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Planning: Support for process will yield results

To The Editor:

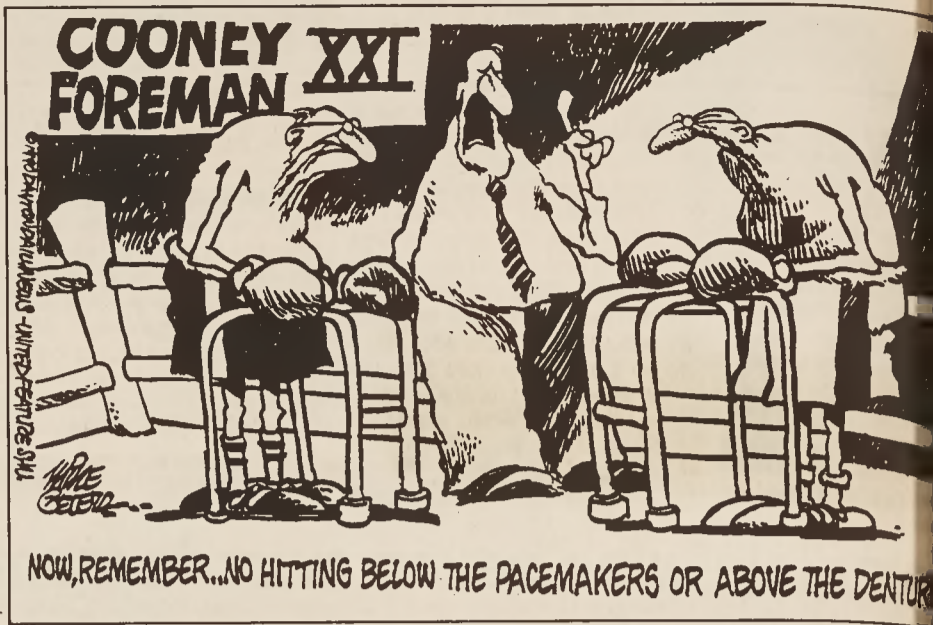
This letter is prompted by the Dec. 27, 1989, *Winston-Salem Journal* article titled "Board to Redefine Area Plans and Revamp the Way They Are Made" and is written on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Washington Park Neighborhood Association.

The tempest regarding the efficacy of area plans has caused the City/County Planning Board and staff to schedule the issue for review at their midyear retreat on Jan. 24. The issue here is one of definition. Often it is painted as a dichotomy between the use of these documents as "guides" or an interpretation of them as the "law." This characterization overlooks the real issue and may be used by well-intentioned individuals who, in their frustration over the correct use of these plans, may seek to abandon area planning entirely. The real issue does not revolve around the word "plan" used as noun, it should be more accurately focused on "plan" as a verb, an active process.

In December 1988, the Board of Aldermen approved the Washington Park Area Plan that had been previously renamed a "Development Guide" by the Planning Board. The approval was the culmination of a two-year-long process conducted jointly by a team consisting of planning staff members and a task force of our association. The team's work involved a series of five public forums ranging from "drop-in" sessions held at churches in our neighborhood to the final public approval hearing at City Hall. An analysis of the public's comments and suggestions was conducted and was followed by a thoughtful effort to write a document responsive to many concerns. Throughout this process, the contributions of our neighborhood task force were tempered by the professional expertise of the planning staff, shaping our plan to bring it into conformance with our city/county comprehensive plan, "Vision 2005."

It is from this perspective that we offer the following comments on the most important aspects of the area plan process: public participation in planning, respect for the professional guidance provided by the planning staff, and recognition that change and growth are beneficial to our community if such change and growth are thoughtfully planned and executed.

An open public process is with-



EAS opposition premature

IT'S baffling, but apparently there are some people who actually believe that Southern Bell cares how much they pay for telephone service. What other explanation can there be for the adamant opposition to the proposed Extended Area Service plan?

Strong lobbying against the plan by Southern Bell should alert consumers to the probability that the telephone company would lose money and the consumer would benefit if such a plan is implemented. It is obvious that Southern Bell would lose a considerable amount of revenue now being generated by the long distance fees.

The telephone company's insistence that the plan would be costly to the poor and only benefit businesses is unfounded at best. Cost determinations have yet to be made. That decision rests with the state Utilities Commission, and that body has not even considered whether an EAS option for the Triad is feasible.

Southern Bell estimates that the elimination of long distance fees for calling within the Triad would cost customers somewhere in the neighborhood of an additional \$3-4 a month. The citizens committee supporting the concept of toll-free service estimates the costs would run closer to \$1-2 more per month.

For many people neither estimate is exorbitant. If Southern Bell is really concerned about the burden on those least able to pay, then they should begin talking about how to lessen that burden for those people.

There are many people who would like to be able to reach friends and relatives living in Guilford and Forsyth counties without having to incur large long distance bills to do so.

People who might wish to search for job opportunities within the Triad or inquire with various stores about stock merchandise are inhibited from doing so because of the costs involved.

The fact that few people currently call outside the county can most likely be attributed to the fact that it costs too much with the service as it is.

But what is disturbing right now is that so many people have objected to the concept without even giving it a fair hearing. At the very least, we should allow the Utilities Commission to weight the information it is receiving from those who support and those who contest EAS. If the Commission determines that the idea has merit, it will conduct a poll to see what costs customers are willing to bear.

That seems to be the only fair way to make a decision. Let's not be blinded by self-serving lobbying efforts disguised as a concern for the poor.

About Our People of the Year

We are proud to present our 1989 award recipients. Our community is full of dedicated individuals who contribute much in their respective roles. Each year so many truly deserving people are nominated to receive an award that it is becoming increasingly more difficult to make a choice.

