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Presentation at University of Iowa Conference

Ernest Bonner

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Presentation to Univ. of Iowa Conference
May 1, 1973.

TALK

~~An important truth that has only recently come to my attention~~
~~is that, seldom, if ever, is it desirable or useful for individuals~~
~~to act on behalf of other individuals.~~ I had many questions
about the conference here and my particular role in it.
What do they mean by citizen participation or sense of
community? What areas of those metaphysical swamps might
they choose to focus upon? How best might I relate some
of my experiences to that context?

All of those questions were raised to assure myself that
I was acting on your behalf. It eventually dawned on me
anew that I could never act on your behalf because I
had no possible way of knowing how to act on your
behalf. Thus, I have decided to act on my behalf,
by saying some things I have always wanted to say

in a context such as this. I will at least be sure, then, that somebody in this room will be satisfied—namely, me.

I define citizen participation as a means, a technique, a method. I define sense of ~~purpose~~ community as an end, a goal, a purpose. ~~do not see~~ Citizen participation may be

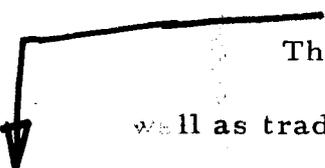
a means ~~to~~ to accomplish the end, sense of community. ~~Further,~~ However, the Cleveland Policies Plan—now in the latter stages of preparation—does not include citizen participation as a means to any of the goals of the plan, and does not include sense of community as one of the plan's goals. I am sure that citizen participation methods as presently conceived or practiced will not serve the goals of the Policies Plan. I am not so sure that sense of community should be excluded

from our goals.

If you are to understand my position, you must know something about the Cleveland Policies Plan. With your indulgence, then, let me read a few selected excerpts from the introduction to that plan.

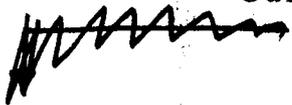
Meeting Monday A.M.
June Colyer

Important decisions are made by Cleveland entrepreneurs, political leaders and residents each day. Some are public, some are private. Some are reached only after searching inquiry, others are reached quickly by necessity or design. Some are decisions to act, some are decisions not to act. Some are even decisions not to decide. Many are decisions without choice. Some are made in the offices of the Mayor or City Council, some are made in the living rooms of local residents or at suburban cocktail parties. Others are made in Columbus or Washington, D. C. Many are made at even more remote places. The outcome of these many decisions is the future of the City of Cleveland.



The Cleveland City Planning Commission, by charter authority as well as tradition, is responsible for providing information, criticism and advice to those who make decisions -- in particular those decisions which affect the short- and long-run interests of the residents of the City of Cleveland. The Commission takes upon itself a special role with respect to that audience of decision-makers. The information, criticism, and advice we offer will be informed by a vision we have for the City of Cleveland and its people. This vision is not utopian. It points in a direction the City can choose and can follow, a direction that distinguishes among desirable and undesirable actions taken yesterday, and today, and to be taken tomorrow.

Our vision (in outline) is as follows:



--Individuals choose their own goals and means to pursue those goals.

- Institutions are established to serve individuals ~~in~~ in their pursuit of their own goals. ~~In the process institutions, themselves, establish goals -- some of which must be self-serving to assure their survival.~~
- Institutional goals which are self-serving ~~institution~~ must be clearly secondary to those institutional goals which further the pursuit of individuals goals.
- Both individuals and institutions pursue their respective goals through decision and action. Decisions to act must be made from among those choices of action which the individual or institution perceives.
- Individuals are better off with more choices in any decision.
- Institutions serve individual goals most when they provide wider choices in decisions made by individuals
- The primary goal of institutions must be to provide wider choices to individuals through institutional decisions and actions.
- In a context of limited resources, institutions should give first and priority attention to the task or promoting wider choices for those individuals and groups who have few, if any choices.

In short, the advice, information and counsel which is offered in the following pages is primarily directed toward the accomplishment of this single, simply-stated goal:

Simple equity requires that locally-responsible government institutions should give first and priority attention to the goal of promoting wider choices for those individuals and groups in the City of Cleveland who have few, if any choices.

