

center city

VOLUME I, NUMBER 21

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

JUNE 5, 1974

DOWNTOWN FOR PEOPLE

For the past month, groups of citizens have been meeting downtown. Their discussions have ranged over a wide variety of topics dealing with the problems and future of the downtown.

These citizens are participating in the thirteen Task Forces initiated by City Hall for the purpose of assisting in the planning and redevelopment of the downtown area.

Since the publication of the Marcou, O'Leary Proposal for downtown development, a few people in the Chief Administrator's Office and the Bureau of Policy Planning have been constantly confronted with the potential for work but had neither the time nor the resources to develop these ideas. They found themselves overwhelmed with tasks requiring citizen support at virtually every stage.

Citizen Participation

As early as February of this year, Carol Colletta, Assistant to Clay Huddleston, and Policy Planning have been discussing the possibility and necessity of a downtown coalition of citizens interested in being involved downtown and participating in the actual planning process.

The idea of a Task Force system took shape in late March around the successful operation of a Court Square Task Force during the Summer of 1973.

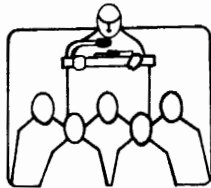
The Chief Administrative Officer, Clay Huddleston, approved the plan and with his support, 'downtown for people' officially became the policy of the City.

Thirteen Task Forces

With the formation of the thirteen Task Forces, a secondary phase in the redevelopment has been reached. With the Marcou, O'Leary plan, a skeletal model has been made available to Memphis. It will be these Task Forces—made up of citizens of varied backgrounds and interests—who will implement and adjust this model to the realities of Memphis life.

The Task Forces have been called together to articulate a definition of what the Memphis downtown should be, to formulate a comprehensive strategy drawn from thirteen areas of our urban life—ranging from housing, education, and security to activities, shopping and downtown after dark. Finally, these Task Forces are to initiate on-going programs and structures that will continue to operate after the Task Forces have completed their duties.

DOWNTOWN TASKFORCES



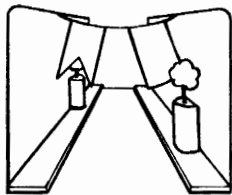
Because people do not presently live downtown in large numbers, there is little natural sense of community in the urban center. Public activities are a means of participating in a spirit of community.

This, in essence, is the basic premise of the Activities Task Force. This group hopes to stimulate public activity downtown, thereby creating a community mood or atmosphere.

The Task Force is limiting itself to organizing a few activities which require considerable planning: ethnic festivals and a senior citizens weekend have been discussed.

The Task Force is currently exploring successful civic activities in cities such as Louisville, Detroit and New York.

Members are: Brad Foster, Gerald Crowder, Rev. Clifford Pike, Martha Rhodes, Melanie M. Tripp and Dukie Whittington.

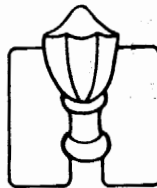


The Beautification Task Force was created to oversee the development of the downtown alleys into 'people-ways.'

To date, three sections of the downtown alley system have been selected for decoration: Lyceum Alley, Stereo Alley, and Whiskey Shoot.

These alleys are to be decorated with banners and super graphics by Memphis State students.

Members are: Louis Pounders, Ed Garavelli, B. Lee Mallory, Richard Knowles, Betty Calandrucio, Bill Butler and Patty Jacobs.



The first meeting of the Downtown After Dark Task Force was held Wednesday, May 29th at 6:00 PM at F. Gallaghers.

The group discussed the problems in attracting people downtown after dark: fear of crime, racial antagonisms and the absence of consistent quality entertainment and cultural activity. Most stores close at 5:00 PM.

The Task Force is compiling a directory of downtown restaurants and activities. It is also attempting to locate a suitable site for nighttime entertainment for the center city.

Members are: Susan White, Jocelyn Wurzburg, Ronald Barassi, Murray Ervin, Joyce Martin, Dan Turley, Jr., Harry Godwin, Antonio Bologna, Bob Wilinson, Wallace Madewell and Carol Blair.



