

Optimist Group Cleans Up Neighborhood

**Special To The Post
By Optimist Park
Community Organization**
Members of the Optimist Park Community Organization have decided to upgrade and beautify their neighborhood by the demolition of several abandoned buildings in the neighborhood, owned by landlords who live elsewhere. Several of these buildings have stood empty for years and are not only eyesores but a haven for rats and street people.



The owner of the dilapidated property located on the corner of Davidson and 18th St. responded to the neighborhood group's request to have the eyesore bulldozed.

The organization is approaching these landlords one at a time and asking them to tear their unsightly and hazardous buildings down.

The first property owner approached, Mr. Roger Campbell whose address is listed on city property records as 2818 Beatties Ford Road, met with members of OPCO, and within 24 hours had begun to tear down an abandoned store at the corner of Davidson and 18th Streets. This building was a landmark in the neighborhood: its doors and windows were gone, a car had run into it and knocked a hole in the brick wall, and it was filled with trash and other debris such as old mattresses, parts of appliances, etc. The neighborhood was delighted that Mr. Campbell cooperated in removing this eyesore.

The second property owner, Ms. Angeleke Kostakes of 401 Queens Rd., did not come to meet with the residents but sent a messenger in her place whose name was Father Theodore, a member of the local Greek Orthodox community. Father Theodore indicated that Ms. Kostakes was too old to come out but that she would be glad

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Septima Clark

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the same board two decades later.

She worked at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee in the late 1950s and later was active in the school's citizenship education program which sought to teach blacks to read and write well enough to pass literacy tests.

Mrs. Clark accompanied King to Norway in 1964 when he received the Nobel Peace prize.

She received numerous honors herself including a Living Legend Award from President Jimmy Carter in 1979 and the Order of the Palmetto from Riley in 1982. The latter is the highest award the state can give a civilian. Her autobiography "Echo In My Soul" was published in 1982.

In 1974, she was elected to the Charleston County School Board and, during a later interview, said she tried to be "the conscience of the board."

"You're not working with a piece of clay that you can mash and figure and fix your way," she said. "You're working with a human being who has a mind of his own and who you have to see that he thinks in the right direction."

Riley called Mrs. Clark "an iron magnolia" because she was always courteous, yet very tough and spirited when it comes to a matter of principle.

He recalled how, when he was running for the first of his two terms as governor in 1978, he met Mrs. Clark for the first time.

"She came all out for me. I didn't have a prayer at the time. I was just beginning. But she was one of my strongest supporters all the way through. She was an advisor to me on matters of education and at-risk children," he recalled.

Mrs. Clark is survived by a son, Nerie D. Clark Jr., of Hickory, N.C.; a sister, Lorine Poinsette of Charleston; two brothers, Peter Poinsette of Charleston and Wilfred Poinsette of Pelham, N.Y.; and several grandchildren.

Martin, Jordan Spar For Gubernatorial Vote

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gram but had considered it flawed in the earlier stages. Martin's Department of Commerce put forward a "Blueprint for Economic Development," and the Jordan-appointed Commission on Jobs and Economic Growth crafted its own legislative program.

Jordan said his plan was more detailed than Martin's, although the governor said they differed little and endorsed some of the Jordan commission's proposals, including creation of a Rural Economic Development Center.

They did disagree over offering tax incentives to lure industry to deprived areas of the state. With Jordan's backing, the Legislature voted to give income tax credits to businesses that create new jobs in the 20 poorest counties. Martin said that would punish ineligible companies and set a bad precedent.

Jordan and his allies repeatedly criticized Martin's economic development efforts, pouncing on the closure of several plants

for residents of Optimist Park to tear this building down as she could not afford to do so. Ms. Kostakes owns two buildings adjacent to each other on the corner of Brevard and 18th Streets, and it is the one on the corner, an abandoned store, that residents want removed. They are also unhappy with a group called The Club which rents the building next door - they would like Ms. Kostakes to find another renter such as possibly a grocery store that would

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provide services throughout the West Trade-Beatties Ford area once the project establishes itself, Majeed said.

The city of Charlotte has earmarked \$400,000 in start-up money for the incubator, Majeed said, and a committee headed by former Mayor Harvey Gantt and NCNB senior vice president Joe Martin is leading efforts to raise another \$150,000 for operations and equipment.

