

The Clarksville Gold Dollar

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 7

Clarksville Community Development Corp.

AUGUST 31, 1979

COMMUNITY MEETING SEPTEMBER 6TH

A community meeting for all Clarksville residents will be held next Thursday night at 7:30 P.M. in the basement of the Sweethome Baptist Church. The purpose of the meeting is to inform residents of neighborhood projects and explain how they can be involved.

The Clarksville meeting is sponsored by the Clarksville Advisory Board and the CCDC and all residents of the area are urged to attend. The input of neighborhood people is needed for several projects that are in the planning stage.

One project is the Rent House Repair Program which will hopefully be presented to City Council on September 13th. The program has been funded by HUD but the \$17,500 that was allocated has been held up by the city. In hopes that the funds will be released if another established organization is involved, the CCDC

approached Austin Tenants Council. The Tenants Council recently agreed to administer the Rent House Repair Program if the city gives them permission.

Another project that will need help from local people is Clarksville's participation in the West Lynn Street Fair on October 14th. Last year music and food drew people to the playground on West 11th and a "hay ride" carried people to and from the West Lynn activities. Plans have not yet been made for this year's Clarksville program.

Board members will make presentations on various topics and neighborhood goals will be discussed. This will be a good opportunity to meet community people and to express your opinions on your neighborhood.

Come share refreshments and conversation Thursday night. Come one, come all!

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CLARKSVILLE GARDENS

The Clarksville Gardening Project takes a big step forward this week. Our new garden space behind Haskell House was tilled yesterday and it is now ready for use. Do you want a small garden plot?

With food prices rising steadily we all feel the need to economize. Growing some of your own vegetables can help. Here at the Neighborhood Center garden I have grown at least \$300 worth of vegetables since April.

Already several people have spoken for space at the new garden. The remaining plots will be given out to interested Clarksville residents. Water as well as the land itself is being donated by the City while tools may be borrowed from the Center. Also, it is possible to get free seeds from several sources. All that you need to provide is enthusiasm and a little time to tend your garden.

Call me at the Center (476-3972) if you want to grow some vegetables. If you are a beginner, I can give you some advice on gardening; if not, perhaps you can tell me a thing or two.

Tony Switzer
Gardener

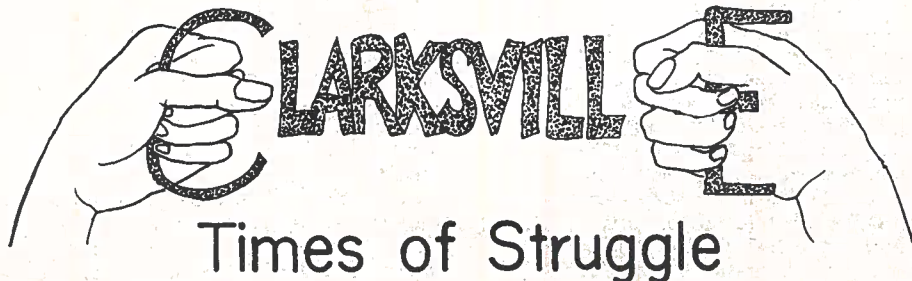


CLASSES TO BEGIN

Mathews Community School fall session begins September 10 with registration for classes Tuesday, September 4 through Friday, September 7. The office at 906 West Lynn will be open for registration from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm, Tuesday through Thursday and from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on Friday.

Classes are offered in arts and crafts, languages, dance, music and personal growth. They are open to adults and children for a small tuition fee. For a complete schedule of classes stop by the school office or the Clarksville Neighborhood Center.

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(This is the final article of this series. In this issue "The Conflict with TAO/ONO, Part II)

In March, 1979 the CCDC and TAO/ONO began to work on a compromise. The CCDC hoped to gain some control over the direction of development in Clarksville and to work toward more low cost housing in the community. TAO/ONO wished to proceed with development without neighborhood opposition.

As a bargaining tool the CCDC offered to drop the lawsuit pending against TAO/ONO. This lawsuit had been filed to block construction of townhouses on Patterson. Jim Person of TAO/ONO said in an interview that TAO/ONO never believed the CCDC lawsuit had a chance of winning and for this reason the company continued work at the site during the months it took the case to be brought to court. TAO/ONO did, however, hope to avoid the cost of the lawsuit by reaching a compromise.

Several versions of a compromise passed between the CCDC and TAO/ONO. According to the final draft the two groups would work together "to develop a master plan for the Clarksville National Register of Historic Places District outlining the type and nature of new homes to be built in the Clarksville district". This plan included a plan for the rehabilitation of housing needing repair. Design work of the master plan was to be done by TAO/ONO at cost.

In return for an end to the community's opposition, TAO/ONO agreed to several points:

- 1) They would sell two lots to persons selected by the CCDC for the purpose of building low-cost housing.
- 2) They would design and build housing at cost on the lots purchased.
- 3) They would assist the CCDC in acquiring four vacant lots not then owned by TAO/ONO and also the Clarksville property owned by the City of Austin for the purpose of building low-cost housing.

