

**URBAN RENEWAL IN
WILLIAMSPORT - 1961 TO 1976:
PROGRESS AND PARTICIPATION
OR EMPTY PROMISES?**

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Urban renewal is not a goal, but a tool. It is a method whereby a great variety of ends can be served, some good, some bad. Since the use of that tool is left largely in the hands of local communities, the number of different goals which will be served, and the probability that not all will be judged ideal, is rather large.¹

Urban renewal projects in Pennsylvania began as a direct result of two pieces of legislation: the first, Pennsylvania's Urban Renewal Law of 1945 provided state assistance for communities undertaking renewal projects; and the second, the Federal Housing Act of 1949, provided federal funding for renewal efforts in cities nationwide. This paper examines and evaluates two controversial renewal projects in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and measures their success or failure by the extent to which they achieved their goals. The hypothesis of this paper is that a successful renewal effort requires the involvement of professionals (e.g. urban planners, architects, etc.).

The hypothesis of this paper will be true if one of the following conditions exist: (1) One or both projects failed, and professionals in urban planning were not involved in planning the project, (2) One or both projects succeeded, and professionals were involved in planning the project. However, if one project failed and one succeeded, regardless of professionals involved in planning the projects, the hypothesis will not be proven true or false. This could conceivably occur if one of the projects turned out to be a success even though the original goals were not met.

The hypothesis of this paper will be false if one of the following conditions exist: (1) Both projects were successful,

and professional people were not involved in planning the project, (2) One project was successful and professionals were involved in planning the project, (3) One project failed, and professionals were involved in planning the project.

While attempting to discover if it is necessary for professionals to be involved in planning a renewal project, this paper will also address the "cost" of urban renewal to the community in human terms (e.g. uprooting of families, and destruction of neighborhoods). The first project to be discussed is the Canal Street Business District #2 project, which was designed to ensure the continued vitality of downtown Williamsport by increasing the amount of land available for commercial development. (Appendix A) The second project is the Industrial Park Redevelopment Park Project, which was designed to promote industrial growth in Williamsport's west end. (Appendix B)

The material collected for this paper comes from a variety of sources. Primary sources include minutes of the Redevelopment Authority and the City Council of Williamsport, public hearing transcripts, trial transcripts, petitions, briefs, and letters. Additional information was gathered through interviews with the residents involved in both projects, local government officials, and other interested parties. The local newspapers provided additional information that otherwise could not be obtained due to the loss of some records. Several secondary sources were consulted in order to put the experiences

of Williamsport into a broader perspective.

CANAL STREET

During the 1950's, Williamsport, Pennsylvania had a thriving downtown area. Many locally owned businesses such as L.L. Stearns & Sons, Brozman's, the Carroll House, Harder's Sporting Goods, Worth's, Lynn Hayes, Neyhart's, Irvin's Shoe Store, and Otto's Book Store prospered as did chain stores like Sears, Roebuck & Company, J.C. Penney, and W. T. Grant. However, in the 1960's, regional malls began to threaten the downtowns of many cities, including Williamsport. In an effort to revitalize deteriorating inner cities, many communities throughout the country took advantage of the renewal programs established by federal, state, and local governments.

Pennsylvania's Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945 promoted elimination of blighted areas and provided for the redevelopment of such areas. The term "blight" in the Redevelopment Law is defined as "a condition characterized as urban obsolescence beyond salvage by private rehabilitation."² An area could be classified as blighted for a number of reasons: unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded housing; inadequate planning of the area; lack of proper light, air, and open space; defective design and arrangement of buildings; faulty street or lot layout; or economically and socially undesirable use of land.³ The local planning commission for a community was

responsible for certifying an area blighted.⁴ The Redevelopment law enabled cities to create Redevelopment Authorities, which would plan and contract with private, corporate or governmental redevelopers to determine the areas in their locality that were eligible for redevelopment. It also gave Redevelopment Authorities the power of eminent domain, the process whereby a properly authorized government entity is able to take private property for public use (provided, of course, that the property owner receives just compensation).⁵

The primary goals of the Federal Housing Act of 1949 were to eliminate substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas, to stimulate housing production and community development, and to realize the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.⁶ In order for a community to be legally eligible for federal loans and grants, it first had to have a "workable program" for the Urban Renewal Administration (the precursor of the Department of Housing and Urban Development) to approve. The workable program must contain seven elements:

1. Codes and ordinances: establish adequate standards of health and safety under which dwellings may be lawfully constructed and occupied;
2. Comprehensive Community Plan: provide a framework for improvement, renewal, and prevent blight to foster sound community development in the future;
3. Neighborhood Analyses: develop a community wide picture of blight - where it is - how intense it is, and what needs to be done about it;
4. Administrative Organization: establish clear-cut authority and responsibility to coordinate the program through effective administration;
5. Financing: provide funds for staff and technical assistance needed for public improvements and renewal

activities essential to the program;

6. Housing for Displaced Families: determine the relocation needs of the families to be displaced; develop housing resources to meet those needs; and provide relocation service to displaced families; and

7. Citizen Participation: assure that the community as a whole, representative organizations, and neighborhood groups are informed and have full opportunity to take part in developing and carrying out this program.⁷

If the Urban Renewal Administration found that all of the requirements for a workable program have been met, it could authorize a contract between the local renewal agency and the federal government.

The City Council of Williamsport, Pennsylvania established a Redevelopment Authority on June 16, 1960 because blighted areas existed within the city that could not be remedied without the power of eminent domain.⁸ The City Council also appointed the Redevelopment Authority Board during its June 16, 1960 meeting. The original members of the Redevelopment Authority Board were Robert C. Wise, attorney; John E. Person, Jr., President of the Williamsport Sun Gazette; Clifford Meyers, Certified Public Accountant; George L. Stearns II, owner of L.L. Stearns and Sons, a retail store in downtown Williamsport; and George R. Lamade, President of The Grit.⁹ The Pennsylvania Department of State issued a certificate of incorporation for the Redevelopment Authority on July 11, 1960.

The establishment of the Redevelopment Authority was the first step in enabling Williamsport to obtain federal and state funding. Funding for renewal projects were allocated three ways: a city would bear one-eighth (1/8) of the net cost of

redevelopment; the state also one-eighth (1/8); and the federal government the remaining three-fourths (3/4).¹⁰

As mentioned above, in order for the Redevelopment Authority to act, the local planning commission first had to declare an area to be a "redevelopment area."¹¹ The City Planning Commission certified three areas as redevelopment areas on August 29, 1961 because at least 50% of the buildings in each area were sub-standard.¹² The Urban Redevelopment Law states that

certain blighted areas, or portions thereof, may require total acquisition, clearance and disposition, subject to continuing controls as provided in this act, since the prevailing condition of decay may make impracticable the reclamation of the area by rehabilitation or conservation, and that other blighted areas, or portion thereof, through the means provided in this act, may be susceptible to rehabilitation or conservation or a combination of clearance and disposition and rehabilitation or conservation in such manner that the conditions and evils hereinbefore enumerated may be eliminated or remedied.¹³

The Redevelopment Authority of the city of Williamsport very quickly initiated several renewal projects, one of which was known as the Canal Street Central Business District #2 project.¹⁴ This area, located on the northern shore of the Susquehanna River, flooded regularly until 1955 when the Army Corps of Engineers finished construction on a flood control system in Williamsport. One of the results of having a flood control system to protect Williamsport was that the properties in the area increased in value, and became desirable for commercial development.¹⁵ The boundaries of the Canal Street project were West Church Street on the north; Front Street on the south;

Market Street on the east; and Hepburn Street on the west.¹⁶ The Redevelopment Authority determined this area to be a clearance area. The northern boundary was later expanded one block to West Third Street, although this section was slated for rehabilitation rather than clearance. The actions of the Redevelopment Authority of Williamsport were similar to other renewal projects nationwide. According to Martin Anderson, author of The Federal Bulldozer, "less than two-tenths of one percent of the gross project cost of urban renewal at the end of 1962 was for rehabilitation."¹⁷ The federal renewal program was essentially a clearance program.

