

# The Clarksville Gold Dollar

Volume 2 Number 3

Clarksville Community Development Corp.

July 6, 1979

## CCDC AND TAO/ONO MEET IN COURT

Tuesday, July 3, testimony was presented in the CCDC lawsuit filed to prevent construction of townhouses planned by TAO/ONO, Inc. Judge Pete Lowry presided at the United States 261st Judicial District Court in Austin, Texas. Attorneys Nell Hawn, Malcolm Greenstein and Jim Simmons represented the plaintiffs.

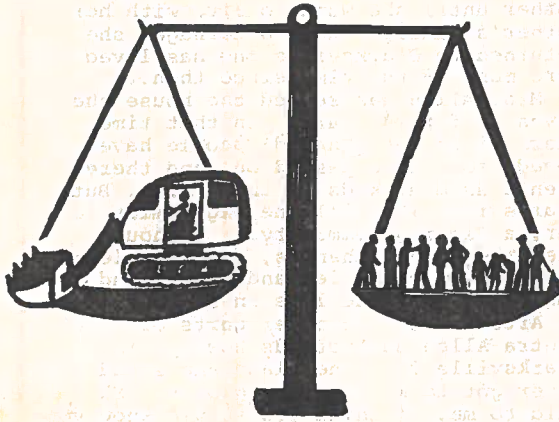
Testimony was heard from plaintiffs Alyce Gynn, Pauline Malmburg and Malcolm Greenstein, all residents of Patterson Street where the townhouses are planned. The plaintiffs testified that the construction of the townhouses would cause harm to them. Among causes for injury named were the probable increases in rent in the vicinity, the likely changes in the make-up of the community, and the increased traffic causing more noise, parking problems, and danger in the case of emergencies when emergency vehicles would possibly not be able to navigate the narrow street.

Pauline Brown testified on behalf of the CCDC which represents other community residents who would face harm from this project. Mrs. Brown is a former resident of Wheatsville and experienced in that community first hand the effects of developer speculation. She and other area residents believe there is a danger that Clarksville people will be forced to relocate as taxes rise leading to higher rents. Approximately 50% of Clarksville residents are renters. Many have lived in the neighborhood as long as home owners.

Michael Conroy was called as an expert witness. Mr. Conroy is a professor of economics at the University of Texas. He has published books and articles and has studied Clarksville. He too testified on how he believes the townhouses would harm the community.

After these testimonies were heard, the defense called one witness, Jim Person,

a member of TAO/ONO, Inc. It was presented that Mr. Person had attempted to help the community of Clarksville, and that as far as he knew, he complied with procedures in obtaining his permit for construction at the Patterson site.



Because of zoning regulations allowing only single family houses or duplexes, TAO/ONO had to obtain a special permit to build townhouses within Clarksville. The lawsuit of the CCDC claims that the permit was illegally issued because correct procedure was not followed by TAO/ONO and the City of Austin in granting the special permit. The lawsuit petition also claims the permit is illegal because the proposed driveway is too narrow to comply with city regulations.

After all testimony was heard, Judge Lowry asked lawyers to submit briefs by Monday. There may be an oral argument scheduled later which will be open to the public. The case could be decided by the Judge on the basis of the testimony and the briefs.

A decision should be reached within a week.

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## WORKING ON THE ROADS

(and working... and working... and working...)

When Clarksville residents asked for paved streets in the community, few imagined that the work would take so long and be such an inconvenience to residents and local businesses. To find out how much longer we can expect the road work, I spoke with Keith Drosche of Austin's Water and Wastewater Department. Good news for local people is that part of the paving will be done soon. Not so good news is that all the streets won't be finished until probably December of this year; and then, only if there is good weather for working this fall.

Mr. Drosche is the city worker overseeing the construction done on the first phase of street work in Clarksville. Most of this work has been with water and wastewater lines and storm sewers, work necessary before paving can be started. Since most existing lines were put in as long ago as the 1930's, many have needed replacement. Austin's growth has created a need for larger lines to carry water and wastewater. Although Clarksville hasn't grown, there has been development around the area and utility lines are linked between communities. So where an 8" pipe may have been large enough in 1930, a 15" pipe must be used today.

