

Editorials

A Beatties Ford Road Renaissance

Where are the black investors? We asked that question in this column last spring (June 6) within the context of what we perceived as a lack of economic development on that part of the Beatties Ford Road between I-85 and the intersection of LaSalle Street. In particular, we noted that two black-owned businesses in the area had closed, efforts by blacks to purchase two other businesses had failed and a proposed upper-middle income, multi-family housing developed in the area never materialized. While we certainly have no ill-will nor animosity toward anyone with a successful business venture, there has been virtually no growth in black-owned businesses in the area over the past 10 years with the one exception being the Beatties Ford Burger King.

We were therefore elated to learn recently of two new developments aimed at stimulating growth along the Beatties Ford corridor stretching from Johnson C. Smith University north to Sunset Road. While the proposed regional shopping complex at the intersection of I-85 and I-77 may have some negative impact on the Beatties Ford Road commercial plans closer to Sunset Road, the area of instituting a mini-commercial revitalization revolution on Beatties Ford Road is an excellent and great idea.

In order to make things begin to happen, Beatties Ford business owners and resident leaders of adjacent neighborhoods - Lem Long of Long and Sons Mortuary, president Robert Albright of JCSU, Eleanor Washington and Louise Sellers, presidents of the University Park and Five Points neighborhood organizations, respectively, have all joined the West Trade-Beatties Ford Area Merchants Association.

Nasif Majeed, president of the Association and owner of the Burger King fast food eatery, said, "Every community has its problems, but there's nothing here we can't overcome with the right focus."

Project Catalyst

The second Beatties Ford Road corridor development, "Project Catalyst," is a proposed retail and residential complex just north of Johnson C. Smith University and south of Brookshire Freeway on the east side of Beatties Ford Road. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Citizens Forum, a 50-member growth advisory group of developers, politicians, neighborhood advocates, has endorsed the project idea.

Dr. Albright, a forum member, said that "Project Catalyst" is "unique" because few predominantly black colleges have engaged in such a major development program adjacent to their campuses. Having discussed the project with two or three major local developers, Albright has dreams of a movie theatre, drug store, townhouses, boutiques and small shops on the nearly 20-acre site between the university and Brookshire Freeway between Beatties Ford Road and I-77.

These two ideas for the revitalization of the Beatties Ford Road corridor can only occur if right thinking people work to-

gether for a better Charlotte and better neighborhoods. It won't just happen, it will take creative thinking, innovative financing and a belief that it can and will take place for northwest Charlotte to begin to achieve the growth it so richly deserves.

Time For Reexamination

Dr. Leon Sullivan, pastor of Philadelphia's Zion Baptist Church with 6,000 members and founder of the internationally renowned Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), addressed the Eight Annual Carolinas Minority Trade Fair here yesterday. Next week, on October 11, Tony Brown, chairman, Council for Economic Development of Black Americans, will address the West Trade-Beatties Ford Area Merchants Association. Both Sullivan and Brown have a long history of successful efforts and ventures to illustrate the potential black Americans have for achieving some degree of economic success, political influence and improved social standing.

The philosophy underlying the practices, preaching, teaching, and lectures of both Sullivan and Brown is self-worth and self-help. The Rev. Sullivan practices what he preaches in more ways than one. His church is involved in day care, a credit union, a community center program for youth and adults, an employment agency, adult education classes, many athletic programs for youth and family counseling services.

Furthermore, Sullivan founded OIC, the first program of its kind in the entire nation. OIC sponsors training and retraining programs in over 140 cities in the United States and eight foreign countries. The program has trained over 600,000 people and has placed over 400,000 of them in permanent jobs with annual earnings of about \$6 million.

And that is not all; Sullivan founded Progress Investment Associates (PIA) within his church membership. PIA has built a \$1 million garden apartment complex; a \$2 million shopping center, the largest built, owned, and operated by blacks in the nation; has built a second inner city community shopping center; and a multi-million dollar social, health and human services facility in downtown Philadelphia.

The list of Dr. Sullivan's accomplishments does not end here. However, it is enough to stress our central point: there has been too great an emphasis, even among black leaders, on the welfare dependency mentality that has crippled much black initiative. It is long past time for a re-examination of our values toward self-help and the realization that the world, the nation, and white America owes black America nothing except the opportunity anyone else has to progress as far as his talents, abilities, and sense of personal commitment will allow. Slavery and its aftermath notwithstanding, we as black people must realize that the road to an improved quality of life can only begin and succeed through individual initiative and an "I can do" personal philosophy and attitude.

Miller Says

Tax Reform Can Mean Black Home Ownership?