The Redevelopment Authority's objectives for this project were:

1. Clearance of structurally substandard buildings;
2. Clearance of buildings which have a blighting influence on the area or are incompatible with the commercial and public uses proposed;
3. Assemblage of parcels for redevelopment;
4. Provide an environment which will generate a strong, healthy central business district, and to assure the continued viability of downtown Williamsport;
5. Achieve changes in land use;
6. Improve existing public facilities and provide new facilities which are necessary for a community; and
7. Make changes in street patterns to assure better circulation for this area.¹⁸

Though the Redevelopment Authority's plan emphasized participation and progress," it alienated and embittered residents of the Canal Street project, and precipitated the decline of downtown Williamsport.

To fully understand what the Canal Street Redevelopment project meant to the residents, a brief history of this ethnic

community is necessary. The community was composed primarily of Italian immigrants who came to Williamsport in the early 1900's, or in the late 1900's, their descendants. (Appendix C) Most of them came from Cervinara, a small community in Italy about 25 miles south of Naples.¹⁹ They were poor, but hard working. The first immigrants obtained jobs, saved money, and sent for other relatives still in Italy. By 1960, third and fourth generation Italian Americans resided in the Canal Street area because it provided them with a sense of security and belonging. Residents of Williamsport referred to the neighborhood as "Little Hollywood" because some of the Italians were so good looking, they reminded some people of movie stars.²⁰ There was very little crime in the area, and according to local attorney Paul W. Reeder, it was essentially self-policing.²¹ Dominick Cioffi, one former resident, proudly states, "We had a Neighborhood Watch back then!"²² A member of the community who saw children involved in undesirable activities reprimanded them, knowing full well that their parents would expect them to do so. Residents were not afraid to leave their doors unlocked; even those that were in the vicinity of night spots or bars.

The neighborhood took pride in its close family relationships, and worked to further those ties. In 1948, Gene Miele, Dominick Cioffi, and Ernest Noviello established the Third Ward Playground Contribution Fund because of the residents' concern that the children did not have a safe place to play. They raised \$190 for the playground, and gave it to Marshall R.

Laird, Recreation Director of the city. He designated the area on the corner of Front and Pine Streets as playground, and included it in the city parks program.²³ Each year, for four years, the residents of the neighborhood had a festival to raise money for playground materials and equipment. Carpenters, plumbers, and electricians donated their time and expertise to build the facility. The completed playground had restroom facilities, a wading pool, a large shelter with a pizza oven, lights so the children could play in the evenings, and a bocce court. The elders gathered at the bocce court in the evenings. The men played bocce, and the women sat together and reminisced about the old country. The loser at bocce would have to take the winners to Taddeo's and buy the beer. In the winter, the playground was flooded for ice skating, and provided enjoyment for people from all parts of Williamsport.²⁴

In the 1960's, the community consisted of 120 families, and included 211 school age children.²⁵ The neighborhood also contained many thriving businesses, such as D'Addio's grocery store, Daniele's barbershop, Noviello's barbershop, Ciccarelli's Bar, the Casale Hotel, Katrina Cafe, Joe's Bar, Morrone's Cafe, Royal Cafe, the Republican Club, Penn Garment Co., Mike's Cafe, the Columbia Hotel, and a bar known as the Bucket of Blood. The residents took pride in their homes and businesses, and one former resident noted that the people of the community "paid their taxes before they ate."²⁶

They enjoyed living close to the wide varieties of stores

in downtown Williamsport, and the Grower's Market. The market was a huge building on Market Street that housed many merchant's stands, and sold fresh meats, cheeses, and vegetables. Mrs. Judith Waldman, who worked with her father at Wayne Stoke's Meat Stand in the market, remembers that "The Canal Street people were our best customers."²⁷ Antonette Casale recalls that she, like many other residents of the Canal Street area, went to town just about every day. It was rare for her or anyone else to come home without buying something.²⁸ The residents not only provided the city with tax dollars, but also supported its businesses with their purchasing power.

It was very unsettling to the community when they began to hear rumors, early in the 1960's, that their neighborhood was slated for redevelopment. The March 13, 1965 issue of the Williamsport Sun Gazette reported that the Redevelopment Authority sent letters to property owners and residents in the Canal Street area urging them not to become alarmed at the rumors concerning the project. They were informed that a staff member would visit everyone in the area to explain the project. In the meantime, the Redevelopment Authority proceeded with a survey of the area.²⁹

The Redevelopment Authority hired Walker and Murray Associates, Inc., a consulting firm from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to prepare a report that described the number of persons per household in the area; the age of the head of household; the income per household; and the special

circumstances in households, such as the care of disabled members.³⁰ They also reported on the condition of the buildings. Their report determined that 73% of the buildings had structural deficiencies, and 61% were substandard to the point warranting clearance. There were no buildings, however, that had to be cleared to remove blighting influences.³¹ (Appendix D)

The Redevelopment Authority, in 1965, assigned the Canal Street area to three major developers: the Pennsylvania Department of Highways, who would construct a section of the beltway through the area (this was one part of a six year program for the construction of the entire beltway), the Williamsport Parking Authority, who would establish additional parking facilities, and Sears, Roebuck & Co., who would build a new, larger store in the area.³² The Redevelopment Authority believed that retaining a larger Sears store downtown would assure Williamsport's continued vitality. (Appendix E)

The Redevelopment Authority scheduled a public meeting on May 12, 1966, at Washington School, located on the corner of William and Third Streets, to explain to the residents what was planned and when, and answer any questions they might have. The Williamsport Sun Gazette reported that approximately 150 persons jammed the meeting room to hear what the Redevelopment Authority had to say.³³ Antonette Casale was there and said "The atmosphere was hostile."³⁴ There was a great deal of resentment emanating from the residents of the neighborhood about losing their property. When asked what the Redevelopment Authority

said at that meeting, Dominick Cioffi replied, "They said they wanted to take our homes for progress."³⁵

Twelve days later, on May 24, 1966, at 10:00 a.m., the City Council of Williamsport held a public meeting regarding the proposed Canal Street project. Only eight residents attended the meeting because it was held in the morning when everyone had to work. This was an unusual time to hold a public meeting, but upon examining the minutes of the City Council, this appears to have been its normal meeting time. According to the City Council minutes, Joseph Bendel, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority, presented the plans and proposals for the area, after which Mr. Dana Roberts, a planner for the City Planning Commission, gave a report on the planning considerations. Mr. Bendel then outlined the procedure for planning and carrying out the project. The opponents of the project did not offer any testimony, although they were allowed to do so, and at 11:05 the public hearing adjourned.³⁶ On May 26, 1966, the City Council passed a resolution approving the redevelopment proposal for the Canal Street Business District #2 project, and it entered into the execution stage.³⁷

In any renewal project, as in this one, there are six major stages of execution. The first is the acquisition of the properties within the designated area. Normally, land is acquired through negotiation, but if this fails the Redevelopment Authority can use the power of eminent domain. The second stage is relocation. As buildings are acquired, the Redevelopment