Construction workers have been on the job in Clarksville for almost a year now. Work has gone slowly because of a particularly wet spring this year. Also, in some cases, the city had not acquired the land to be used for water lines so that paper work sometimes caused delays. In spite of this the contractor is ahead of schedule and this contract should be done by October. At that time all the utility work will be completed and West Lynn, West 12th (between West Lynn and Charlotte) and Charlotte will be paved.

The part of Charlotte to be paved will be the section that will cover the box culvert installed between 10th and short 11th. It will be done by October. West Lynn and West 12th will be paved within the next two months.

The street work closes streets daily. The workers try to maintain local traffic and traffic to businesses. However there will be periods when car access to stores and

homes will be blocked as concrete curbs and gutters are poured and left to dry. This shouldn't require more than 2 or 3 days.

Mr. Drosche explained that they are trying to minimize dust, but that it can't really be avoided. He also wanted to thank the people who live in Clarksville. "Residents have been very nice and I appreciate their understanding," he said.

Improvements in Clarksville may mean changes. New streets and upgraded utilities will cause land values to rise. Mr. Drosche believes "the dollar sign is going to be very tempting." He foresees that much of Clarksville property will be changing hands so that in five years a different group of people will live here.

What Mr. Drosche referred to is part of the future facing Clarksville. Neighborhood improvements, new houses, as well as paved streets, cause land values to rise. Property is suddenly worth much more than ever before. This has happened in other cities and is happening in other Austin communities. Of course land owners do have a choice to sell or not, and people attached to their neighborhood place more value on their home than what money may be offered. Many Clarksville residents will probably choose to not leave their home, family and friends.

The next and final contract for street work in Clarksville will be opened to bids in July or August. \$1,600,000 has already been invested in the project. An estimated \$1.5 to \$2 million will be spent on the next contract. Paving done on that contract will probably start at Waterston and work south.

To homeowners wondering what the cost of all this work will be to them, there is some very good news. Federal regulations state that for projects even partially funded by the U.S. government (and this one has received Housing and Community Development funds) there can be no charge to community residents. So unless there is a change in federal regulations this year, which is unlikely, the highest price paid by Clarksville people will be the inconvenience of the work.

## Times of Struggle

(This is the second of a series of articles describing past problems that have confronted Clarksville. This week: The Fight Against the Highways)

The planned construction of MoPac and the crosstown expressway drew together various residents of West Austin. In November, 1969, Austin people from St. Luke's Methodist Church asked that the recently formed Clarksville Committee meet with them. From this meeting the Concerned Citizens for Development of West Austin was formed. This non-profit agency acquired the first Clarksville Neighborhood center which was financed with help from St. Luke's members, fund raising drives and federal support.

The neighborhood center was only one of the goals of the CCDWA. Quoting a statement from the group, "(there is) a need to preserve and rehabilitate the area and to provide needed services and facilities for its residents." Priority was given to the housing problem, mainly the relocation that would be necessary if the new highways were built. Physical improvements needed in Clarksville were listed as "1) housing improvements, 2) additional housing, 3) street paving, 4) curbs and gutters, 5) better drainage, and 6) a recreation facility." Among social services that were needed the same statement lists medical, education, and welfare.

The new Clarksville group next addressed the city manager in January, 1970, to ask for new information on the proposed highways. They learned that MoPac was to continue as planned with various building contracts to be let during the next year and a half. The crosstown expressway was said to be six to eight years away.

The following month the Concerned Citizens filed a complaint with U.S. Secretary of Transportation. They asked that federal funds for MoPac be withheld. The complaint was that the project had been routed through Clarksville purposely because property values were extremely low for the area. People were offered between \$3000 and \$5000 for their homes.