Three important points should be made about this goal. First the goal is not to provide what, in our or others' opinion, people need. The goal

is to provide as wide a range of alternatives as is possible, leaving the decision as to what individuals or families need to each of them, not us. This is an important distinction. To assert that families need a particular kind of "standard" housing, that children need a certain kind and number of recreational facilities, that some groups need a feeling of community, is to disregard the rich variety of needs and wants inherent in any collection of individuals. To then use this misleading conception of standard needs in designing standards for public (or private) offers of goods and services is to standardize individuals themselves.

Coming down on standards → relation to housing paper

Second, pursuit of this goal is pursuit of a more equitable society, not a more efficient political or economic system. This does not mean that policies serving the goal of equity cannot also serve the ends of efficiency, only that the goal of equity is primary. ~~The Commission recognizes the~~

~~need to allocate the city's limited public resources as efficiently as possible, and the value in collecting revenues in the same effective way. But the basic rationale for achieving efficient collection and expenditure of public funds remain two-fold:~~

- ~~1. To assure maximum resources for the promotion of a more equitable society, and~~
- ~~2. To promote equity as efficiently as possible.~~

Finally, the Commission's emphasis on promoting choices for those who have few, places us in a clear advocate position on behalf of those less favored by present conditions. It is obvious that the less favored are neither the more powerful nor in many cases the more numerous of this City, region or country. The Commission does not, therefore, expect to carry the day

for those interests in every case. Neither does the Commission, by its advocacy on behalf of the less favored, ignore or otherwise demean those who advocate the interests of more favored individuals or groups. Conflicts between sincere advocates will clearly arise.

The Commission expects these conflicts and agrees to submit them for resolution to the relevant executive, legislative or judicial tribunals, and to accept the resolution which is forthcoming. Conflicts interests and ideas are not to be avoided. The Commission will constantly strive to sharpen and clarify these conflicts in line with its view that truly professional practice deserves no less and that this service to decision-makers is our fundamental duty to the citizenry we ultimately serve.

Ultimately, justification for the goal of a more equitable society must rest in the moral commitment of the Commission itself. But the Commission does not stand alone in its emphasis on this goal. It stands with that tradition established by a long line of philosophical, religious and political leaders. The goal of a more equitable society is not a new one. It only affirms what has been advocated consistently throughout recorded history -- that equity in the social, political and economic relationships among men is a requisite condition to a just and lasting society.

Religious and philosophical writings set the tune centuries before the birth of the United States.

Plato's remarks on "The Perfect City" written over 300 years before the birth of Christ, included the following:

- a. housing
- b. transportation
- c. public services (especially education)
- d. others.

But it is one thing to harbor a comprehensive and fundamental goal directed toward the achievement of a more equitable society and quite another thing to relate that goal to the day-to-day decisions required from the Planning Commission. The bridge between the goal sought and the policies which the Commission holds as guides is an important step. Policies must be developed which are consistent with achievement of the goal while directed to important decisions which the Commission is obligated to make.

In the goal at hand, choices are fundamental. Who has choices and how do they get those choices? Who may choose from a number of alternatives and why?

Individuals with abundant income of their own to spend and power to influence the collection and expenditure of public funds on their behalf certainly have a wide variety of alternatives before them and, thus, a wide variety of choices. Income in your own pocket to spend as you see fit and power to influence the collection and expenditure of public funds are then two fundamental generators of choice. Individuals so desirably situated may choose where to live, work and play, ~~and~~ what they buy and who they buy it from, even how others' income will be collected for public purposes and how it will be spent.

The message is clear. If we are to promote choices for those who have few, we must promote policies which increase individual incomes for those with little income and policies which extend more influence over the

collection and expenditure of public funds to those without reasonable influence.

At the same time, it must be admitted that more income and increased public influence do not necessarily assure a wider range of alternatives to individuals. For example, increasing the income of individuals who live in some areas of the city will not necessarily improve the retail facilities in their neighborhoods, though increased income is a necessary first step. Similarly, increased income for individuals does not assure their tenancy in a standard housing unit located within a decent environment. Millions of consumers with billions of dollars to spend do not necessarily get a fair deal in their purchases of goods and services. And taxpayers do not always get the best possible public services for their money.