By Sherman N. Miller
Special To The Post

America's thrift institutions have fallen on hard times. Mortgage delinquencies have been on an upward trend for a considerable time. Between 1970 and first quarter 1984 the mortgage delinquency rate has almost doubled in conventional loans (1.75 to 3.69 percent), VA loan (3.03 to 6.14 percent), and FHA loans (3.85 to 7.12 percent). These rising delinquency rates dictate that lending institutions reassess their home loan policies. However, any new loan structures will move home ownership beyond the reach of many black Americans.

In 1983, white Americans owned 87.7 percent of the residences they occupied. Conversely, black American's residential ownership was less than 50 percent (45 percent) for this same period. Is black America permanently locked in a rental caste?

A black American tragedy that seems like a phantasmagoric nightmare is the deleterious impact on potential rental housing that new housing concepts like regeneration entail. This baneful impact on black America is quantified by J. Eugene



Sherman

Grigsby III and Mary L. Hruby in their article entitled, "A Review of The Status of Black Renters, 1970-1980."

Grigsby and Hruby write, "...425,000 rental units removed from central cities between 1973 and 1980 (39 percent of total) had been occupied by blacks, but they occupied only 402,000 (21 percent) of the newly constructed rental units. Conversely, 634,000 (58 percent) rental units removed from central cities had been occupied by whites, but this group occupied 1,471,000 (75 percent) newly constructed rental units in central cities."

The above housing trend portends that many blacks may become permanently locked in substandard rental housing with the ad-

COMMUNITY SELF-HELP PROJECTS

EDUCATION
VOTER REGISTRATION
ANTIPOVERTY PROGRAM
POLITICAL ORGANIZATION
MORALITY
DELINQUENCY
FIGHT AGAINST CRIME!



"TRUE WISDOM IS TO KNOW WHAT IS BEST WORTH KNOWING, AND TO DO WHAT IS BEST WORTH DOING."
HUMPHREY

BLACK COMMUNITIES CAN AND MUST DO THE JOB

Are People On Welfare Willing To Work For A Living?

Are the people on welfare not willing to work for a living? According to recent studies - not necessarily. Twenty thousand welfare recipients in Massachusetts are waiting in line to enter the state's work-for-welfare program. This program has already found jobs for 19,000 welfare recipients like them.

In Michigan 7,700 welfare recipients have entered PROJECT SELF-HELP, which has found 2,100 jobs for these people.

Welfare recipients in 37 states across America are seeing an influx of people who want to get in work for welfare programs. California has recently joined the effort.

Whether or not the program will work and save money will come with age. But one aspect seems clear, that if given a true opportunity to get a job many people on welfare go for it.

Ten years ago under Gov. Ronald Reagan, California experimented with welfare and abandoned it as a failure. California's program had required all able-bodied welfare recipients to work 20



Sabrina

hours a week at a public service - such as picking up litter in public parks. The basic idea was to give jobs to the poor, realistically only a handful got jobs.

Why does workfare seem to be working now? Primarily because it provides work experience for the poor and is viewed more as an opportunity and not a punishment.

Massachusetts uses workfare as a positive alternative that is willing to lend a helping hand when needed. It offers an array of opportunities: immediate job

placement, on the job training, career planning and education. Mothers of school-age children, if they accept the program, can have child care, bus fare and tuition. If the mother finds a job in the private sector as some 19,000 have, they can keep their child care free for one year or more if needed.

This program, after two failures, has saved taxpayers \$34 million in two years. The state's welfare caseload is its lowest in 12 years.

In the other participating states, workfare is mandatory but made more attractive by incentives. California's workfare law offers job counseling, English lessons, job searches, and child care. Four years have passed since Congress made it legal for all states to require welfare recipients to work. Realistically, workfare is still on a trial path.

Those who oppose workfare base their views on the idea that workfare as practiced consists of made-work assignments - work for which no employer is willing to pay. They argue that most recipients do not learn skills that are transferable to "real life" positions and may be forced to work with regular salaried employees. Believed to be creating a secondary class of workers.

Many women oppose workfare because it assumes that women who stay at home and do not work are lazy. Not true says Christine Pratt-Marston, co-chair of the National Anti-Hunger Coalition. She feels that a welfare recipient, female, may sometimes do better on welfare than working. She argues that the cost of child care and basic living needs rob women of the opportunity to be financially viable. What she does overlook is that 75 percent of the women working today are the sole supporters of their families and are making ends meet and go beyond that point.

Ms. Pratt-Marston views motherhood and career as a scarlet letter with no ratification.

Workfare is an idea with some promise - if not abused. To stand up to the promise workfare must not be used as a punishment for being poor. It must not force welfare recipients into dead-end, degrading jobs. It must offer the needy opportunities to work their way up and out of poverty. Workfare can transmit dignity upon the down and out: can shower pride upon the poor.

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