the planning and delivery of antipoverty programs, contributed mightily to the creation of new forms of urban advocacy. Local antipoverty boards and Model City agencies, formed in response to federal funding mandates, hired planners. The antipoverty agencies and their staff soon became potent political and patronage organizations in big-city ghettos. The issues they dealt with came to involve city-wide questions of resource allocation — as well as their original mandate for determining the specific local direction of federal antipoverty resources.

Simultaneous with the development of the officially sponsored Planning Commission and antipoverty advocates in cities around the nation came the formation of privately organized advocacy groups. Soon it became impossible to carry out a major renewal or highway project in big cities around the country without dealing with community groups, staffed by volunteer professionals or public-interest planning concerns. Costly investment programs were slowed, redirected, or halted in the face of protests, publicity campaigns, and litigation programs. The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a flowering of advocacy

in a climate of professional approval and support — but with a decidedly mixed set of results.

As in many areas of national life, the overwhelming electoral victory of Richard Nixon over George McGovern in 1972 set the stage for a rapid decline in antipoverty urban advocacy. The federal funds which supported professional staffs were cut or eliminated. Private advocacy agencies found themselves subject to IRS audits. The public climate of support for minorities and the poor in efforts to claim a larger share of national resources turned to hostility and the counter-assertion of the rights of the "silent (white, middle class) majority."

Urban advocacy in the early and mid-seventies was thus a lonelier and less protected activity than before. One area of continued, and even expanded, growth was in the formation of community advocacy groups in lower middle-class and working class, often white ethnic neighborhoods in cities around the country. These groups are to an extent reflective of concerns for home, school, and community apparently threatened by the expansion of blacks' and poor peoples' claims to greater shares of urban resources. Nonetheless they share many of the concerns of the antipoverty advocacy groups: the need for more federal resources for city housing and job programs, the need for greater representation in city-wide resource allocation.

We will discuss in some detail only the two advocacy agencies with which we have been closely connected, Suburban Action Institute and Garden Cities Development Corporation. Both were launched in the heyday of urban advocacy, the period from 1969 to 1972. One, having survived the lean times, continues. The other fell victim to overexpansion, the cut-off of federal funds, and the recession of 1973-1975.

#### SUBURBAN ACTION INSTITUTE

Our organization, Suburban Action Institute, grew out of an interest in opposing a public policy toward urban development in the late 1960s, the policy of rebuilding ghettos. In the mid-1960s, under the Johnson Administration, as a part of the war on poverty and a reflection of the growing civil rights movement, the urban policies of the nation shifted to some extent towards an increasing concern with the well-being of the low-income and nonwhite families of our cities. This was in contrast to the earlier days of slum clearance, primarily concerned with regenerating downtowns and attracting new capital to the cities. The new approach was a clear, conscious recognition that a decade of urban renewal had if anything been counterproductive; had

led to increased social tension in our cities, such that the minority groups that had been pushed around under urban renewal were reacting violently against the Establishment because of their maltreatment under these specific programs.

One of the results of the new approach to urban development seemed to be an increasing concern with the well-being of those who had the least — the nonwhite and low-income families. Simultaneously, movement towards increased citizen participation in the planning process was taking place as Congress recognized that it was essential that those whose neighborhoods were being affected by development would have the opportunity to participate in making choices about what was appropriate development within their communities. Our reaction to citizen participation was mixed. As advocates of democratic practice, we believe that anything that involves the citizenry in more participation involving how resources affecting them directly will be allocated and employed is highly beneficial. But aspects of the early days of citizen participation were rather mechanical. To be eligible for federal funds, it was necessary for a local planning agency to show that it had a citizen group organized to serve as an advisory board; one never knew really whether that group represented "the community." The *Model Cities* program called for active participation by the community in the development of the plan, and took planning's concern with citizen participation beyond formalism into a functioning process by which citizens in the community receiving funds would play a strong role in the development of their plans. There remained many problems as to who represents a community, who speaks for a community, whether the people who are elected through official ballots in the communities (in extremely low-turnout elections) did in fact speak for the community. The elections were held; there was a political opportunity for people to speak out and to run for office in the *Model Cities* communities and to begin to play a role in the development of the *Model Cities* plans.