As part of the agreement the CCDC would find buyers for the houses and take care of necessary paper work in qualifying applicants. The CCDC was hoping to experiment with the use of FHA Section 235 Program to finance the sale of homes to Clarksville residents and exresidents.

Two stipulations made by TAO/ONO as a part of the agreement caused hesitation on the part of the CCDC and was one cause of the eventual rejection of the

compromise by the CCDC board of directors. TAO/ONO required that the two lots be paid for within eight weeks of the agreement and that qualified clients be found within the following four months. If the dates weren't met by the CCDC, the lots would return to TAO/ONO.

TAO/ONO member Jim Person explained the reasons for these requirements. Payment of the \$12,000 was needed by April 24, 1979, because TAO/ONO owed money on the lots and the date set was shortly before the loan was due. The other date was set as part of TAO/ONO's routine requirements established in any contract they enter upon. It was explained as a protection of their design control and a legal restraint to prevent other builders from being hired.

On March 15 the compromise was rejected unanimously by the six CCDC board members present at the meeting. (See interviews, this issue) Since that time CCDC members have decided to openly oppose TAO/ONO's development in Clarksville. Yard signs in front of many houses read "Stop TAO/ONO from Destroying Clarksville" and bumper stickers on local cars say "Save Historic Clarksville from Developers" and "Stop Developers from Destroying Clarksville". Leaflets have been tacked on trees and were passed out at a restaurant in the area to explain the CCDC's point of view.

Four demonstrations have been staged against the developers' activities and these protests have drawn Austin's attention to the neighborhood. There has been coverage on local radio, T. V. and in the Austin American Statesman. The reaction of outsiders has been divided.

Clarksville has always had to struggle to survive as a community. Now as people begin to recognize the value of this community, it is more threatened than ever. The future will undoubtedly bring changes. If the present trend continues, property values will rise and new people will try to buy into the area. It will be particularly hard to protect renters and to provide for low income children of Clarksville who wish to remain in their neighborhood when they start their own families.

To preserve their community, the CCDC will continue to try to discourage developers and to look for aid in the construction of more low cost housing. They will need all the support they can find, because they are fighting for social justice in a state more concerned with economic growth.

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IN RESPONSE TO THE INTERVIEW WITH JIM PERSON

On March 15th, 1979, six CCDC board members met at Clarksville Neighborhood Center to reach a decision on a proposed compromise with developers, TAO/ONO, Inc. At that time TAO/ONO and the CCDC had been working for several weeks on a draft of the agreement. March 16th was set as a deadline for reaching a decision as to whether or not to accept a compromise. At the CCDC meeting on March 15, board members felt it necessary to call a neighborhood meeting to give residents an opportunity to express their views. A call was made to Jim Person of TAO/ONO to ask for an extension until the meeting could be held the following week. Jim Person was quoted as replying, "Hell, No". A vote was then taken and the agreement was unanimously rejected. To understand reasons behind this decision, I spoke with five of the six board members who were there that night.

Lena Stewart

"I was going to go along with it. It seemed like a good compromise but we wanted to ask the community what they thought. TAO/ONO wanted to go on with it and it didn't seem right to us. Person wasn't right when he said no to an extension. We knew then that there was a bug under the rug somewhere. Everyone thought that Greenstein had us going that way. He did not! We judged the compromise from what Person said, just that quick."

Carey Baylor

"I was going to compromise. The board members wanted to call a community meeting, but time was running out. After Jim Person didn't give us time to bring it to the community, we decided to go on with it, too. He was making all the decisions and he wasn't giving us any time to let the neighborhood decide on it. The main reason I voted against it was that he gave us such short time."

Pauline Brown

"I didn't think it was too much of a compromise. From his point of view it was great, but what were we getting? He didn't even give us enough time to get the money together. However, I was going to vote for the compromise. When he didn't agree to giving us more time to ask the community what they thought, it turned my decision. It didn't seem he could have our neighborhood's interest at heart. I felt that any person with any cooperation who is trying to be a part of the neighborhood should not have spoken that way. It made me believe the agreement wasn't for us."

Malcolm Greenstein

"I opposed the compromise for several reasons. It seemed to me that the CCDC benefits were all contentions. If we didn't raise \$6,000 for each lot they were selling us by a certain period of time, then we lost any right to those lots and had gained nothing. TAO/ONO's benefits were immediate. The lawsuit was dropped in the terms of the agreement "with prejudice". This meant it could never be taken up again and TAO/ONO could proceed with development without more demonstration or protests. By such an agreement they would acquire a good name and be set up as the Clarksville construction company. They had the residents with their backs against the wall. It looked to me like compromise at the barrel of a gun."

Rev. W. B. Southerland

"In my personal opinion the compromise looked good in content, but had room for improvement. A major hangup was that they made the rules and set the deadlines. They knew full well we would have trouble meeting the deadlines. It was my intention that the compromise be accepted with the understanding that negotiations continue that would correct the inefficiencies of the agreement. The way the compromise looked to us and our lawyers, TAO/ONO was only held to the terms by good faith whereas the CCDC would lose the right to ever again pursue a lawsuit against their townhouses. This needed some correction. When the board started voting against the compromise, I went along with the board and voted against the agreement to make it a unanimous decision."