Authority is required by law to help the residents find new housing that must meet certain health and safety standards. The third stage is site clearance, the demolition of the buildings in the project area. The fourth stage is site improvement. This could include construction of streets, sewers, water mains, and lighting systems, all of which are done to make the site attractive to potential developers. The fifth stage, the disposition of the improved land, can be accomplished by the Redevelopment Authority in four ways: it can be sold, leased, donated, or retained. The sixth stage is new construction. If the land is sold to a private developer, he/she is required to build according to the plan that has been approved by the Redevelopment Authority.³⁸

The Canal Street project proceeded with the first stage of execution, the acquisition of the homes and businesses within the designated area. The Redevelopment Authority established a Land Acquisition Policy in order to protect the interests of all parties concerned. Each property would be appraised by two qualified real estate appraisers who were familiar with Williamsport real estate values, and knowledgeable with regard to Pennsylvania condemnation procedures. The Redevelopment Authority hired Interstate Appraisal Co., of Cherry Hill, New Jersey,³⁹ and Associate Appraiser, Inc., of York, Pennsylvania to appraise each property.⁴⁰ The Redevelopment Authority sent both sets of appraisals to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (previously the Urban Renewal Administration)

so that they could issue maximum acquisition prices.⁴¹ The acquisition price could not be less than the current city valuation. Based on the federal government's determination, the Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority assigned negotiators on the staff of the Redevelopment Authority to a specific property or properties. They were responsible for contacting the owners within seven days of the assignment to discuss the acquisition. Each negotiator submitted weekly progress reports to the Executive Director, and if an agreement was not reached within sixty days, the assignments were terminated unless the Executive Director opted to extend them. The Redevelopment Authority of the city of Williamsport stated that it would:

make every reasonable effort to acquire each property by negotiated purchase before instituting eminent domain proceedings against the property. It would not require owners to surrender their property until they received either the negotiated purchase price or in cases where the amount was in dispute, not less than 75% of the appraised fair value as approved by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Williamsport and concurred in by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.⁴²

If a satisfactory purchase price could not be negotiated, the Redevelopment Authority filed a Declaration of Taking for those properties at the Lycoming County Court House. Often the Declaration of Taking included more than one property because properties were condemned at different times. The condemnees, could then file a petition for an appointment of viewers.⁴³ The Board of View consisted of three people, one of whom had to be an attorney who served as chairman of the board. The Board of View

examined the properties, held hearings, and filed a report within thirty days of their final hearing.⁴⁴ This report became final unless the condemnor or condemnee filed an appeal to the Court of Common Pleas within thirty days.⁴⁵ The appeal to the Court of Common Pleas was non-jury unless the appellant filed a demand for jury trial.⁴⁶

None of the property owners ever saw the appraisals that the Redevelopment Authority had obtained, or knew the valuation of their properties. A few of the residents, who could afford it, obtained their own appraisals from local real estate agencies, and could compare the Redevelopment Authority's offer with their own appraisal (in the future the state would allow up to \$500 for a resident to obtain his/her own independent appraisal).⁴⁷ For example, Francis A. Daniele owned a building on Market Street which housed a barbershop on the first floor, and apartments on the second floor. He recalls that the amount the Redevelopment Authority offered him was a little low, but within 10% of the appraisal he obtained on his own. Nevertheless, he decided to petition for an appointment of viewers, and was awarded \$2,000 more.⁴⁸ Mr. Daniele maintains that he gained financially. Not only did he receive \$2,000 more for his property, but he also received compensation for his business and equipment.⁴⁹

A business concern could submit a claim for direct loss of property and Small Business Displacement payment. Forms for these claims could be obtained at the Relocation Office, located

at 248 Pine Street in Williamsport.⁵⁰ As part of the claims process, Mr. Daniele supplied his tax returns for two years. The Redevelopment Authority took the total amount of income for two years, divided it in half, and gave him the money to compensate for his loss of business. He also received an extra \$2,100 for his equipment. Then the Redevelopment Authority turned around and gave him the equipment as well.⁵¹

Mr. Daniele was very inventive about obtaining even more money from the Redevelopment Authority. After the sale of the property, the Redevelopment Authority allowed him to rent the property for one year until all the properties in the area were demolished. Mr. Daniele inquired of the Redevelopment Authority as to who would be responsible for the furnace. The staff of the Redevelopment Authority said that they would take care of it, but they did not realize that it was a hand fed coal furnace. When Mr. Daniele brought it to their attention, they asked him if he would be the caretaker. He replied that he could probably manage that for \$30 per month. So instead of paying \$135 per month rent to the Authority, he paid \$105.⁵²

Another former resident, Jennie T. D'Addio, reported receiving \$25,000 for two properties she and her husband owned on Government Place after she petitioned for an appointment of viewers. The Redevelopment Authority originally offered \$14,000. If Mr. & Mrs. D'Addio had not appealed, they would have lost \$11,000. When questioned about the rather large discrepancy between the Redevelopment Authority's offer and the Board of

View's award, Carl Nolan, who is present Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority answered, "Sometimes things were missed in the appraisal, and these things were brought up at the Board of View hearings."⁵³

A comparison between the appraisals that the Redevelopment Authority obtained and what the residents who did not appeal actually received is not possible. According to Mr. Nolan, they are confidential. One has to wonder how many things were "missed" and how many residents did not receive fair market value. At the very least, the residents should have been able to see the appraisals of their properties so that they could make an informed decision. Some could not afford their own appraisal or an attorney, and did not want to spend precious dollars if they did not have a reasonable chance of success. Obviously, the Redevelopment Authority wanted to obtain the properties at the cheapest possible price. According to Mr. Stanley Glowacki, Director of Operations for the Office of Community and Planning Development, if the Redevelopment Authority had appraisals of \$6,000 and \$8,000 for one property, it could offer the homeowner \$6,000, and negotiations could proceed from there. This negotiating process certainly is not illegal (it would be illegal if the Redevelopment Authority offered less than \$6,000), but is it ethical? Many of the residents were elderly or simply not knowledgeable on the subject. In addition, there were still some residents who were not fluent in the English language. However, Mr. Nolan stated that whenever they encountered this situation,

there was always someone there who could interpret for them.⁵⁴ Many were afraid to appeal, believing that they might receive less money.

Leo Taddeo, present owner of the New Columbia Hotel, is one of those who did not appeal and believes that his family did not receive their fair share. His mother owned and operated the Columbia Hotel on William Street. The Redevelopment Authority contacted the Taddeos in 1965 regarding the acquisition of their property and advised them not to make any improvements. Mr. Taddeo said the roof should have been repaired, and several other minor things should have been attended to, but they weren't because of what they had been told. Then, five years later, the Redevelopment Authority said, "This is a mess. We can only give you \$6,000."⁵⁵ Some residents, however, were not afraid to appeal.

Mrs. D'Addio and her husband were fortunate, in that Mrs. D'Addio's brother was a local attorney, Ambrose Campana. Besides the properties mentioned above, they also owned a grocery store, as well as other rental properties that housed seventeen tenants. They made it a point to attend every Board of View hearing so that they would know what to expect and would be able to prepare accordingly. In each of the six cases they argued before the Board of View they were awarded more money, although she said they had to "fight for every dime."⁵⁶

Mrs. D'Addio, a woman now in her early seventies, knew how to use the system to her advantage and one senses that she

enjoyed being a thorn in the side of the Redevelopment Authority. Common sense, as well as a keen business sense, told her that it would be much better to have occupied rental properties in good repair when the Redevelopment Authority came to appraise and negotiate.