Our primary complaint with the *Model Cities* programs — with Title II of the original OEO Community Action Programs and with other socially oriented programs concerned with the eradication of poverty and discrimination — was that they tended to focus on a place. They established an identifiable physical place as the area in which solutions could be found to these social problems. In the *Model Cities* program it was the *Model Cities* community, a delineated area having a host of

social problems, which was the arena for programs to operate. The existence of enormous social problems in the area were the very standard that HUD required for a community to qualify for assistance. Although the statutory language never explicitly said so, the solution to the problems of families residing in model cities communities had to be within the model cities community itself (Davidoff, 1967). The communities that received these funds, as physical places, desperately needed the infusion of dollars. But, insofar as federal grants limited the opportunity of the model city resident to choose whether to find opportunity where he lived presently or to find enlarged opportunity outside of his area, we felt that they were highly discriminatory programs. We accept the definition of a ghetto in its older meaning as a place to which a class of population is restricted. If this is a proper definition, then the whole idea of ghetto rebuilding would be anathema, because it meant a class of the population was restricted, in finding opportunities, to a very limited physical area.

We were opposed to a public process that restricted choice to a small area, particularly because it restricted choice to an area that was worn out. What we were seeking was a public program that offered opportunities to impoverished families, families discriminated against because of race, to make a choice of location within the regions in which they lived, based on where they thought they could find the greatest opportunities. Our studies of metropolitan regions indicated that the greatest opportunity for economic advancement rested not within the center city, but within our suburbs.

This was the case for a number of reasons. First, America has for many decades been decentralizing its metropolitan population; population has been flowing at a rapid rate from the cities to the suburbs. The suburbs have been attractive to American families for many reasons. Families did not like the congestion of the city. They found economic opportunity in the suburbs. They wanted more open space, more privacy, for themselves and for their children. They thought that the education offered in the suburban schools would be preferable. They fled the inner cities because the inner cities had more and more blacks, and they ran out of hate or out of fear. Objective and external forces were also at work; land was available in the suburbs.

There is some room in our cities for redevelopment, but in terms of total amount of vacant land in our metropolitan areas it is a very small percentage. Ten to twenty percent of the land available is in our inner

cities, the rest being in the jurisdictions outside. There is a second fact of metropolitan development which is at least as important as the existence of vacant residential land, and that is the fact that American industry has for many years now been moving to the suburbs. Headquarters operations, service operations, manufacturing operations — the overwhelming bulk of the new jobs have been created in the suburbs. As the jobs have grown in the suburbs, our public policy for advancing opportunities for low and moderate income families has not looked to the suburbs. That policy has looked to the inner city. While our public policy on urban development speaks now of rebuilding and revitalizing the center city, in the postwar period tremendous subsidies have been given to the suburbs to allow their development to take place. Daniel Patrick Moynihan used to point out that had President Eisenhower wanted a conscious policy to develop our suburbs, he couldn't have proposed anything better than the federal interstate highway system. Meanwhile, F.H.A. housing policy has made possible the development of single-family homes in the suburbs. The federal income tax system operates to the advantage of home owners by granting a set of deductions from tax liability. Thus the federal government has sponsored the development of the suburbs, but that development has essentially been for the middle class. It has not been conscious federal policy to enlarge the opportunities of working class, moderate or low income families to take advantage of the resources that the suburbs provide.

*While federal policies for ending poverty and discrimination were being focused on delimited portions of inner cities in the Model Cities program, suburban communities were growing in jobs, tax base, and quality of service — and erecting ever higher barriers to the immigration of nonwhites and the poor. These barriers include zoning restrictions and other controls on building; subdivision regulation; and building codes restrictions. Zoning — employed originally as a means of assisting communities to enhance public health, safety and welfare — has increasingly become a mechanism employed by localities to preserve the fiscal base of the community by prohibiting the forms of residential development which would heavily tax the community. The relatively low priced forms of housing are prohibited or restricted to a tiny area of the town. In addition, suburbs may require that the single-family homes that are permitted be developed on excessively large tracts of lands. It is not unusual for a town to require a home to be on a half*



acre, one acre, two acres, four acres or in Bedminister, New Jersey, five acres of land. What happens throughout a region when the land is under the control of one acre, two acre, four acre zoning? The potential supply of available units in the region sharply decreases. What happens to land price at a time when you have a sharp decrease in supply and a tremendous demand for development? Land price shoots up. In the suburbs, land prices are tremendously high for a single tract upon which a home can be constructed. It is our concern that with job opportunities growing in the suburbs, suburban community, corporations, and governments should see to it that the workers associated with those jobs have an opportunity to live close to those jobs.