The Day Care Center Task Force began its meetings in May. The goal of this Task Force is to establish quality day care centers in the central city, making downtown working more convenient and downtown living feasible.

Rather than seeking aid from established organizations, the Task Force is attempting to organize a network of downtown day care centers under the control of a parental governing board.

A survey of possible participants and prospective center sites has been distributed at City Hall and the First National Bank. The results are currently being compiled.

Members of this Task Force are: Verni Nerren, Beverly Harty, and the Rev. Clifford Pike.



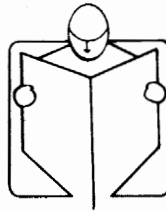
The Educational Task Force held its first meeting on May 23rd and began discussion on the educational needs of the downtown area.

The Task Force expressed the desire for an adequate survey of the needs of the downtown community and will seek aid from the Communications Task Force to implement this survey. To accomplish this, it was suggested that a questionnaire be made up and that present facilities downtown be utilized: the Joint University Center, Shelby State Community College, the Board of Education, and the Memphis Public Library.

Interest was also expressed in utilizing Memphis' human resources: internships for high school and college students and an adult education program tailored to the needs of the downtown worker and resident, while at the same time drawing from these people their own unique potential and experience in the form of seminars or craft and cooking workshops.

The role of art was discussed. Jack Whitlock, Director of Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, suggested the operation of a store-front gallery downtown. The Task Force will examine the possibility of regular art displays on the downtown plazas and parks.

Members are: William Welch, Carol Blair, Michael Lance, John Whitlock, Don Paight, and Michael Deaderick.



The Communications Task Force suggested the 'Kick-off' luncheon which took place May 30th for all Task Force members.

Plans are currently being made by David Freeman and Michael Lance to organize a weekly dutch-treat luncheon so that members can come together and discuss ideas and common problems.

Members are: Dukie Whittington, David Freeman, Edward Garavelli, Michael Lance, Barbara Monaghan and H.R. Shaw, Sr.

The Communications Task Force held its first meeting May 14th at the First Presbyterian Church.

The Communications Task Force will collect and disseminate information about downtown life and activity both within the downtown community and to the city at large.

The Task Force established as its objectives:

1. To compile a directory of resources, a listing of communication vehicles now available.
2. To serve as a communications link between all the Task Forces and to publicize this work to the community.
3. To use the CENTER CITY as a primary means of accomplishing this task.

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TWO WOMEN

Why not relieve all people over 65 of their private funds, buy Oklahoma and create an ideal elderly retirement center? This is a logical extension of the current social attitude that has kept old people from participating in the world they have experienced and studied all their lives. It isn't just the social attitude of people in power who refuse to employ the elderly, who do not provide better public transportation and housing, and who fail to provide adequate educational opportunities and consumer protection. It is also the attitude old people adopt largely in reaction to society's ignorance of their situation and potential.

Margaret Kuhn calls this 'the disengagement period.' 'Old people disengage themselves at their own pace from the rest of society,' she explains. 'They retreat to their own more comfortable worlds. It is a form of suicide, true; but it is just as much a form of murder—society cuts the old person off: it is a heartbreaking waste.'

'I am an early adolescent rebel who never grew out of it,' states the 68-year-old national leader of the Gray Panthers. Their program represents a 'revolutionary' response to problems on the part of old people who, like their adolescent descendants, are concerned with their role in the world at large. Both groups seem to sense that this is the age of liberation and self-determination.

The Gray Panther program specifically includes lobbying against compulsory retirement, promoting the establishment of comprehensive health care and adequate consumer protection. What the movement principally offers, and what Ms. Kuhn projects in her own life, is an awareness of the contribution old people can and must make to society. This she calls the 'folk wisdom' of our culture.

Recent population studies reveal that 18% of the people in the United States were over fifty during the sixties. Due to birth control and medical breakthroughs which prolong life, it is estimated that close to 40% of the population will be over fifty by the 1980's. We are entering an era which offers an exciting challenge. 'The new positive view of old age is that we have much to give through our acquired skills and years of experience. Our ability to cope and survive are positive attributes that no other segment or human group in our society possesses. This is the dawning of a new frontier.'