The fundraising effort has already passed the \$35,000 mark and local organizations are expected to add grants to the effort before the January deadline.

The incubator will cost about \$585,000 according to committee figures.

"It'll be a total team effort" Majeed said of the project, which is expected to produce new jobs in the black community the moment it becomes functional.

"What (the incubator) is providing is below-market rents, computer access and secretarial services" for minority-owned businesses, Majeed said. "It'll

be an asset to the neighborhood rather than bringing in people who make noise late at night and litter the nearby lots with beer cans. Residents feel that it is the responsibility of Ms. Kostakes as the property owner to attend to her property rather than turning the responsibility over to the Optimist Park residents.

A third property, an abandoned house at 1304 North Davidson Street, is boarded up but

Incubator Draws Near

help them run more effectively with technical services and financial services. It'll provide a broad cross-section of business solutions."

Besides using JCSU's land, the incubator will have direct access to Smith's business department through the use of computers, Majeed noted.

American business is dominated by small firms, especially in the black community.

"Eighty-nine percent of all businesses in the United States are small businesses and they employ more people," he said.

But the reality of business life puts a chill on the plans of most small businessmen. Majeed quoted national figures that point out that most small businesses fail within a year. With those numbers in mind, the incubator should be a valuable resource in protecting jobs.

"Nine out of 10 businesses fail within the first year. They're here one day and gone the next," Majeed said. "The first few years is when a business really needs help."

Blacks Seek Rule Changes

FAYETTEVILLE (AP) -- The Fayetteville Cumberland County Black Democratic Caucus has asked the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners to change the way commissioners are elected.

In a Dec. 3 letter, the black caucus asked the commissioners to change the county board from an at-large system to district representation. It also asked that the board be expanded from five to seven members.

"A substantial number of white voters in Cumberland County refuse to vote for qualified black candidates which results in black candidates being defeated and the black community being under-represented on the Board," the letter said. "The black vote is simply not strong enough to overcome the persistence of white voters to vote for white candidates."

The letter, signed by Glorious U. Fowler, a secretary of the black caucus, said the change would result in two or three of

the seven commissioners elected by district being black.

Jim Wicker, assistant director of the Institute of Government, said in North Carolina 51 counties elect their county representatives at large, 42 have adopted some form of district nomination or election, and seven offer some combination of at-large and district elections.

Voting districts can be changed either through legislative action of the General Assembly or a referendum by county residents, Wicker said. A referendum would first have to be approved by the county commissioners.

Commissioners said Tuesday that they had mixed reactions to the request.

Commissioner Virginia Oliver said she believed Cumberland County is small enough to function well under the current, at-large system. She said black candidates in the recent past have not had difficulty getting elected.

and the decision of RJR-Nabisco to move its corporate headquarters to Atlanta from Winston-Salem.

"We have a sitting governor who does just that - he sits while thousands of workers lose their jobs," Ken Eudy, executive director of the state Democratic Party, repeatedly said.

Martin retorted that he appreciated Democrats' raising the issue, saying it shone the spotlight on his "excellent" economic record. He said thousands more jobs had been created than lost.

Later, Martin and Jordan clashed over how to finance a major school construction program.

For awhile, both supported a major bond issue, which the Senate approved. But when the House balked, Jordan abandoned bonds and put forward his own program. An angry Martin blasted Jordan at a news conference, saying he had "punted on second down and long yardage."

"Being called 'ineffective' by this governor is like being called

ugly by a frog," Jordan fired back.

"Cute," Martin said. Jack Hawke, state GOP chairman, jumped into the fray, saying Jordan was "more of a wimp than I thought."

Eventually, Jordan and House Speaker Liston Ramsey negotiated a plan to raise \$3.2 billion over 10 years for schools, including \$830 million in new revenue through a 1 percent increase in the corporate income tax. Martin said the plan was inadequate and imposed an unnecessary tax boost.

Democrats pounced on Martin for departing for a sailing vacation before the Legislature adjourned. "Our state deserves leadership that is on the job, not on a pleasure boat," Eudy said.

Some Republicans privately joined in the criticism but others defended Martin and blamed Jordan for letting the legislative session drag on a month longer than expected.

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