

RESTON TIMES 9/12/74

New Town Gaps Discerned at Seminar

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vice-president, field operations, of the National Urban Coalition, who said bluntly that new towns are not meeting social objectives. She posed some questions which should be addressed: are there employment opportunities for minorities; are minorities involved in the decision making process? She cited teens and the elderly as special new town problems, and fretted that new towns are repeating traditional patterns.

Social objectives should provide the framework for developing new towns, she said.

The gap between concepts and realities are also evident on the developer front, a point reiterated by Gulf Reston president James W. Todd and former HUD new communities chief William Nicoson. Todd said that new towns are the highest risk of real estate, that private developers need other than profit incentives to begin new town projects. "The developer has to believe it (the new town) will be a superior development," Todd said.

The realities change in political climate, heavy front end costs, changes in financing all serve to give new towns "maximum exposure to market risk," Todd said. Stating that Gulf's carrying cost on undeveloped land per month is \$800,000, Todd did not dwell upon the concepts of continuing sewer service and public facility construction, the lack of which has plagued the development of Reston during the past two years.

Nicoson cited a plethora of problems associated with new town development, observing that costs are frequently under-estimated, that there is confusion in role as to who will provide the diverse public

facilities. Nicoson outlined alternatives to finance, such as one in New Fields, Ohio, where the cost of housing and the range of housing costs can be brought down to achieve a better mix of low and moderate income housing through establishment of a New Community Authority.

Albert L. Horley, Director of the Office of Telecommunications Policy, HEW, spoke of concepts in regard to communication facilities. Horley noted that in terms of technological achievement, the "future is here today." Noting that the availability of hardware permits use of cable television for uses so diverse as provision of health care, education and cultural opportunities, Horley surmised that risk-sharing between the public and private sectors may ultimately be necessary to bring these systems to fruition.

The new town gaps were perhaps most poignantly illustrated by Alene Smith, who recalled for the audience that after a year in Reston, her husband, Rodney, a founder of Black Focus who gave it its name, died. She said that she had to leave Reston for D.C. for a job, she had to leave Reston for D.C. for socializing and companionship. "Reston, despite the rhetoric, has failed to offer the most important ingredient which its present inhabitants desire; that is, clear-cut constructive purpose toward which all of our diverse, peculiar, and common aspirations can be harnessed; that is, freedom of lifestyle, socialization and specialization," Smith said.

She outlined a six-point "new definition of social perspective which carries us beyond the physical and

economic reference points through which all now relate to this community specifically."

She asked that residents be given a more substantial role in the planning process, to determine what, where and when new facilities will be forthcoming and how these will improve upon and serve the interests of the community.

She asked that the question of alternative lifestyle be frankly addressed to deal with a rapidly changing social environment, that commercial facilities be encouraged and established to carry a wide variety of products which reflect an up-to-date assessment of black consumer preference, that school and recreation be improved to achieve a better balance between structured and unstructured learning and playing environment.

She seeks a better program for the inclusion of minorities in the housing mixes available in Reston ... a full-fledged effort to integrate minority families and individuals into the social fabric of the community.

She also asked for a stronger emphasis on non-material cultural programs, such as music, art, drama, poetry and dance so as to give free flow to the expression of ideas and forms which give vent to the full range of creative imagination.

"Reston must move from a preoccupation with the merely physical aspects of the 'good community' to where it recognizes the complex needs of its residents for greater individual choice within a community framework," she concluded.