On the practical level, this means that old people and the young must be encouraged to interact as much as possible: in the classrooms, in the assembly halls and on the streets. An obvious model for such a society is that of classical Athens, where older citizens had advisory roles in the process of education, culture and government, and, thus, an inner sense of responsibility for communicating their ideas, experiences and judgments to the young.

'Old people themselves must be 'enablers;' they must aid in directing their own lives by being involved in the community,' Ms. Kuhn insists. 'The community must provide those services that will create this climate. There must be some sort of 'turning around' or 'revolution:' old people are involved in a struggle just as non-whites, the third world and women are. This sure beats Jericho.'

KUHN

If one were inclined to seek out, in this place: Memphis, and at this time, among the inexhaustible repetitions of buildings vacated and bare at evening's dusk, among, even, the refuse of life: the black, the elderly, the poor: to seek out a symbol of hope for a community, then may I lead you through the abandoned streets: past a man, white and perhaps 60, who stands and sways at the curb and stares vacantly past black children who play oblivious to his stare and who glare insolently at our passing.

May I lead you farther: to the edge of brown lifeless buildings-- a housing project-- where we pause and listen: far up the street: the voice of a woman calling her child: it is lost in the movement and sound of the river wind in the trees which smell sickly sweet in the courtyard.

We enter a doorway which opens into a bare stairwell rising three stories. The walls are of grey color, but chipped and scraped beyond recognition of painting. We climb and the sounds of television and of the human voice mingle with the odor of people enclosed in concrete, the odor of old women who sit in silence, their eyes yellow and liquid in the darkness: crazy in their loneliness and obstinance before death.

We knock and before us: a woman. Her face has that half divine look of nobility, a look absorptive of every grief and humiliation, almost defiant. She is unmistakably in control. We are directed to the windows which dominate the living room. A storm, the night before, has shattered a pane. She points us to it in all seriousness and we become serious and feign concern. At this she laughs: 'What price progress!?' And her stare, like fine fire, eases into a smile. 'Civilization? What is it? Nothing, just spit and glue. We are all so tenuous, you know, so temporary.'

While we sit, she talks. (There is no room here to tell of it all.) She speaks of her life: born in Como, Mississippi (she holds her cigarettes between her thumb and third finger) and moved to Memphis in 1917: Central High School: the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, then after four years of study: Europe.

Her voice is precise, almost dramatic as she speaks: 'mawvelous.'

'In 1935, I returned from Naples. Naples, you know-- her eyes squint into a smile-- is one of the poorest cities in Europe. But so gay. Music and song sustain Naples. But when I arrived in New York, the middle of the depression, you know, the day was grey and gloom prevailed over the city. Money sustained New York and, during the depression, few people had money.'

It is exactly upon this universal paradox of human joy and grief that she has balanced her life. It is a constant theme: during the depression, she worked in Roosevelt's Resettlement Administration, worked with 'relocated persons' (like the term underprivileged, this is a bureaucratic euphemism for those broken, sick, robbed, kicked or otherwise tormented by society) to create original plays and form symphony orchestras.

She returned to Memphis in 1950 and worked for the Memphis Academy of Arts. She and eleven other women organized the Saturday Luncheon Group: its name alone should mark the change in Memphis' race relations.

Silence now. For a moment, she pauses in sad reflection, her face drained, for the first time, of expression: during the Sanitation Workers Strike, she played the Temple organ while the crowd assembled for the march to City Hall.

'I'm just an old lady with no business at all.' Her voice is distant. She speaks, not to us, but to remind herself of this fact.

(continued on the following page)

VALIANT



The Security Task Force held its first meeting May 15th with Frank Holloman acting as chairman.

Since the goal of this Task Force is the promotion of a secure and stable downtown environment, it was recommended that the Task Force consider:

1. Increasing the number of walking patrols.
2. Setting up a police booth on Main St. to provide information and directions to downtown visitors and workers.
3. The extension of the new lighting system to the downtown alleys.