At the Board of View hearings, Mr. & Mrs. D'Addio were routinely asked if their properties were rented, who was renting them, and how much rent they received. If one of the units was vacant at the time of the hearing, they would not be able to claim any income from it. Mrs. D'Addio encouraged not only her tenants, but all the renters in the area to stay until the end, even those who were renting from the Redevelopment Authority. The renters would benefit by staying because the Redevelopment Authority would have to compensate them for moving expenses. They would also be eligible for rent assistance. For instance, if they paid \$200 rent where they were living in the Canal Street area, and the rent in their new accommodations was \$250, often the Redevelopment Authority paid the extra \$50 for up to two years.⁵⁷ Having the renters stay until the buildings were scheduled for demolition benefitted the city as well. After the sale of the properties to the Redevelopment Authority, the city began to lose the tax dollars from the property, so any rental income coming in helped to compensate that loss. The landlords, such as Mr. & Mrs. D'Addio, who had not sold their properties yet, would also benefit by being able to show the income from the rental property at the Board of View hearings.⁵⁸

Sometimes, making sure an apartment was occupied required some rapid improvisation. One of Mr. & Mrs. D'Addio's tenants moved a few days before a Board of View hearing because he was afraid if he waited he would not be able to find anything suitable. Somehow Mrs. D'Addio managed to find a woman to move into the apartment one day before the Board of View hearing. Mr. & Mrs. D'Addio also made it their "pet project" to keep their home and rental properties in excellent repair so that they would get a fair price for their properties and be able to "thumb their nose at the Redevelopment Authority."⁵⁹ Other residents, however, do not believe they made out as well.

Antonette Casale reports that she and her husband felt intimidated by the Redevelopment Authority staff (real estate negotiators) regarding the amount to be paid for a rental property on the corner of Laurel and Jefferson. They told her, "You better take the offer, or you will end up getting less."⁶⁰ This type of statement did not endear the Redevelopment Authority to the residents, and attitudes of mistrust surrounded the project.

Mr. & Mrs. Casale's property was vacant and boarded up while the negotiations took place. Mr. Casale needed some copper tubing for some plumbing in their own home, and decided that he would use what was in the rental property, since it would eventually be demolished. He discovered that all the copper tubing, as well as the bathroom fixtures, had been removed. They heard that the staff of the Redevelopment Authority were taking

items from these houses and using them in cabins. She said, "I can't prove it, but it's what we heard."⁶¹

Two other residents, Dominick Cioffi⁶² and Ernest Noviello⁶³, report similar incidents. They saw people from the Redevelopment Authority take things from homes and believe that the items were sold for personal gain." When questioned about these incidents, Carl Nolan stated that "there was a lot of looting of these properties after they were condemned and boarded up."⁶⁴ The April 18, 1970 issue of the Williamsport Sun Gazette noted that there had been problems with vandalism. Mr. Nolan also stated that "the properties were owned by the Redevelopment Authority, and that all money that came from the sale of fixtures went to the Redevelopment Authority, and that the financial records could substantiate this."⁶⁵

The office of the Auditor General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania conducted an audit of the Redevelopment Authority for the period from June 16, 1960 to June 30, 1972. Unfortunately, their examination "did not include a review of transactions pertaining to the Midtown and Canal Street projects" because those projects were sponsored in their entirety by the federal government.⁶⁶ However, the Auditor General's Office did make several findings and recommendations regarding the accounting procedures of the Redevelopment Authority in several other projects:

1. Failure to properly deposit performance deposits;
2. Injudicious use of state funds;
3. Records fragmented and inadequate; and
4. Transfer of cash from one project to another without

authorization.⁶⁷

Mr. Cioffi maintained that his property was "stolen" by the Redevelopment Authority. When he appealed to the Court of Common Pleas, he received \$1,000 less than the amount he was offered by the Redevelopment Authority. He was told he "improved his house too much for the area."⁶⁸ He was so distraught by the experience that he and his wife moved to Georgia for ten years, and then only returned because his wife was so homesick.⁶⁹ Mr. Cioffi remained bitter about his experiences with urban renewal up to his death in January, 1994.

All that the residents wanted was to duplicate what they had with the money they were offered. Mrs. Carmen Genua told Mr. Nolan, "You find me a home like this for the \$10,000 you are offering me, and I'll take it." Eventually the Redevelopment Authority told Mrs. Genua that "if she was going to have that kind of attitude, they would have their solicitor take care of her." Mrs. Genua finally accepted an offer of \$10,500 without appealing.⁷⁰

The residents of the Canal Street Redevelopment Project, to this day, are very emotional when talking about their old neighborhood, and how they felt when they had to leave. Antonette Casale said, "I wouldn't give up what I had there for all the money in the world. There was love there - not only within families - but within the community. I feel bad that my children and grandchildren will never experience it. My brother-in-law, Joe, was so heartbroken when he had to leave that he

cried every day."⁷¹ The family insists that the move contributed to his death. Mrs. Casale maintains that the move by the residents from the Canal Street area was as devastating to them as when many of them had come to America from Italy.⁷² Leo T. Taddeo, owner and operator of the New Columbia Hotel, said wistfully, "I wish I were back there now. My business is bigger now, but I was a lot more relaxed there."⁷³ On the day the buildings were demolished, Francis A. Daniele left town. He could not bear to see the destruction.⁷⁴ There is a consensus among the former residents of the Canal Street project that despite their attachment to the neighborhood, they would have been happy if the city had benefitted by it. Not only did those in the neighborhood suffer, but the economic development sought by the Redevelopment Authority never materialized.

The Redevelopment Authority's plan hinged upon Sears relocating its store to the Canal Street area. However, sometime between 1966 and 1967, Sears decided to locate their new store at the Lycoming Mall. This is a sore point among the former residents, even those who feel as though they came out ahead. Francis A. Daniele maintains that "there was a lot of faith lost, and a lot of people uprooted - and for what?" He added, "Redevelopment charged ahead with a lot of empty promises and fantasy ideas. It was a half-assed plan!"⁷⁵ "The people in the neighborhood were not against progress," Mr. Taddeo stated emphatically. "As long as we thought Sears was going in downtown, we thought it would be good for the city. But nothing came out

of it. They lied to us."⁷⁶ The Redevelopment Authority had indeed charged ahead with only a letter from Russell L. Herbicek, Real Estate Assistant for Sears, indicating that he would recommend the relocation to Canal Street, subject to approval by the Chairman of the Board of Sears.⁷⁷ This letter of intent, however, was not binding, and the Redevelopment Authority did not have an alternative plan.

John J. Albarano, a local developer who was not associated with Canal Street Project said, "We (the city) goofed. The city should have moved forward; instead, Canal Street set the town back. We are where we are today because the project wasn't properly handled. We used the power of the Redevelopment Authority to clear out land for city development, and then failed to take advantage of it. The Lycoming Valley Mall succeeds only because of the inadequacies of our downtown."⁷⁸ He also maintains that the Sears plan fell through due to the private interests of several downtown businessmen. Coincidentally, one of these businessmen was George Stearns, who was on the Redevelopment Authority Board. Albarano maintains that these men "used their positions to gain knowledge, and then used that knowledge to further their own interests."⁷⁹ The rumor that Stearns, as well as other local prominent businessmen, somehow blocked Sears from going in the Canal Street area because they were afraid of competition is widespread in Williamsport. Even former mayor Jessie Bloom stated that this was the reason that the project fell through, although neither Bloom nor Albarano can

offer any solid evidence to support their positions.⁸⁰

Stearns did express some concern about expanding the commercial area of Williamsport. Regarding the Hepburn Street renewal project, Stearns wrote to John E. Person II, the Redevelopment Authority Chairman, on November 12, 1964, "I wish to repeat that I am most fearful that if we are not extremely careful in the development of the Hepburn Street renewal area, we will be expanding the commercial areas of Williamsport, and thereby seriously affecting the present downtown area real estate values."⁸¹ However, in that same letter, he also suggested that "we don't unduly inconvenience or evict and raze any properties until we have a specific and binding commitment for its reuse. In this manner we would protect the present tax revenue of the area."