In all of these cases, it is not always enough to have more income or more influence over the collection and expenditures of public funds, for this does not necessarily enhance an individual's choice of private and public goods and services.

There are, thus, two (2) broad areas of policy:

1. Policies to promote changes in the level and distribution of income and power toward some more equitable allocation of choices among the individuals of this society; and
 2. Policies to improve the choices in goods and services offered by the private and public sectors in response to any given level and distribution of income and power.
- 

- Both areas of policy must be included in an effective thrust toward the goal of promoting choices where few or none exist.
- Specific areas of policy under the general area of policies dealing with the level and distribution of income and power include:
 - (2) Private sector payments and transfers of income to individuals.
 - (3) Public sector payments and transfers of income to individuals.
 - (5) Public sector allocation of power to individuals.
 - (8) Relationship between individual income and power.
- More specific areas of policy under the general area of policies to improve response of the private and public sectors include:
 - (1) Individual expenditures on private sector goods and services.
 - (4) Individual payments to public sector institutions.
 - (6) Response of the public sector to individual power.
 - (7) Relationship between private and public sector institutions.

A comprehensive set of policies would cover all the specific areas of policy delineated as well as the ramifications of policy in one area on policies in other areas. It is more than limited resources which sways us from that course. It is our considered judgment that the profound understanding of specific relationships among individuals, institutions, etc., which must precede any comprehensive analysis is impossible to attain. In short, to search for some comprehensive set of policies is to grope in the dark for the path toward an unknown destination.

Rather, this effort is limited to the development of policies in four (4)

particular areas of concern to the City of Cleveland -- income for residents, housing, transportation and government reform. Our own sense of priority as well as our present resources and specific talents suggest these areas of policy as the starting point. The policies in this plan are, therefore, not the only policies needed, only the first developed. In this sense, the policies plan proposed in the following pages is a living document -- to be added to or amended as time and resources dictate.

Why the area

On the other hand, the strategy followed is more than an accommodation to the circumstances. Each of the four areas in which policy will be developed needs extensive analysis and careful inquiry. To do less is to risk a lack of understanding that can undermine both the effectiveness and the acceptance of policies developed. In fact, policies easily developed from ideological premises or paraphrased from the conventional wisdom are worse than no policies at all.

What follows, then, is not a set of wide-ranging policies dealing with every conceivable problem or decision that the Commission may have to deal with, but a set of policies -- and only those policies -- which are carefully designed to attain our goal of a more equitable society -- a union of men where those who now have few choices will have more.

Our disenchantment with citizen participation stems from the experience we have had in Cleveland and our reading of the experience of others — all of which documents that citizen participation techniques do not effectively transfer income or power to those most lacking in these ways. So if we stick closely only to those means or methods which effectively accomplish our stated ends, we must of necessity exclude citizen participation from our suggested set of tools.

In more specific terms, no form or practice of citizen participation in Cleveland has effectively transferred the power to collect or spend public funds — nor has any form or practice transferred income, except to individuals who have been selected by those in power to receive income. You are all familiar with the various forms of

citizen participation used in model cities programs; and you are no doubt also aware of the consistent character of those forms—none effectively transfers power, none were meant to.

In Cleveland, Model Cities residents, through an elected Board of Trustees, have the authority to conceive and propose programs for the expenditure of Model Cities funds. But the City (actually, the Mayor) retains the power to approve or disapprove these proposed programs and to hire, fire and contract for the operation of the programs. Our Model Cities program has been held up for 3 years on just this issue. A temporary lull in the battle ensued when an Office of Citizen Participation was established, given a \$900,000 budget (10% of total funds), and put under the direction of

the most vocal opponent to city-control of Model Cities funds. The Director of this office presumed she had the power to hire, fire and contract for services. She recently suspended (for 10 days) her "assigned" fiscal officer, probably because he would not spend the money as she saw fit. But she will not be able to continue that suspension nor will she be able to hire another fiscal officer to take his place during his suspension. In short, her power to allocate her own budget funds is not complete, and in important decisions, does not exist.

Thus, if we are to serve the objectives of the Policies Plan — to distribute power over the allocation of public funds more broadly — we will not pick as means any of the forms of citizen participation with which I am familiar.

A much more effective means of transferring power would have to rely upon changes in some of the basic statutory provisions under which our cities exist. We are now investigating such a change.