In April a class action suit was filed to stop MoPac. The Clarksville agency claimed that federal statute procedures weren't followed that should have helped relocate residents in West Austin. An injunction was granted May 1, 1970, by U.S. District Judge Robert with a hearing set for later that month. At that hearing the suit was dismissed.

An appeal was immediately filed. Meanwhile state representatives came to Clarksville and offered to homeowners a money supplement to pay for relocation. A main goal of the lawsuit was thus gained, and the appeal was lost in court.

MoPac continued on schedule and six miles of freeway (of the planned 13 miles) were opened November 3, 1975. 26 Clarksville families were relocated; 23 left the Clarksville area.

A film made during construction by U.T. student George Leo Nelson documented the effect of MoPac on Clarksville. The interviewer of the film, Raynell Parkins, joined the West Austin forces in opposing the crosstown expressway. Mr. Parkins made a presentation to City Council in November, 1974, on behalf of Clarksville. At that meeting Council voted to strike the project from the Austin Transportation Master Plan.

To clear up some confusion on whether or not the Master Plan includes a crosstown expressway, Wayne Golden of the City Planning Department was contacted. He explained that the Master Plan has never been completed. When it is completed City Council will vote to accept or reject the Master Plan. At this time only existing freeways and a freeway along highway 183 are included. MoPac is to be completed from Loop 360 to 183 when funds are available.

MoPac took part of Clarksville despite community resistance. A crosstown expressway will not take Clarksville, because of community resistance.

(next: Clarksville Looks for Aid. Federal assistance and developers arrive.)

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## Solar Energy Comes to Clarksville

SAVE MONEY ON GAS BILLS

You are invited to come to 1616 West 10th Street this Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and see a solar hot water heater built from used and scrap material. After the water heater is built in the front yard, we will install it on the roof. Total cost for the project will be about \$20 --- a small price to pay for an end to water heating bills.

The CCDC is co-sponsoring this Workshop with the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems. This water heater design is the same as is being used on homes in Crystal City, Texas. Besides being cheap it can be built by nearly anyone with a minimum of tools. Clarksville folks stand to save a lot on utility bills if this type of heater is used.

So, come by 10th Street this Sunday to learn about solar energy and how it can help you. There will be refreshments and hopefully lots of neighbors to talk with.

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### From the Reverend "VIEWPOINT"

"DEDICATED TO THE PROPOSITION"

AN EXCERPT FROM HIS JUNETEENTH ADDRESS

We are here today in memorial of the Emancipation and not as celebrants of this much publicized day, nonetheless, we are grateful to God for this assemblage.

As Mr. Adlai Stevenson said in an article in 1963, our nation differs from others in its principles of unity. We are not people of a simple culture, and we are a land dedicated to a proposition and our unity centers around a principle.

We the Black People of this amalgamated country, by our faith and determination, are forcing society to consider seriously the original proposition which gave America its birth. I must hasten to say it is a time not only for society to commit herself to retrospection, we must reexamine ourselves in the sense of determining who we are, where we came from, and what we believe.

FAITH

The first thing I want to say is that we, regardless of whom we are, always live by faith. Or to put it in another way, we live on the basis of propositions which we cannot prove but nonetheless which we commit ourselves to live by.

It is amazing how much we assume in today's world. Traditional values which were once dear to us are now lost in the changing times. The scientific laws grow outdated and sociology is far from being absolute. It seems that just when we think we have things all figured out, there appear many exceptions. This tells me that when we deal with material things of life, whether certain values or scientific laws, we must live by faith even as we do in the spiritual realm.

If a person considers a day in their life they will know just how uncertain many things are. We plan for the future the best way we can but the wise person knows that the future is beyond their control. The old folks used to say, "the Lord willing" and the older I get, the more I understand the truth of their words.

DEDICATION

The second thing to consider is that life is a dedication. The strength of the community life lies not in abundance of things, the strength of community life lies primarily in a willingness to commit oneself to faith. Faith that we can face tomorrow knowing full well the troubles we have today. Faith that we will overcome the obstacles and the odds of yesterday.