This year's recipients have made remarkable contributions to the welfare of this community. They all are people who have used their positions and talents to make life a little better for us all.

We invite the community to help us honor all of the individuals presented in our Year-In-Review section. They are truly a credit to this community.

CHRONICLE MAILBAG

Our Readers Speak Out

broadly recognized planning principles.

Lastly, the combination of open public process and trained professional planning advice should be used to promote thoughtful, planned growth and development at all levels from neighborhoods to our city and county as a whole. Change is the process that makes our community more vital and attractive to new businesses and families alike. However, we must learn to recognize and preserve those existing assets that make Winston-Salem and Forsyth County special enough to us to make it our home. The area planning process is the single most effective mechanism for accomplishing that goal. Through this process, we examine and assess our assets and liabilities and reach mutually agreed objectives. Let's support the process and the result will take care of itself.

Lisa V.L. Menefee
President
Washington Park
Neighborhood Association

Don't be turned off

To The Editor:

In response to the Disgusted Citizen who was treated rudely: As an

owner of an Afro-American business I agree: "The customer is always right."

I hope the manner in which we were treated will not keep you patronizing other Afro-American owned businesses, especially those there are other Afro-American florists.

Afro-Americans are plagued with the stress and tensions of life in America. Arguing can help to clear one's mind and relieve stress.

Interestingly enough, we most often with those we love. A question is probably not if we should ever argue but rather how and with what weapons. We as a people need to learn to choose issues worth arguing about and argue fairly.

It has been written that the sure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with but whether it's the same problem you had last year. Your frustration with the manners of the manager of a store is indeed a common criticism of American businesses. How successful are we going to be if we're locked in combat with one another. One of these days is none of our days.

Sylvia N. C. Black Tie

Please see page A5

Get 'Our-Story' now for Black History Month

Yes, it's that time of year again. It's time for the annual Black History Month Quiz from our special Black History Month issue of *Tony Brown's Journal* magazine.

And, as usual, the conditions are the same: You can have all of the magazines you want to pass out to your church, school, group or friends -- free. Of course, you pay the cost of shipping (\$10 for each box of 200) and \$1 in postage for each single copy you want to be mailed to you. Write to me at 1501 Broadway, Suite 2014, New York, N.Y. 10036, or call (212) 575-0876.

This year's subjects range from the first black female in Congress to "A Man Called Adam." The magazine

TONY BROWN

Syndicated Columnist

also provides the answers and grades you accordingly. For example, excellent ("You're serious about history"); good ("You could improve"); average ("Obviously, you did not go to a black college") to the basement of black historical information ("Join the Library of Black History!").

Some of the questions are not so ancient. For example, "What do Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder share?" And who won her Academy Award for "Gone With the Wind?"

You may already know that famed orator/politician Frederick

Douglass delivered his most famous speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July," in Rochester, N.Y., on July 4. But in what year?

For the sports fans, how about this one? A famous black jockey not only won the Kentucky Derby, but also the Russian, Moscow and Polish Derbys. Name him.

The first patent awarded to a black man was for the corn harvester on Oct. 14, 1834. Who was its inventor? You'll also get the answers to: Who wrote "I'm Just Wild About Harry" or the poem "John Henry"?

True or false: Richard Allen organized the Free African Society and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

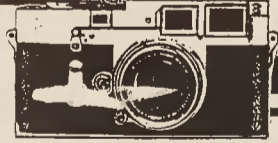
In 1864, the first public school system for blacks was opened. Name the city, but the magazine quiz will.

I will, however, say that if an educational system which helps us find out who we are as people (after deliberately mislead us with "His-Story" for hundreds of years) is really fulfilling its truly educating us?

After hundreds and hundreds of years of educational neglect becomes more and more apparent we are going to have to teach other.

So join me for my 1990 issue of "Our-Story" so we can punch in "His-Story."

Chronicle Camera



Do you think it is a good idea to have toll-free phone service in the Triad?

The Triad area could be a step closer to becoming closely linked if a proposal to allow toll-free telephone service between Greensboro, Winston-Salem and the Triad becomes reality.

The plan is to eliminate long distance rates between the three

cities and the counties of Forsyth and Guilford.

While the plan seems ideal because it would allow customers to call between the cities at no charge, Southern Bell also proposes that a rate hike would accompany the toll-free service.

The plan, known as the Expanded Area Service (EAS), would bring about a 26 percent increase in monthly telephone rates. Southern Bell estimates that the monthly rates for Winston-Salem customers would increase by approximately \$3.04 if the proposal

is accepted.

But critics of the proposal say that the EAS will place a hardship on low-income and elderly customers. The Winston-Salem Urban League's Board of Directors has endorsed a resolution opposing the EAS plan.

The board feels that big

businesses are the ones most likely to benefit from the service and that residential customers will be strapped with footing the bill.

The Citizens Committee for a Toll-Free Triad has challenged the rate hike because... The Citizens Committee is expected to propose a

lower rate hike in February. The commission will have final say as to whether the plan is necessary and what the rates will be if the plan is accepted.

Chronicle Camera asks residents their opinions of the plan.



"I think we should be able to call close by without long distance and the increase should be worth it."

Russell Thomas



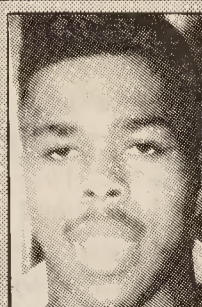
Sheree Southern

"I don't call that much to those cities anyway."



Fred Duncan

"I'd hate to see my bill go up."



Kenny McClain

"Yes, I'd like to call Greensboro for free."



Pierre Singletary

"It seems as long as the increase isn't too much."