Somehow, over the years, Stearns has been blamed for Sears' decision to relocate at the Lycoming Valley Mall, as opposed to downtown. This rumor has absolutely no basis. In an recent interview, Russell L. Herbicek, a Real Estate Assistant employed by Sears as the main contact with the Redevelopment Authority, stated emphatically that the "idea that local businessmen had anything to do with Sears decision to go to the Lycoming Mall is ludicrous."⁸² He maintains that the businessmen "worked strenuously" to encourage Sears to locate in the Canal Street area. There was no lack of effort on the part of the Redevelopment Authority or no opposition to his knowledge. According to Mr. Herbicek, the relocation of Sears to the Canal

Street area was simply not viable. He explained that Sears stores across the country were in a transition stage at that time and forced to choose between staying in the inner cities or moving to the malls that were springing up everywhere. Mr. Herbicek also stated that in the final analysis the space requirements for the store and adjacent parking were the main problems. (Appendix F) Mr. Nolan argues that the reason Mr. Herbicek gave is a "cop out." He maintains that the Redevelopment Authority "courted" Sears for years, and was well aware of the space requirements.⁸³ The Redevelopment Authority had set aside 87,000 square feet for the Sears retail store and 13,000 square feet for an automotive center.⁸⁴ Today Sears occupies 85,000 square feet at the Lycoming Valley Mall with parking facilities for 727, according to Sears Merchandise Supply Manager Robert Cardillo. However, they are planning to expand another 38,000 square feet in the near future.⁸⁵

After the Sears plan collapsed, the Redevelopment Authority was confident that they could find another major commercial enterprise. They were so confident that they proceeded with the construction of a covered walkway that went from the Market Street bridge to the "hoped for" store. According to Mr. Nolan, the cost of the walkway was in excess of \$400,000.⁸⁶ The Redevelopment Authority failed for many years to find a commercial enterprise for the Canal Street area. Correspondence in the Redevelopment Authority files indicate contacts with S.S. Kresge Company, Boscov's, John Wanamaker,

Strawbridge and Clothier, Montgomery Ward, J.C. Penney, and Hess's. This was a frustrating time, not only for the Redevelopment Authority, but also for residents of Williamsport. Year after year the Williamsport Sun Gazette reported on the failed attempts. The August 15, 1973 issue described the Canal Street area as a "highly visible scar in the downtown section." An October 26, 1977 editorial complained that, "For more than twelve years Williamsporters have been promised a major commercial development in the Canal Street project. Three developers later, there is still no development." On September 19, 1979, the Williamsport Sun Gazette reported that "the city has had four developers try and fail to come up with something in the Canal Street area." The walkway that "went nowhere" was an embarrassment to the community, and according to Mr. Nolan, it became a "political football."⁸⁷ In 1984, the walkway was sold for \$1.10 to Allison Inc. and Stopper Construction, and removed.⁸⁸ (Appendix G)

While the Redevelopment Authority's plan was in chaos, and the city was in a state of confusion about what to do with the vacant land, the Canal Street residents set about renewing old ties. In the late 1980's, many former residents, who still lived in Williamsport, expressed a wish to hold a reunion. Dominick Cioffi, who was eighty-two years old in 1991, enlisted 40 former residents, and planned a reunion. The theme was "separated by space, but not by spirit." It took seven months, many phone calls, and a great deal of organization. Mayor Jessie

Bloom declared August 4, 1991, as "Little Hollywood Day," when a group of over 1,300 former residents and their families joined together in Brandon Park and celebrated their common heritage. (Appendix H) Fran Pisapia, niece of Mr. Cioffi, wrote a poem for the occasion entitled Remembering Little Hollywood that described how important their community was to them. (Appendix I) People came from as far away as California and Alaska to see friends and reminisce about the old neighborhood.⁸⁹

Today, many of the bitter feelings, except for those reserved for the Redevelopment Authority, have since given way to bittersweet memories. The bonds that existed between the families, although stretched, have not disappeared, as evidenced by the attendance at the reunion in 1991. They have feelings of gratefulness and happiness that they were able to experience such close ties with their neighbors, as well as sadness that it was taken away from them. They gained in another aspect, as well.

The relocation of the residents also integrated them into the larger community. It is well known that prejudice of varying degrees existed with regard to their ethnic heritage. A professor at Lycoming maintains that the deed to his house included a clause that "restricted the sale of the house to anyone of Italian heritage."⁹⁰ Many people can remember ethnic slurs such as "wop" or "guinea" directed against those of Italian descent. Mr. Ernest Noviello recalls that when he moved to Penn Street from Canal Street that one neighbor stated angrily that she "tried to keep people like him out."⁹¹ The integration of

the Italians into the larger community of Williamsport also benefitted the city. While the Canal Street area provided its residents with comfort and security, it also isolated them. Their integration allowed for the breaking down of barriers, something that is not easily accomplished when people of one race or ethnic background are set apart.

As mentioned previously, plans for the Canal Street area included three developers: the Pennsylvania Department of Highways, the Williamsport Parking Authority, and Sears. In 1970, the Redevelopment Authority sold the land for the beltway to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for \$332,493, although actual construction did not begin until 1972 because of delays in awarding the contract.⁹² The construction of the beltway eliminated some of the traffic congestion within the city. In 1973, the Redevelopment Authority leased the area bound by Church Street, William Street, Court Street, and Jefferson Street to the Williamsport Parking Authority, which solved some of the parking problems.⁹³ However, in 1984, City Council agreed to allow Northern Central Bank to purchase this property for \$125,000 because "the property does not serve a useful purpose in connection with the maintenance and operation of parking facilities."⁹⁴ This property is now the location of Northern Central Operations Center.

Today, downtown Williamsport is a mere shadow of what it once was. Pine Street has many vacant stores, and Woolworth's, a store that was downtown for approximately sixty years, is gone.

The people that once jammed the sidewalks are no longer there. They are at the Lycoming Valley Mall, shopping at some of the stores that used to be located in town, and Williamsport City Bus even provides the transportation. When asked whether he thought the Canal Street project was a success, Carl Nolan stated, "How can I say its a success when everybody is leaving town? It certainly is not what we envisioned or hoped it would be."⁹⁵ However, he also noted that downtown Williamsport may be losing its commercial aspect, and instead becoming more service oriented. The Sheraton Inn located in the Canal Street area in the early 1980's, and was later followed by the Northern Central Bank Operations Center and the Blue Cross building. Arthur Sterngold, a Lycoming College professor, confirmed in a 1992 report Strategic Recommendations for the Economic Development of Williamsport, that "the service sector employment has been growing much more rapidly than other sectors."⁹⁶

Williamsport may be growing as a service sector, but this is not what the Redevelopment Authority hoped to accomplish, or what they promised the Canal Street residents. In a promotional report, the Redevelopment Authority, quoting John Ruskin, wrote that the redevelopment program "must build forever, and insure the undying gratitude of future generations for present accomplishments."⁹⁷ The few buildings constructed in the Canal Street area after the residents were forced to move, are little comfort to them. The Redevelopment Authority never has and never will have the undying gratitude from the residents of "Little

Hollywood," in fact it may have their everlasting scorn.