To encourage the development of a downtown shopping area, it was suggested that the Task Force explore the possibilities of holding self-defense classes for women and preventative techniques against shoplifting for employees.

The Task Force has also initiated contact with the downtown stores and Police Department.

Members of the Security Task Force are: Frank Holloman, Brenda Brown, Mac Holladay Sgt. Joanne Moore, Murray Spindel, Harold Fergus and Tom Farnsworth.

VALIANT

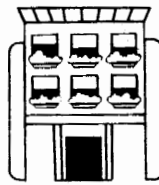
We ask about Memphis today.

'The idiocy of the Expo! A total farce!' She has returned to us. 'It's just pop corn culture. Why can't we help the young people-- God knows I'm too old!-- encourage them to do constructive things? Then the downtown will take care of itself. The majority of Memphians are apathetic if not pathetic when it comes to thinking.'

Again: silence.

'But one learns. We are resilient. We must be.' Her face smiles openly and she laughs at our seriousness. It is the same theme: the circle is completed: from joy to grief and back again to laughter.

'We humans, we couldn't tolerate life without laughter. It is one of God's greatest blessings. It is surely a healing thing.'



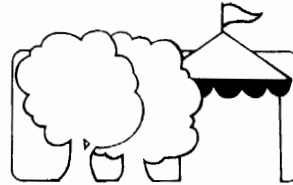
The Housing Task Force has as its goal the creation of a new residential community in the downtown area. This community, composed of widely divergent segments of our population, would utilize both new structures and potential housing sites in restored buildings.

The Task Force outlined three specific tasks:

1. To produce a Housing Inventory that will provide a profile of those interested in moving to the downtown area.
2. To develop a directory of sites of building and redevelopment.
3. To produce a library of resource material on what other cities are doing to develop housing in the urban center.

The Task Force is currently handling distribution of the Housing Inventory developed by Policy Planning and Analysis.

Members are: Leroy Lane, Michael Angelo, Jeanne Holladay, Sally Hunt, Steve Sims, Jeff Smith, Rosemary Gilliam, Lee Askew, Mary Ann Longacre.



The Court Square Market Task Force held its first meeting Wednesday, May 29th. The Task Force has as its goals the establishment of a permanent open-air market in the downtown area.

The stages of implementation are as following:

1. Investigation of required ordinance changes allowing craftsmen and food vendors to sell in public areas.
2. To compile a register of potential vendors for the market.
3. To enlist the cooperation and participation of businesses with storefronts on the Court Square plaza.

The Task Force wishes to coordinate the timing of its plans with the construction of the Mall. It is felt that initially the market will have to operate portably on a specified day of the week, relocating according to the changes of downtown redevelopment.

Members are: Judi Whitaker, Fred deRoode, Lyman Aldrich, Robert Browne, Michael Cody, Lydia Slentz, Mary Robinson and Jan Raines.



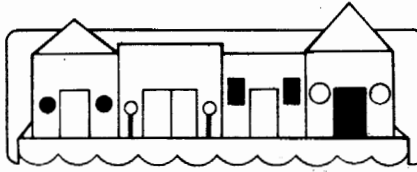
The Historical Task Force held its second meeting on May 29th with chairwoman Mary Agnes Welsh.

The objectives of the group— to preserve and enhance those sites which reflect elements of Memphis' social and cultural heritage— was further refined by vote on policy.

The groups suggested the following tasks:

1. An up-dating of a street-by-street survey of historic locations to be used in establishing a walking tour of downtown historic sites.
2. The conversion of Fire Station No 1 and No 4 at Second and Adams into a Fire Museum.
3. Request to review and comment on the proposed Landmark Preservation Ordinance now being considered by City Hall.
4. To pursue the possibility of a single volume building survey, with photographs, renderings and articles. Such a survey would greatly assist the city's development of a local landmarks register.

Members are: Mary Agnes Welsh, Ed Williams, John Gibson, Paul Gruenberg, Thomas Hughes, Nat Josel, Carol Carlsen and Jim Roper.



