



In The Works

GREENSBORO NEIGHBORHOOD SELF-HELP PROGRAM

"Helping Neighborhoods Help Themselves" is the motto of the Neighborhood Self-Help Program administered by the Greensboro Department of Planning and Community Development. The program, now in the third year of implementation, provides up to \$5,000 annually to recognized neighborhood advisory committees in the city's community development target areas. The program's structure is designed to give neighborhood groups the opportunity and the skills associated with initiating, planning and administering projects that meet the identified needs of their neighborhoods.

Proposals for funding must originate from the neighborhood advisory committees. The organizations are responsible for establishing planning committees to identify community needs and develop appropriate solutions; demonstrating neighborhood support for the projects, including collection of petitions supporting the project from at least 10 percent of the households within the target area; and managing the completion of the planned activities. Eligible activities include neighborhood cleanup and beautification, vacant lot clearance, crime prevention programs, weatherization projects, and neighborhood education projects.

To date, six neighborhoods have undertaken nine projects involving a total of nearly \$12,000 of Neighborhood Self-Help funds. The projects have funded a variety of activities, including sale and installation of smoke detectors, tree planting, and educational workshops.

In response to a series of residential fires in the Asheboro area, neighborhood organizers sold 199 smoke detectors to area residents at a reduced cost. The Fire Department assisted with installation where needed and provided fire inspections in those homes. Since then, three other neighborhoods have sold smoke detectors, resulting in the installation of over 500 detectors.

Using Neighborhood Self-Help funds and advisory assistance from the city Parks and Recreation Department, residents in the Glenwood area planted and cared for 116 red maple trees. The Glenwood Neighborhood Advisory Committee also

hosted a series of short courses in home improvements, landscaping, and money management. Co sponsored by the Guilford Technical Institute, the sessions were very successful and involved a total of 39 residents.

Proposed projects for future funding include a landscaping beautification program for the College Hill neighborhood. The plans call for the planting of rows of trees to produce a canopied effect along one of the streets in this historic area. Several other neighborhoods are preparing proposals for funding decisions.

The program is tentatively slated to end in June of 1984, but the city expects the program impacts to continue far beyond that time. In addition to the concrete improvements made in the neighborhood, the program has increased residents' perceptions of the identity of their neighborhoods and made them aware of the positive changes that can occur if residents work together. The experience of carrying out small neighborhood improvement projects has also enabled residents to gain skills in the areas of decision-making, problem solving and program planning. The results of this greater degree of neighborhood organization are demonstrated by the recent incorporation of several neighborhood organizations and the development of more sophisticated Community Development Block Grant proposals submitted to the city. The city also benefits from the improved relationship between itself and the neighborhood organizations.

For more information, contact: Gloria Nance Sims, Community Development Planner, Department of Planning and Community Development, City of Greensboro, Drawer W-2, Greensboro, N.C. 27402. (919)373-2144.



REVITALIZATION UNDERWAY IN DOWNTOWN HIGH POINT

Downtown High Point is currently the site of considerable development activity as a result of significant effort by local government, the High Point Economic Development Corporation (HPEDC), and numerous private investors. The opening of Radisson Hotel, the addition of 800,000 square feet of furniture showroom space, and the construction of a county governmental complex are just a few of the developments that promise to bring more dollars, people and activity to High Point's once-ailing downtown.

Three of these development activities -- the new Radisson Hotel, the redevelopment of a former furniture factory into Market Square, and the planned improvements to Commerce Avenue -- illustrate the potential for successful downtown revitalization when public and private interests work together. A common objective of all three projects is to upgrade and diversify downtown High Point by making it the center for year-round activity, not just the host of the semi-annual Southern Furniture Market. These developments are also designed to enable High Point to capture a larger share of North Carolina's convention and business meeting market.

The Grand Opening of the \$20 million 249-room Radisson Hotel in early November was the result of several years of planning by the city, HPEDC, and the hotel developer. HPEDC initiated the hotel project, commissioned the market feasibility study and helped arrange financing for the public and private portions of the project. The city obtained a \$1.7 million Urban Development Action Grant which was used as a second mortgage and provided a combination of general obligation bond revenues and excess electricity utility revenues to construct an adjacent parking deck.

The \$10 million remodelling and transformation of the Tomlinson Furniture Manufacturing Company building into Market Square was undertaken by a group of local businessmen. The 500,000 square foot structure is unique because it includes a number of the nation's premier design furniture showrooms open for trading year round, North Carolina's third largest trade show center, a restaurant, and a private club. Banquet and catering facilities capable of providing for 1,500 diners are also being planned. Although Market Square is a privately financed and developed project, HPEDC played an important role by providing technical market data.