REACH ROAD

The Canal Street project left the residents, for the most part, dissatisfied and angry about their experiences with urban renewal. Approximately five years after the Canal Street Project began, the Redevelopment Authority initiated the Reach Road Industrial Park Project. The Reach Road residents did not fare any better in their dealings with local government officials, but the end result was quite different.

Reach Road is located in the western end of Williamsport and lies on the northern shore of the Susquehanna River. When the Army Corps of Engineers first planned a flood control system for Williamsport in 1946, this area was not included. The Army engineers did not believe the property to be protected justified the expense. However, several community leaders, one of whom was John C. Youngman Sr., argued that the Reach Road area was the only logical place for industrial expansion in Williamsport.⁹⁸ Eventually they convinced the Army engineers to include this area in the flood control system.

From 1956 to 1971, the Industrial Properties Corporation, a non-profit organization and division of the Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, purchased over 300 acres of land along the Reach Road area. The Industrial Properties Corporation's purpose was to

promote, foster, expand, protect, assist and otherwise be helpful in the business of industrial life in the city of Williamsport, Pennsylvania; and to aid and promote the public purposes of the Area Development Act by providing funds through loans to purchase or develop land and facilities in certain areas classified as redevelopment areas under the Act.⁹⁹

As mentioned above, Industrial Properties had already acquired most of the land in the Reach Road area. A small plot, known as the Foresman Plot, remained in private hands. The boundaries of the Foresman Plot were Reach Road on the north, Reading Avenue on the west, Mosser Avenue on the south, and Catawissa Avenue on the east. (Appendix J)

In 1964, Mayor Raymond M. Knaur stated that two renewal projects should be given priority: the Central Business District and the Industrial Park projects.¹⁰⁰ On September 11, 1964, the Redevelopment Authority of the city of Williamsport decided, as soon as funds were available, to undertake an Industrial Park study. They received a state grant for \$10,675.00 in January, 1965, to help defray the planning costs involved in this study.¹⁰¹

The Redevelopment Authority retained Mullin and Lonergan Associates of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to make the Survey and Planning Application. Its report stated that "the area contains many dilapidated barns and sheds which through the lack of maintenance have a blighting influence on the existing homes." The report also maintained that "the extreme isolation of this area from all other residential communities in the city is felt to be a significant environmental deficiency."¹⁰² The report

asserted that "the area qualifies under requisite eligibility criteria in that nineteen of the thirty-two buildings (59.4%) are deficient."¹⁰³

The City Planning Commission acted on September 12, 1966 and certified the Foresman plot as a redevelopment area, provided that at the time of execution it has immediate industrial use. They added that the land was not to remain fallow for a period exceeding one year.¹⁰⁴

In January 1967, Danneker & Lear, a sheet metal fabricating company contacted the Redevelopment Authority. Mr. Danneker was considering the acquisition of a one acre tract in the Reach Road area, so that his company could relocate from Loyalsock Township. However, he had some concern about the proposed redevelopment project. In a letter to Mr. Danneker, dated February 2, 1967, Mr. Bendel stated,

It would appear that utilization of the one acre tract for industrial use would not jeopardize our planning, and could be incorporated in the Industrial Park development program. In my opinion, I would encourage you to proceed (emphasis added) with said plans to acquire said property and proceed with your relocation to Industrial Park.¹⁰⁵

In its 1967 Annual Report, the Redevelopment Authority of the city of Williamsport indicated that it would apply to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for funds to plan the Industrial Park Project. After acquisition and relocation of twenty-six families and four business concerns, the Redevelopment Authority intended to sell the cleared land to the Industrial Properties Corporation for industrial reuse.¹⁰⁶

Carl Fila, a homeowner and businessman in the Foresman Plot,

does not recall the exact date he learned about the renewal project slated for his neighborhood. Mr. Fila operated a construction company next door to his home on Reading Avenue. While bidding on some demolition work for the Redevelopment Authority in the Lycoming College project (the construction of the Academic Center), he heard from Joseph Bendel, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority at the time, that the Foresman Plot was on the Authority's agenda. When he asked Mr. Bendel what they were going to do with him, he replied, "Oh, you'll have to move."¹⁰⁷

The March 5, 1967 issue of The Grit outlined several community goals for Williamsport. Downtown revitalization, stressing urban renewal along with parking and traffic improvements, was a priority. This plan was already being executed in the Canal Street project. The full development of Industrial Park was next on the list.

On March 3, 1968, the Redevelopment Authority sent letters to the residents of the project area asking for their cooperation with a survey crew in order to obtain additional information on the structures located in the area. Very quickly, Carl Fila, George Kadash, and several other residents from the area formed an organization of homeowners, which would later be incorporated as the Greater Williamsport Association of Concerned Citizens (GWACC). On June 1, 1968, the organization of homeowners stated in a letter to City Council their belief that the Reach Road Industrial Park Project would not be in the best

interests of Williamsport as a whole. They requested prior notification of all meetings pertaining to action or discussion on the project.¹⁰⁸

Incorporated in the spring of 1969, GWACC's purpose, according to the By-Laws, "was to promote good government, and be capable if necessary to assist local government agencies within its capacity."¹⁰⁹ The only qualification for membership in GWACC was that each member had to be a taxpayer and citizen of the greater Williamsport Area. Although the organization of homeowners originally formed to protest the Reach Road Industrial Project, GWACC addressed many issues in its history: sex education in the schools, the change of government in Williamsport from a Charter Commission to a mayor-council form, a regional police force, and several others.¹¹⁰

On May 27, 1969, six members of the Foresman Plot voiced their objections to the Reach Road Industrial Park Project to the Redevelopment Authority. They claimed that the small businesses in the Foresman Plot employed as many or more than the one or two factories that would be placed on the cleared land.¹¹¹ The residents of the Foresman Plot were very critical of the "establishment" in general and the Redevelopment Authority in particular. They were so outspoken that Mayor Richard J. Carey accused them of criticizing the Redevelopment Authority only as a means to serve their own special interests. Mayor Carey argued that, "their primary objective was not to protect homeowners, but to obtain a high price for property they own in a redevelopment

project."¹¹²

On May 11, 1970 the Planning Commission of the city of Williamsport approved the redevelopment proposal for the Reach Road Industrial Park Project. Richard Merk, chairman of the Planning Commission, stated in a letter to Williamsport's City Council that "from the standpoint of logical urban development, the Planning Commission recommends that this area be put to industrial use."¹¹³

The Redevelopment Authority stated the objectives for the Reach Road Industrial Project in the minutes of a meeting held on May 13, 1970:

1. Cause the removal of all deteriorated and obsolescent structures in the area;
2. Provide an industrial land use plan to insure the harmonious development of the urban renewal area with the adjacent industrial development complex;
3. Require proper controls for the orderly development of the area;
4. Provide a more intensive economic use of the land; and
5. Provide additional land for new industry and jobs in order to promote the economic wellbeing of the entire community.¹¹⁴