All through Jim Person's interview he spoke of his company's sensitivity to Clarksville, but to me it is his insensitivity that stands out in the interview. How can his claim to be sensitive be true if the neighborhood people don't think his development is sensitive?

I take issue with him when he says he is maintaining the character of the neighborhood. Jim Person has done everything to make a dollar off of Clarksville. Clarksville wants to develop the neighborhood for its own low income residents, and in that way we would keep Clarksville's original character.

We would have been able to work with TAO/ONO if they would have built low cost homes here. We are still interested and feel that TAO/ONO should be building low cost housing because that is what is appropriate in Clarksville. TAO/ONO knows nothing of Clarksville or they would not be using wood siding and tin roofs or building townhouses and expensive homes. Person says we'll like the finished product of their development. How can we when we don't like the beginning?

Person says his investors aren't interested in low cost housing. That's the problem-they're only interested in profit. TAO/ONO's not helping Austin. They're trying to buy up a neighborhood and have the city worry with the low income areas people will have to move to.

Real estate has to stop taking advantage of low income neighborhoods. The system doesn't have to work like that. Clarksville is an established neighborhood. Business and the city should look at that and help preserve the community that is here. There should be ordinances to prevent the type of development that's happening in Clarksville. It's common in all low income areas and money is the key. This should not be.

TAO/ONO's interest is in making money and having design control over a large area. Jim Person has his home here, true, but for how long? Will he stay as long as we hope to stay, or will he travel on and do the same to some other neighborhood?

Concerning his comments about renters. I would like to say that I'm not convinced renters will be better off displaced by TAO/ONO than they would be if someone else were responsible. To help these people, the renters could have first chance to purchase houses.

Person is misleading when he says the Blacks who approached him about houses didn't try to work out anything. If he's interested in maintaining the neighborhood, why doesn't he try to help Blacks and minorities buy-help them afford his houses?

I'm interested in meeting with Jim Person to discuss these things. I don't understand him and would love to know where he's coming from. Issues are further clouded because we have been hearing from many people connected with the company.

I would like to say this to the people of Clarksville. We may be forced back, but only a half step. We'll never step a whole step backwards as long as we're together. It is time for developing a consciousness of ourselves for what we are, part of the great motor of history-the working class. Clarksville, I think you are that.

Pauline Brown

IT'S TIME FOR SCHOOL

Summer is almost over and has passed quickly for us at the center. We certainly enjoyed all the summer weather so we could swim and play lots of baseball during our Summer Recreation Program. Now with the arrival of school it is time for the After School Program to begin. The program is available to children ages 3-9 years old living in the Clarksville community. Our program is from 2:30 pm (after/school) to 5:30 pm and we hope to offer a healthy environment for children of working parents. The only cost is a \$5.00 monthly fee for food snacks (fruit, juice, and other snacks) served daily. Our activities vary from arts and crafts; to playing with blocks, puzzles, and games; to outdoor sports; and educational and cultural field trips. This summer we enjoyed weekly movies offered through a Children's Film Festival and hopefully we can journey to other children's movies this fall.

If you are interested in enrolling your children in the After School Program, please contact me at the Center or call (476-3972) between 2:30-6:00.

Recreation Worker Carol Aaronson



BASEBALL

A Clarksville baseball team is being formed. Games will start the second week of September and the team will play Thursday nights at different fields around town. Call Freddie Strong at 478-4303 if you would like to play.

PAINTING SWEET HOME

There has been a delay in painting the church because some bad windows are being replaced and some work is being done on the steeple. When these repairs are completed, painting will begin. It will be a big job and any volunteers would be appreciated. Call Rev. Carrington at 447-9002 if you can help.

CHOIR TAKES TRIP

The church youth choir had their eagerly awaited trip to Six Flags on Saturday, August 18th. The choir had worked hard for months to save for this trip. They held bake sales, car washes and sold hot dogs and cokes at Enfield park several evenings a week. The work all paid off-43 people had a great day at Six Flags.

Shirley Sterling, the youth choir sponsor and organist, said that choir members have new ideas for the future. They are thinking of putting together a baseball team and holding classes, maybe macrame and sewing, at the church on evenings.

The youth choir annual was August 19th. This event revolves around the church and is a culmination of all the programs of the past year. Rehoboth Primitive Baptist Church youth choir visited the annual this year.

BIRTHDAYS

A baby is expected any day now to Toni Knight and Ian Inglis at 1300 Woodlawn.

Terry White will be 18 on September 3rd.

In the Holmes family there are five birthdays to report: Dwayne Thomas was nine on August 22, Cora Chamber's birthday will be September 2nd and Nannie May Strong will celebrate her birthday September 9th, Bobbie Franklin and Barbara Walker are twins and were born on September 6th.