Faith becomes a powerful force only when it becomes something more than intellectual sense. It calls for far more than that, it calls for complete commitment from those who announce what they believe. The future of this community, depends on the greatness of its faith and the strength which our men, women, boys, and girls dedicate to its fulfillment.

The christian church which is the center of this community, proclaims the worth of every human creature and the universal brotherhood of us all. We are committed to a community where regardless to social, economical, or political status, everyone has his or her opportunity. We are committed to a community where there are no big "I's" and little "u's". We are dedicated to a community where we must be forever opposed to being saddled with man made handicaps.

Rev. W. B. Southerland

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## JUNETEENTH... INTERVIEW

About 100 people attended the Juneteenth celebration and dedication of the Haskell Homestead. Rev. Southerland gave the invocation then spoke, Pauline Brown sang several songs, and Leonard Ehrler, Director of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, gave a speech and with the help of Mamie Johnson they cut the ribbon dedicating the house to Hezekiah Haskell, Jr.

Hezekiah lived in the house until shortly before his death. In his will the property passed to his niece and three of his children. They in turn agreed to sell the land to the city at a very reasonable cost so that the homesite would be preserved for the community and dedicated to Hezekiah Haskell. I spoke with Aletra Allen about the house, her neighborhood and the changes that she has seen here.

"Clarksville is my home."

Aletra Allen  
1821 West 11th

Mrs. Allen was born in the Haskell House. Her mother died while Aletra was still a baby and she was raised by her grandmother until she went to live with her father's family. When a teenager she returned to Clarksville and has lived here most of the time since then.

Mrs. Allen has rented the house she lives in for 20 years. In that time Clarksville has changed; people have moved, some have passed on, and there aren't as many kids as there were. But Clarksville is still one big family to her, a "loving community." Although there have been changes, Clarksville is still "nice and quiet and happy" and it has "still got the love in it".

After living in other parts of town, Aletra Allen understands how special Clarksville is. One place she lived she never got to know her neighbors. She said to me, "I think you should know your neighbors. They say that when you die you go to heaven. If you're going to heaven you're going to be with them. (And if you're going the other direction you'll be with them!) So you'd better make the best of it while you're here!"

Aletra and her husband used to care for Hezekiah Haskell, take him wood for his fireplace and help him as he needed. He was a "sweet man" and he told her not

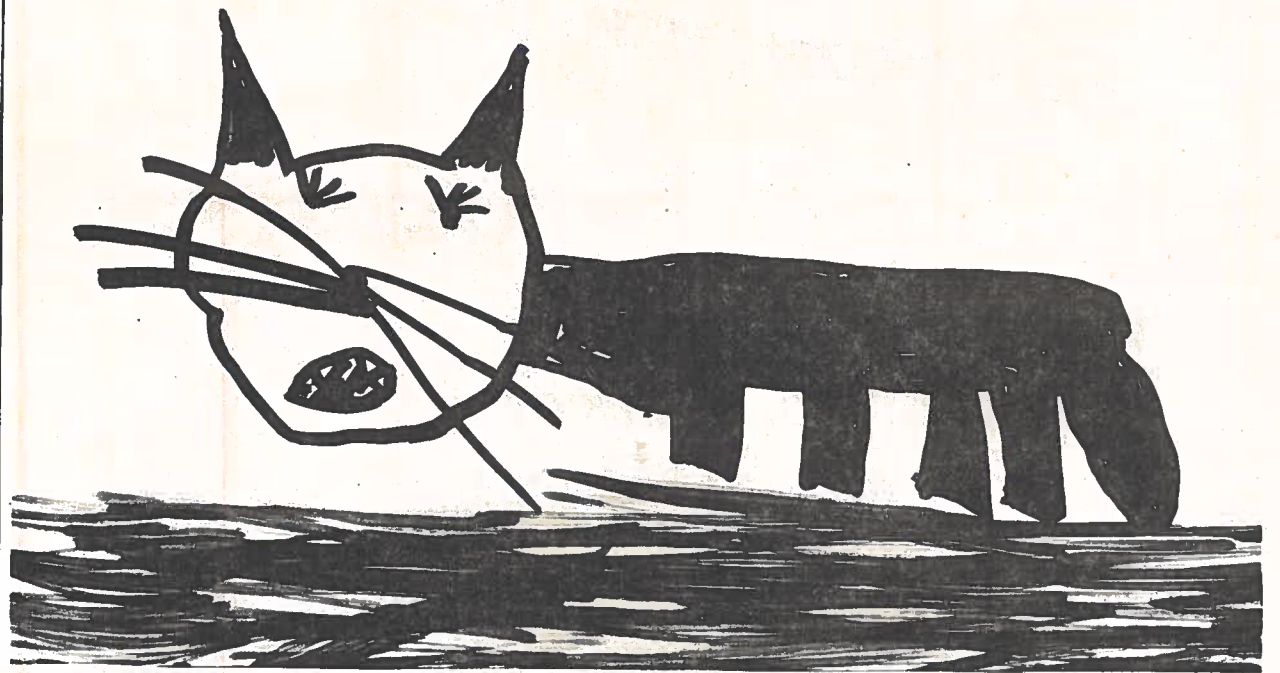
to sell the land but to build on it for a home.