The River Landing Task Force has held two meetings.

The work of this Task Force is especially important because development of the riverfront— as a setting for recreation and entertainment— is of key importance to the re-development of the entire downtown area.

As acting chairwoman, Francis Millington, pointed out, 'The river is the reason the city is here.'

The Task Force is currently involved in improving the riverfront park system: increasing parking facilities at Tom Lee Park, and creating pathways connecting all the parks on the river.

The group is currently studying the Harrover plan for Mud Island; and has expressed its opposition to a 'riverfront expressway.'

Members are:

Francis Millington, Mark Boner, Michael Gallagher, Mose Pleasure, Jim Roper, Blanche Deaderick, Gordon Green and Mike Bowers.



The Recreational Task Force has been established to encourage the building and use of adequate recreational and leisure facilities.

Recreational needs are to be provided for those who now live and work downtown during the noon and after work hours. Additional recreational facilities are to be provided to attract people to a unique downtown environment.

The riverfront was named as a focal point for recreation. The concept of leisure activities was also explored in the areas of both shopping and education.

The Task Force will utilize a Metro study of parks and recreational facilities and will make recommendations to the Park Commission.

Members of the group are: Rudolph Jones, Jr., Ms. Parry Norling, Kerry Roby, John Sheahan and Samuel Null.



The Downtown Shopping Advisory Task Force hopes to promote an active awareness by the downtown merchant of consumer needs and preferences.

The Task Force, meeting May 22, decided that a survey of services and shopping needs to be made in conjunction with other task forces.

In addition, a directory of shopping services in the urban center is currently being listed by the group.

Members are: Hazel Fath, Marti Kuhn, John Marshall, Juana McCoy, Ford Stuart and Dorothy Sabella.

Downtown Housing Inventory

A Downtown Housing Inventory has been drawn up by the Bureau of Policy Planning and adopted as a tool by the Housing Task Force.

The purpose of this Inventory is to measure the housing needs of the Central City Community and to coordinate these needs with commercial developers who are willing and able to create a unique housing and social environment downtown.

Initially, this Inventory has been distributed through the personnel offices and managers of various downtown businesses, banks, and governmental agencies. The completed forms are to be collected at a central location or mailed to the Bureau of Policy Planning, Room 302, City Hall. By June 1st, 5,000 of the projected 10,000 Inventory forms had been distributed in the downtown area.

Sally Hunt and Gerald Murley, coordinators of the Housing Inventory, explain that the completed data sheets are to be processed by computer at Southwestern in order to formulate a housing profile in the downtown area. The Housing Task Force will offer its findings to participants in the Inventory, building owners, and potential developers who might wish to coordinate efforts with city planners.

The Housing Inventory is a first step toward the goal of re-establishing a residential community in the downtown section of Memphis. To accomplish this, the Housing Task Force must identify the potential citizenry interested in residing in a traditional urban setting.

According to Ms. Hunt and Mr. Murley, the success of downtown revitalization can only be realized through the development of a full community. This creation must be founded upon actual citizen participation in the planning stages. Each citizen is now offered the rare opportunity to add personal needs and desires to the planned construction of his community.

CIVIC CENTER COMMUNITY CULINARY CLUB MENU FOR JUNE 6-14

Serving from 11:30 to 1:00

First Presbyterian Church, 166 Poplar Avenue

Price: \$1.25 per serving, including drink

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

Fried Chicken, rice and gravy, squash, rolls

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

Roast beef, whipped potatoes, green beans, rolls

MONDAY, JUNE 10

Country-fried steak, blackeyed peas, creamed corn, corn bread

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

Pork steak, rice and gravy, green beans, rolls

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12

Spaghetti, cole slaw, French bread

THURSDAY, JUNE 13

Oven-baked chicken, whipped potatoes, peas and carrots, rolls

FRIDAY, JUNE 14

Beef stew, tossed salad, corn bread

Center City

First Presbyterian Church
166 Poplar Avenue
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