GWACC was concerned about the financial dealings of the Redevelopment Authority and repeatedly asked it to make its records public. The Authority furnished financial statements, but no detailed record of transactions. GWACC obtained Sunbury attorney, Peter Krehel, who filed an Action in Mandamus to compel the Williamsport Redevelopment Authority and the City of Williamsport to file "an audit of the financial transactions of the Williamsport Redevelopment Authority with full public disclosure," in November 1969.¹¹⁵ Mandamus is designed to compel

public officers and others to perform established public duties. The primary requisites of the action are that the plaintiff has a legal right to enforce which is specific, well-defined and complete, and that a corresponding duty rests upon the defendant.¹¹⁶ The Court held that "it does not appear that there is a duty imposed upon the defendants to make such an audit as prayed for in this action."¹¹⁷ The Court of Common Pleas of Lycoming County dismissed the complaint on May 23, 1970.¹¹⁸

On June 2, 1970, at 7:30 p.m. (four years after the public hearing for the Canal Street Project), City Council held a public hearing on the proposed Reach Road Industrial Park project at City Hall. The hearing began with the presentation of the plan and proposal by William Miller, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority. Mr. Miller's proposal called for the acquisition of all property within the boundaries with the exception of an already existing industry known as Lyco Systems.¹¹⁹ Mr. Miller stressed the importance of an industrial base in the community to provide jobs. He also pledged to, "offer the highest appraised value to the property owners in the project, just as the Redevelopment Authority has been doing in the Canal Street project."¹²⁰

Mr. Henry Parsons offered a statement on behalf of the Industrial Properties Corporation, "probably the largest landowner or developer in the Industrial Park."¹²¹ He stressed the importance of industrial growth and the tax revenues it would generate. The promise of increased tax revenues, according to

Martin Anderson, author of The Federal Bulldozer, is "one of the most effective arguments in persuading city politicians to initiate urban renewal programs."¹²² Mr. Parsons also emphasized that "if industrial growth is to continue in Williamsport, it is very clear that the urgent need for land must be met."¹²³

Henry Clay McCormick, a local attorney, spoke on behalf of Oberjoch Kennels, a business concern that had been in existence on Reach Road for over twenty years, and proposed an amendment to the Redevelopment Authority's plan. Mr. McCormick stated that the appraisal value of Oberjoch Kennels was \$111,300.00. It would be impossible for the owners to obtain any amount close to that upon condemnation proceedings, and "if they did it would be a waste of the taxpayers' money."¹²⁴ He stressed that Oberjoch Kennels provided a service to the community. In addition, the kennel employed four people full time and three people part time. McCormick presented a petition signed by one hundred and seventy-one clients of Oberjoch Kennels who requested that the kennel be allowed to remain in its present location.¹²⁵

Several residents of the Foresman Plot spoke in opposition to the Redevelopment Authority plan. Mrs. Mary Churba was understandably upset -- she and her husband had just built a new home on Reach Road five and one half years previously. Mrs. Churba stated, "Now it is going to have to be taken out of there, destroyed."¹²⁶ The Codes Department of the city of Williamsport changed the zoning in the Foresman Plot from residential to heavy industrial in 1960. However, in 1964, when the Churbas applied

for their permit to build the home, the Codes Department approved their building permit.¹²⁷ In addition, as previously noted, in 1964 the Redevelopment Authority was in the process of undertaking an Industrial Park study. If the Churbas had been informed that this area was to be included in a renewal project it is doubtful that they would have proceeded with the construction of a new home.

Carl Fila also spoke in opposition to the project. He was adamant about remaining where he was. He grew up in the Foresman plot, built a house on land his father gave him, and established a construction business next door to his home. He required easy access to the beltway for his heavy equipment, and considered his present location ideal. He referred to William Miller, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority, as a "carpetbagger." He said angrily, "Miller came into Williamsport like one of those carpetbaggers that went south after the Civil War. When he gets done cleaning us out, he will move on and clean someone else out." He questioned the right of the Redevelopment Authority, "to come in here and tell us now that we have no right to live there because this is better for industry."¹²⁸ The discussion became so heated at one point that Mayor Carey threatened to bring the police in.¹²⁹

George Kadash also spoke in opposition to the project. Mr. Kadash had quite a reputation around town (and still does), particularly in city government. He made it a point to go to every City Council meeting, and very freely offered his opinion

on what was being discussed, even if he was not directly involved. In this instance however, he was directly involved -- his home was on Catawissa Avenue. He believed that the government simply had no business taking his home, that it amounted to an illegal "seizure of property."¹³⁰ He also disagreed with the opinion that taking residential properties for later reuse by industry did not serve the "public purpose" called for in the Redevelopment Law.¹³¹ The Redevelopment Authority's argument was that providing jobs for residents of Williamsport did in fact constitute a "public purpose."¹³²

Four days after the public hearing City Council rejected the Redevelopment Authority's plan for the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project. The residents of the Foresman plot "lobbied the living daylights out of them (City Council)," according to Carl Fila, and at least four members of City Council voted against the project.¹³³ This victory proved to be only temporary, however.

As soon as City Council announced its decision, the Williamsport Sun Gazette published editorials about the rejection of the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project. The editorial on June 6, 1970, called the decision by City Council "unfortunate." The article also stated that, "Council's action now means a lot of time, effort, expense, and long range planning have come to naught unless they reconsider their vote and clear the way for the city's sustained future industrial expansion within its corporate limits."¹³⁴ Another editorial on June 17, 1970

indicated that "although council has rejected the project, the item could come up for a new vote at any time with another public hearing."¹³⁵ Two half page advertisements, paid for by the Industrial Properties Corporation and published in the Williamsport Sun Gazette on June 15 and 17, 1970, chastised City Council for its rejection of the project, and urged them to reconsider its action. It also reminded City Council that "this land would be almost valueless had it not been for the predecessor organization to Industrial Properties Corporation having the foresight to persuade the U.S. Corps of Engineers to provide flood control for all the Reach Road area."¹³⁶

(Appendices K and L)

On June 11, 1970, two residents of the Foresman Plot went before City Council and asked what could be done so that they need not fear the project's reactivation. The City Solicitor explained that nothing prevents a future Council from deciding to proceed with the project.¹³⁷

The whole process repeated itself in 1972. City Council scheduled a second public hearing in February, but then postponed it because it wanted the new nine member Planning Commission to review the project.¹³⁸ The Planning Commission met on January 28, 1972 to discuss the project. William Miller of the Redevelopment Authority and Frank W. Earnest of the Industrial Properties Corporation spoke on behalf of the project. Four residents of the Foresman Plot were present with questions and objections to the project.¹³⁹ On March 28, 1972, the Planning

Commission voted five to three to reject the proposed Industrial Park Redevelopment Project (one member was absent from the meeting).¹⁴⁰ In a letter to City Council, dated April 3, 1972, Richard Merk announced that "after many meetings and lengthy discussions the Planning Commission recommends by a majority vote that the proposed Industrial Park Urban Renewal Project be rejected."¹⁴¹ The previous Planning Commission had approved the project.