It is important that a suburb not be able to reap the rewards of the taxes from an industry while foisting on the cities the jobs of educating and servicing the working class families who may have to shift to a new job or commute at great cost to that job. What Suburban Action has been doing is to put pressure on the corporations, the suburbs and state and national governments to change their practices.

Since its establishment in 1969, Suburban Action has made some important strides in dealing with its issues:

- It has contributed to an increased public awareness of the issue of suburban exclusion and the need for regional sharing of solutions to problems of race and class. One of the early goals we met was to have these issues treated on Page 1 of the New York Times. Our publications have been widely distributed to both planning and lay readerships. Our access to electronic media has been good.
- It has brought a number of legal actions to challenge suburban exclusionary practices, with some important victories to its credit in state or federal courts.
- It has successfully challenged the proposed move of one large corporation, RCA, from New York City to New Canaan, Connecticut. A number of other actions against corporate moveouts are pending.
- It has helped to focus the concern of civil rights agencies and official planning bodies on the issue of suburban exclusion.
- It has survived. Suburban Action's funding level (based primarily on foundation grants and research contracts), while never large enough to sustain even a small part of the effort needed to mount a major attack on the problems it deals with, has been able to

maintain a staff, stay in operation, and weather the hard times of the past five years.

#### GARDEN CITIES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

As the first small victories were won in the battle against suburban exclusion, and in the expansive economic and public climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Suburban Action's staff gave a great deal of thought to the necessity for creating a housing and new-community development agency that could move beyond a theory of "suburban contributions to metropolitan problems" and into the reality of such.

*Our hypothesis was that as court victories against suburban exclusionary practices were won, the development of new housing at moderate cost in the formerly exclusive suburbs should not be left solely to the private for-profit market (Davidoff, Davidoff, and Gold, 1971). Private developers generally realize their greatest profits from their highest-priced units. In addition, the usual form of nonprofit development agency — the urban public housing agency — usually did not exist in suburban municipalities. Suburban Action's staff believed that a nonprofit development corporation specifically geared to purchase vacant suburban land; apply for the right to build moderately priced and subsidized housing; where necessary, to litigate to gain that right; and carry through with the construction of the units, was urgently needed.*

Garden Cities Development Corporation came into existence at a time when credit was widely available and relatively inexpensive; when tax shelters made a variety of private investors eager to go into partnership with nonprofit agencies for housing development; when federal housing subsidies were flowing at the fastest pace in their 50-year history; and just before a sharp jump in the cost of building materials took place.

By 1973, GCDC had pyramided millions of dollars' worth of land and completed apartment buildings onto a base of zero capital and a good basic concept. Working with the skilled and imaginative architectural firm of Callister, Payne, and Bischoff (the designers of Heritage Village) and other design firms, GCDC had prepared plans and submitted proposals for more than a dozen suburban mixed-income communities, ranging in size from a few hundred to a few thousand units. The flagship proposal was for a 6,000 unit new community, complete with recreation, commercial development, health, education, and welfare services on an 800 acre site in Mahwah, New Jersey, a town

which is home to a mammoth Ford assembly plant of whose 6,000 workers fewer than 100 lived in the community, as a result of inflated house prices based on severely restrictive acreage zoning.

Victims of optimism and good times, GCDC and SAI moved from relatively modest quarters in their home community of White Plains, N.Y. to extensive and well-equipped new offices in Tarrytown. The two organizations expanded sharply.

Then came a series of crippling blows. The Nixon Administration cut off housing subsidy funds. The cost of credit and of building materials rose sharply. The business climate darkened as the economy slid into a massive recession. Along with the UDC, the state and City of New York, and other large and small concerns, GCDC went under, succumbing to a falling-domino syndrome as loans were called in. Having attempted to stay alive and keep functioning while warning signs accumulated, both GCDC and SAI slid under mountainous debts.