HPEDC has also worked to ensure the success of Market Square and other downtown developments by planning and administering the Commerce Avenue beautification project which links Market Square, the Radisson and other downtown attractions. These improvements will be financed primarily through the city's Community Development Block Grant program, with a small amount of

funding obtained from the city's excess electricity revenues.

Other significant developments, either completed or underway, in downtown High Point include the construction of a \$10 million 300,000 square foot design center by the Southern Furniture Market, several private office buildings, and the adaptive reuse of the Holt McPherson Center, a formerly abandoned building which now serves as home for a number of community art and service organizations.

For more information, contact: David T. Peet, President, High Point Economic Development Corporation, P.O. Box 1730, High Point, N.C. 27261. (919)886-5179.



INTERDISCIPLINARY WATER RESOURCES GROUP FORMS

In the spring and summer of 1983, a group of people in the Research Triangle area met to discuss the possible formation of a multi-disciplinary group to address water resources issues. The result was the formation of the North Carolina section of the American Water Resources Association (AWRA), the 27th section to form in the United States since the organization's beginnings in 1964.

The North Carolina AWRA chapter held a well-attended public symposium in Raleigh on "Phosphorous and Falls Lake" in September, and the topic of its January meeting was groundwater and hazardous wastes. Location of the quarterly meetings will move around the state.

AWRA was organized nationally as a scientific and educational nonprofit organization to foster interdisciplinary communication among persons of diverse backgrounds working on any aspect of water resources. The principle objectives are:

- the advancement of water resources research, planning, development, management, and education

- the establishment of a common meeting ground for engineers, and physical, biological, and social scientists concerned with water resources
- the collection, organization, and dissemination of ideas and information in the field of water resources science and technology

North Carolina AWRA's 60 current members represent citizens; local, state and federal governments; planners; regional agencies; industry; and academia. Persons throughout the state with an interest in any area of water resources are encouraged to join.

For more information, contact David Meacham, Secretary-Treasurer, c/o Duke Power, P.O. Box 33189, Charlotte, NC 28242. (704)373-5989.

NEW TECHNIQUES IN COMMERCIAL RECRUITMENT FOR SMALL CITIES

Nearly every downtown has faced the development of a regional shopping mall within the last ten years. With this development usually comes the move of the downtown anchor retail stores -- and the threatened demise of the traditional shopping core. Many small cities are caught off-guard, empty-handed, and with a quickly deteriorating and outdated downtown.

But in Sanford, North Carolina, a group of far-sighted people decided to do something about their downtown when talk about a regional shopping center was in the early stages. They realized the importance and potential of their downtown, and contacted the Community Development offices of the State Department of Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD). With NRCD help and a study completed by a planning firm from Charlotte, the Sanford downtown business people developed a seven-block municipal tax district to initiate funding for a downtown revitalization project. City and county funds were also solicited for the project. In July 1983, three years after the district had been developed, a project director was hired and downtown revitalization began in Sanford.

One of the most challenging programs of the project is an effort toward recruiting commercial business for the downtown area. The Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the Downtown Revitalization Project, has developed a Commercial Recruitment Team whose objective is to fill the gaps of vacant retail space and balance retail mix in the downtown area. This team consists of local specialists in marketing, city regulations, available sites, utilities, livability, and finance. When a client has been contacted and invited to Sanford, the team is

responsible for researching and gathering all information necessary for satisfying the individual client's needs before the visit occurs.

For example, if a large department store was entertained as a potential client, the team members would be expected to have prepared information on all downtown sites having the square footage that the store would require, utility costs of each site, number of accessible parking spaces, shipping and loading space, and applicable city regulations. A financial "package" would be prepared including information concerning low-interest commercial loans, special incentives, and tax credit and investment information if the building is in a historic district.

The Commercial Recruitment Team is patterned after the successful Industrial Recruitment Team of the Sanford-Lee County Chamber of Commerce, the only difference being that the state is usually responsible for the initial client contact. In commercial recruitment, however, the recruiting is the responsibility of the local community or county. The initial contact of clientele is one of the greatest challenges in the area of commercial recruitment. While new business recruitment is a common need in small cities all over the United States, there is no general procedure by which to proceed. A few of the small cities in North Carolina have formally organized commercial recruitment programs, and Sanford's unique recruitment "team" approach is one of the newest. A commercial recruitment network is in the planning stages at the state level to aid small cities in organization and effective action plans to move commercial businesses into the downtown area once again.

Our endeavors are still young, so we are looking for people with whom to share ideas and experiences. If you are working with, or thinking of starting a similar project, let's communicate. Contact Mary Ellen Bowen, Project Director, Sanford Downtown Revitalization Project, Box 1523, Sanford, NC 27330. (919) 774-6153.