Suppose each ward in the City of Cleveland (33 in all) were allocated, at the beginning of each budget year, a specified amount of money to be spent in some area of municipal service without significant economies of scale — say, recreation. And suppose the councilman in that ward then proposed a program for spending that money to a legislative body composed of residents elected, at large, from the ward. This body could approve, disapprove or modify such proposals and could further hire, fire or contract for the expenditure

of their allocated funds according to the plan approved.

This is the kind of transfer of power that appears to meet our objectives. It is also most difficult to achieve, for obvious reasons. But restricting your proposals to those easiest to accomplish is what brought us to where we are today — nowhere.

So citizen participation techniques or methods do not figure in any way in the Cleveland Policies Plan.

I realize that City officials will wonder about this, particularly those who make their living among the "citizens" who are "participating." I suspect that HUD will be dismayed to find no citizen participation element in our plan. And I know that many planners will find fault with us on the same score — as many of you might.

But we are not bent on citizens realizing some sense of participation, nor on neighborhood groups receiving some forum with decision-makers. We are intent on distributing the power to spend public funds. If you accept this goal I fail to see how you can avoid accepting our disenchantment with citizen participation

But suppose you do not accept our goal of transferring power and income, in order to widen choice? Suppose you do not accept our single-minded devotion to the sovereignty of individuals and to the notion that more alternatives from which to choose will improve his lot? In fact, you might very well question the foundation of the policies plan — those presumptions and values inherent in its basic goal. In moments of reflection, I confess, I do that very thing, myself. And I am often vaguely troubled by our lack of attention to that important part of our agenda at this conference — an individual's sense of community.

People do, indeed, seem to need some sense of membership in a larger community — one ~~one~~ with which they may share a common set of values and beliefs, a common purpose or a common interest. But this sense of community among individuals is a goal ~~one~~ ~~could~~ ~~not~~ support only in opposition to the goal of choice we have already accepted.

Let me try to explain.

It is our assumption that individuals are seeking financial, physical or psychological security, as well as personal growth. I think that is correct. But my experience tells me that people value attainment of the various forms of security more than personal growth. Furthermore, individuals find this

security — more often than not — as members of some kind of community.

It is easy to understand an individual's feeling of security as a member of a community, if community is defined as the association, with others, in a group which holds a common set of basic beliefs, values and attitudes. But a community seems to have another attribute, if not in theory certainly — in my experience — in practice. Communities are more often closed than not, and they are intolerant of those outside the community. They are at least exclusionary and may even be aggressive in their hostility to others.

Suburban communities exclude in obvious ways ~~with~~ with great success, and with the support of the residents. Middle-income communities exclude the poor. Labor unions exclude. Churches exclude. And on and on and on. And ~~other~~ ^{some} communities you could name actively campaign to dismember or destroy other and would drive out or exclude if they had the power to do so. communities. In Cleveland, the Nazi party sets itself in hostile opposition to the black community and is actually campaigning to send all blacks to Africa. In your own fair city — in fact, in this very building — I saw a series of posters suggesting that the local Young Americans for Freedom would like to do away with the Yippies.

~~Other communities would drive out or exclude if~~

In a less hostile and over-bearing way, elderly residents in university student communities would like to ban the behavior of young residents which is so at odds with their values and seems, to them, to be their number one problem. Middle-income blacks feel a deep resignation and occasional anger at their inability to move - or exclude - low-income blacks from their schools and neighborhoods.

So to promote a sense of community is to undermine, in important ways, efforts to promote choice, and tolerance for choices made.

I recognize the security that individuals get, and need, from a sense of belonging to a wider community of shared beliefs and values. And I

also recognize that individuals may feel more secure in a community which excludes choice than in a society of greater choice for all.

But I am not permitted the luxury of inaction in the face of dilemma or uncertainty. I choose a society of greater choice and my advice to decision-makers is ultimately based on that choice. I am anxious to know how you choose.

Thank you.