After his death the best use seemed to her to be for the community. The land could have sold for more, but thinking first of her neighborhood and the memory of her Uncle Hezekiah, the property was sold to the city so that a museum could be established for the benefit of Clarksville.

10 to 20 years ago the house she lives in and others here were selling for \$5,000. She and her husband tried to buy their house but the owner decided not to sell. Mrs. Allen now wonders if her house will be sold as property values rise. After 20 years she feels that even if the house were bought she should still have the right to live there.

Some of Aletra Allen's friends and family were moved by the MoPac project. She now is concerned that others will be moved out as developers buy land. She said, "I like to see anything pull up and look nice, but they shouldn't try to move poor people out." Everything being sold costs too much and nothing is being sold to Blacks. She doesn't dislike the newcomers and as she puts it, "I can get along with anyone. A few people can blend in but this is a lot of new people coming in. Everything is going to the ones with money."

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From Kwita

CLARKVILLE CLEAN-UP

Clean-up June 16, was a big success. Everyone worked hard and worked together for a cleaner neighborhood. An afternoon spaghetti dinner at the neighborhood center recharged the workers who then finished clean-up by 3:00.

One of the city's clean-up workers said that compared to other Austin neighborhoods Clarksville deserves a A+ for participation and hard work. So let's pat ourselves on the back a little!

VEGETABLES IN THE GARDEN

The garden is enduring the heat pretty well. Okra is ready now. So are beets, tomatoes, peppers, and squash. Cantelopes and lima beans need to grow a week or two more.

Come and get it!  
Tony

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POT LUCK PICNICS

It's time to get together with friends and share a dinner. Area residents are invited to bring a dish and enjoy a picnic at West Austin Park. The pot luck picnics are every Friday evening at 7:00 p.m.

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SUMMERTIME AND THE LIVIN' IS BUSY  
KIDS ARE JUMPIN'....

and the afternoon recreation program is concluding its third week. So far we've had a fine time swimming at West Enfield pool, going to the movies to see The Little Prince and Black Beauty, painting, watching a puppet show, and playing games.

Soon we are starting a mural on the south inside wall of the neighborhood center. The theme of the mural will reflect the Clarksville community. Carlos from Interart Works will be helping us with ideas and design, and we also want any kids to help that want to. So come by the center for information.

Ted Nanez and Barbara Nell Franklin will soon be joining the Summer Afternoon Program as CETA workers. With their help children will receive more individual attention and our capacity to enroll more children will increase. Anyone interested in the program come by the center between 12-4 p.m. daily or call me at 476-3972. The program is free and open to 3-13 year olds.

Looking forward to more fun in the sun.  
Carol Aaronson

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