#### **SURVIVAL AND RENEWED PROSPECTS**

SAI was kept afloat by the simple, and Draconian, device of payless paydays and the reduction of staff and facilities far below the minimum necessary for normal operation.

Over the years from 1974 to 1976, SAI struggled to obtain continued funding and to pay off immense debts.

With the success of its efforts at retrenchment and survival, SAI has turned to a renewed analysis of the requirements of successful advocacy in its field. The following principles seem clear:

1. Planning advocacy on behalf of the interest of the poor and of minorities can be carried out on a sustained basis and at a high level of professionalism. Doing this requires sustained funding, and, as lines of inquiry and efforts are explored and continued or abandoned on the basis of their satisfactory payoffs, requires expanded funding to permit full pursuit of promising approaches.
2. Achieving a high and sustained level of funding through foundation appeals, fundraising events, and the search for research grants directly related to our areas of concern, requires a great proportion of staff time.
3. The original GCDC thesis, while it failed in execution, was substantially correct. Further, the nonprofit development corporation, if successfully put in operation, promises the creation of a self-sustaining (and possibly expanding) funding mechanism

as "nonprofit profits" are put to use in maintaining staff, acquiring land, and carrying through development projects.

4. Any advocacy effort should maintain a close relationship between advocate and client. In the case of Suburban Action, this relationship has been especially difficult to maintain because of the physical and temporal separation of our purported beneficiaries — inner city poor and working class people and minorities — and the resources we hope to offer — jobs and homes in suburban areas. The abstractness and remoteness of our operating hypothesis keep us from appearing particularly useful in the daily struggles of families in the inner cities to survive.

Consequently, SAI has a particular need to establish an independent base of financial and organizational support. With a new national political and economic climate, we expect to be able to create this base.

### NEXT STEPS IN ADVOCACY PLANNING

Around the nation, a period of relative quiescence in public discussion of forms of advocacy within the profession has nonetheless seen a continued growth in advocacy practice, whether labelled as such or not. A comprehensive view of grass-roots urban organization around the country, much of it outside the aegis of organizations formally labelled "advocate planning," is given by Perlman (1976).

We believe that the organizational principles laid down by Saul Alinsky (1969, 1972) for community organizers are valid and important for the next stage in development of urban advocacy. Advocates and clients must be able to:

- Outline coherent tactics and strategies to advance their aims
- Achieve satisfying victories, however small, to maintain a spirit of optimism and hope
- Reach out to form working coalitions with groups that share significant interests
- Maintain independence and internal democracy; avoid cooptation.

In the next several years, these organizing principles may lead to increased stress by urban advocates for the poor and for working class communities on:

- (1) Educating and enlarging the capacity of citizens to become effective advocates. The long-range goal of advocacy should be to reduce the dependence of the citizen-client on the skills of a professional advocate. The aim should be to enlarge the capacity of citizens to be their own advocates.
- (2) Developing economic autonomy. Community self-help institutions in the form of sweat equity and urban homesteading, shared ownership of production facilities, and forms of cooperative ownership are proliferating in urban and rural communities. Misplaced utopianism and mismanagement are constant dangers, but when they are weathered these institutions hold out great hope for community autonomy and for increased leverage in the larger community.
- (3) Refining and disseminating community organizing techniques.
- (4) Acquiring political power. The experience of groups such as La Raza in the Southwest and of neighborhood groups in a number of urban wards presages the development of specifically political forms of advocacy. The low voting turnout of poor communities is the major roadblock to effective urban advocacy. It cripples the low-income and minority communities' efforts to obtain leverage over public resources.

It remains an important fact of life in professional planning that the wealthiest and most powerful interests in metropolitan communities have the resources to hire advocates who can present skillful and well-argued cases for community development that will advance those interests. Our kind of advocacy planning, advocacy on behalf of the relatively less wealthy and less powerful, can use community organization; political leverage over elected officials; foundation grantsmanship; media skills and other forms of community outreach — to try to narrow the gap in expertise and in effectiveness.

In a new national political climate, and building on the strengths achieved over the past ten years, urban planning advocates of redistribution both within and outside the national government may have the resources required to promote and implement the plans urgently needed.

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