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

graduate program in
urban and regional planning
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
IOWA CITY, IOWA

assisted by
Johnson County Regional
Planning Commission
and
Dane County, Wisconsin
Social Planning Agency

MONDAY - WEDNESDAY
APRIL 30 - MAY 2, 1973

IOWA MEMORIAL UNION
THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

A conference of students, teachers,
professionals, and area citizens
convened to explore some basic
planning processes and objectives
in the context of community

Monday, April 30

PROGRAM

Planning Processes, Objectives,
and Community

8:00 a.m. Big Ten Lounge
Registration and Coffee

9:45 a.m. Harvard Room
Welcome: Introduction to Conference and
University of Iowa
James Harris, Chairman
Urban and Regional Planning

10:00 a.m. Harvard Room
Talk by Marshall Kaplan

1:30 p.m. Harvard Room
Talk by Jerry Kaufman

2:30 p.m.
Coffee Break

2:45 p.m. Harvard Room
Talk by Ernie Bonner

7:00 p.m. Lucas Dodge Room
"The Meaning of Community"
Talk by Mildred Loomis
Open to the University Community

9:00 p.m.
Reception for all participants

Marshall Kaplan is a principal in the planning firm of
Marshall Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn; previous efforts on
new communities, Model Cities, and advocacy planning;
co-author of Community Builder (1967); recent book,
Planning in the 1960's: Design for Irrelevancy

Jerry Kaufman is Associate Professor of Planning,
University of Wisconsin; has served as the Associate
Director of the American Society of Planning Officials

Tuesday, May 1

PROGRAM

Planning Processes, Objectives,
and Community (cont.)

9:30 a.m. Harvard Room
Panel and Open Discussion
Marshall Kaplan, Jerry Kaufman, Ernie Bonner,
and Mildred Loomis

10:30 a.m.
Coffee Available

11:00 a.m. Harvard, Northwestern, Purdue,
and Princeton Rooms
Small group discussion with panel participants

Citizen Participation Trends and Techniques

1:00 p.m. Yale Room
Legislative Trends and Techniques
Charles B. Huyett and David Discher

2:00 p.m. Yale Room
The Charette
Robert Cox

3:00 p.m.
Coffee Available

3:00 p.m. Yale Room
Nominal Group Technique for Problem Identification
June Spencer

7:30 p.m. Yale Room
Social Services Agency Simulation
Michael St. John

(ASPO) and member, Board of Directors, American
Institute of Planners (AIP); currently teaches
"Strategies for Planning Effectiveness"

PROGRAM

Citizen Participation Trends and Techniques (cont.)

9:00 a.m. Yale Room
Using Citizen Participation Techniques in a large regional planning effort
P. Arthur Myren

10:30 a.m.
Coffee Available

11:00 a.m. Yale Room
The Delphi Technique
Harold Linstone

1:30 p.m. Yale Room
Portland Planning Model
Andrew Van de Ven

Ernie Bommer is Chief City Planner, Cleveland, Ohio.

Mildred Loomis is Director of the School for Living; Editor of the Green Revolution

Charles B. Huyett is the Assistant Regional Administrator for Community Planning and Management, Department of Housing and Urban Development

David Discher is Director of State Planning, Office of Planning and Programming, Iowa

Robert Cox is Senior Planner, Madison County, Indiana

June Spencer is Acting Director, Dane County Social Planning Agency, Madison, Wisconsin

Michael St. John is a Board member of the Milwaukee Mental Health Association

P. Arthur Myren is Senior Planner, Northern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC)

(continued)

REGISTRATION

Fees: Students - Free
Others - \$10

Register at the Conference
monday morning or upon arrival

HOUSING

Rooms have been reserved in the Iowa House, which is co-located with the Conference Center in the Iowa Memorial Union. The cost of a shared double room will be \$8.25 per person per night plus sales tax. The single room rate is \$12.00 per night plus sales tax. Call the Conference Center collect if you require overnight accommodations: (319) 353-5505.

PARKING

Unreserved parking near the Iowa Memorial Union is usually not available. Free parking in the adjacent parking ramp is provided Iowa House guests. For those not staying at the Iowa House, reserved parking may be purchased for \$1.50 per day, payable upon departure.

Harold Linstone is Director, Systems Science Doctoral Program, Portland State University; Associated with the journal, Technological Forecasting

Andrew Van de Ven is Professor of Administrative Sciences, Kent State University



Center for
Conferences
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