The fact that the Planning Commission rejected the project did not mean that City Council could not act. The previous Planning Commission certified the area as blighted, and this was all the City Council needed to proceed. However, it certainly would "look" better if the Planning Commission and the City Council were in agreement, especially in such a controversial project. The residents of the Foresman plot believed that the odds were still not in their favor. Both local newspapers had endorsed the Industrial Park Project. Both presidents of the two newspapers, namely John E. Person Jr. of the Williamsport Sun Gazette, and Ralph R. Cranmer of The Grit, were also on the Redevelopment Authority Board. In addition to serving on the Redevelopment Authority Board, Ralph Cranmer and George L. Stearns were also directors of the Industrial Properties Corporation.¹⁴²

On May 4, 1972, City Council met in conference with the Planning Commission and asked it to restudy the project, but several Planning Commission members refused.¹⁴³ From that moment

to July 27, 1972, the next scheduled public meeting, the local newspapers and the residents of the Foresman Plot voiced their opinions in order to encourage public support for their differing opinions. The Grit ran an editorial on May 14, 1972 that encouraged the approval of the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project. It stated that, "more substantial benefits could come in the industrialization of the Foresman tract, especially in the sizable increase it would provide in tax revenue over the taxes paid by its residential owners."¹⁴⁴ George Kadash announced on WWPA, a local radio station, that the, "newspapers will continue to withhold certain facts from the public. News or facts concerning redevelopment are very often selected. After all, if you were president of a newspaper and a member of the Redevelopment Authority, what would you print -- favorable or unfavorable?"¹⁴⁵ GWACC contacted many public officials -- congressmen, senators, even President Nixon -- in an effort to find someone who would help them.

The City Council scheduled a second public hearing on the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project on July 27, 1972 at the Curtin Junior High School at 7:30 p.m. On July 10, 1972, George Kadash requested that City Council provide a court stenographer to "take legal transcript of said proceedings."¹⁴⁶ City Council denied his request. The afternoon of July 27 George Kadash petitioned the U.S. District Court for an injunction to block the hearing. He maintained that he and his wife suffered through "violation of the provisions of the Constitution under the

Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments," through the actions of the city of Williamsport and the Redevelopment Authority. He also requested a trial by jury to "determine the amount of damage suffered and caused by the defendants."¹⁴⁷ In his ruling Judge Muir stated that

the Court is not convinced that in the absence of a temporary restraining order the Plaintiffs will be irreparably harmed. The Court is also not convinced that if a temporary restraining order were granted, there would be no substantial harm to the other interested parties, and that there would be no substantial harm to the public interest.¹⁴⁸

Judge Muir ordered that the request for a temporary restraining order be denied. The public hearing would proceed as scheduled. George Kadash obtained Henry O. Feese, C.S.R. to transcribe the proceedings for a cost of \$300.00.¹⁴⁹ At the public hearing the evening of July 27, William Miller essentially repeated the statement he made at the June 2, 1970 public hearing, that "this area must grow industrially to have an adequate economic base for the future."¹⁵⁰ Mr. Henry Parsons, again, emphasized the need for more land for industrial growth.¹⁵¹ Philip Petter, Vice President of the Williamsport Chamber of Commerce in charge of the Retail Division, stated that the Foresman plot "is an area of the community that has been set aside for industrial development and there is no sense fighting the problem."¹⁵² Charles R. Stearns, President of the Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, stressed the two reasons that the Chamber approved of the project: "it would broaden the tax base within the community, and also provide more jobs within the community."¹⁵³

Mayor John Coder was also present and addressed the Council at the public hearing. Some background information about Mayor Coder should be presented at this point. Coder, elected in 1971, was the first mayor under the new strong Mayor-Council government. Previously, the form of government in Williamsport was the Charter Commission. Coder maintained that City Council tried to limit his powers. They were often at odds with each other, to the point where the mayor considered handing in his resignation. At this public meeting, he referred to himself as the first "Weak Mayor" of the City of Williamsport, due to the actions of City Council.¹⁵⁴ Coder did not necessarily disapprove of the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project, but "was against it under the present set up."¹⁵⁵ He was disturbed that many small businesses in Williamsport displaced by other redevelopment projects wanted to relocate in Industrial Park and were not allowed to do so.¹⁵⁶

By this time, the residents of the Foresman plot were tired of living with the uncertainty of the situation and were not as unified as they once were. Bruno Mahonski believed that "heavy industry and residents do not get along, and our best avenue up there is to get out under Redevelopment and be treated fairly and squarely."¹⁵⁷ Leona Klementovich presented a petition signed by fifteen property owners stating that they were very much interested in Redevelopment.¹⁵⁸ Michael Kopko stated that, "if it is good for the city's future, we should move out if we get a reasonable price."¹⁵⁹

There were still some property owners that opposed the

project. William Fullerton argued that the Redevelopment Authority was using the City Council and Mayor as a "patsy" in order to get what they wanted.¹⁶⁰ Although they did not live in the Foresman plot, Ed Danneker and Howard Ertel both owned small businesses in the project area and they wanted to remain. Mr. Ertel owned a plumbing and heating business, and Mr. Danneker followed the advice given to him by Joseph Bendel, former Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority, and purchased property in the Foresman plot and relocated his sheet metal business there. Now, the Redevelopment Authority wanted to condemn this property. Mr. Fila and Mr. Kadash, mentioned previously were now even more adamant than before about remaining in the Foresman plot. Lois Stroud, owner of Oberjoch Kennels spoke in opposition to the project, although this time the Redevelopment Authority excluded her property from the project. She felt very strongly that "to bring up a proposal that was previously defeated by City Council and the Planning Commission was nothing short of harassment."¹⁶¹ She also maintained that the reason some property owners wanted out now was due to the long term attack on their private lives and uncertainty about the project.¹⁶²

In addition to Ms. Stroud's business, two other properties were excluded: Porter Welding Company, and Hope Enterprises, which is a school for the mentally retarded. Carl Fila raised the question why these three businesses could remain, but his construction business could not.¹⁶³

City Council made its decision on September 14, 1972. At

the City Council meeting, Carl Fila questioned Council President William E. Nichols' right to vote on the project. He argued that since Mr. Nichols was President of City Council and also an officer in the Chamber of Commerce, that this was a clear conflict of interest.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Council proceeded with the vote. William E. Nichols, Constance Snyder, John G. Good, Dr. Edwin Gearhart, Dr. Randall Hipple, and E. Earl Miller voted in favor of the project, and William L. Paynter voted against the project, as he had at the last public hearing.¹⁶⁵ After voting on the resolution to approve the project, several outbursts by the crowd followed. William E. Nichols lost control of the meeting and twice requested that policemen be sent in, however residents blocked the door. For almost an hour, spectators voiced their disapproval. According to the Williamsport Sun Gazette, Mr. Nichols appeared to be the target for most of the abuse.¹⁶⁶

When asked how he felt about Council's decision, Mr. Miller said it was "fantastic." He maintained that real estate taxes would increase four to five times.¹⁶⁷ City Council authorized the Redevelopment Authority to apply for a \$482,255 state grant for development of the Industrial Park project. This money would be used for land acquisition, relocation, demolition, and clearing the properties for reuse.¹⁶⁸ Not only would the Redevelopment Authority apply for state funds, but there "was also a local funding source in the Industrial Properties Corporation."¹⁶⁹

The Redevelopment Authority announced that they would begin buying the properties within a month. Four owners had already

contacted Mr. Miller and expressed interest in beginning negotiations.¹⁷⁰

On October 9, 1972, the residents of the Foresman Plot received a letter from Wayne L. Green, a real estate officer of the Redevelopment Authority. The letter explained that Mr. James Maddon, a local realtor, and Associate Appraisers of York, Pennsylvania would be in the area appraising the properties. Mr. Green explained that "it is most important that you cooperate with them because the appraisals are the guide in establishing a fair value for the properties."¹⁷¹

GWACC applied to the Williamsport Department of Public Safety for a permit to march in protest from the Williamsport Area Community College (now Pennsylvania College of Technology) to City Hall (then located on Pine Street) on October 12, 1972. John Samony, Director of Public Safety, approved the march as long as there were "no placards on sticks, the march was orderly, and pedestrian traffic and/or vehicle traffic was not blocked."¹⁷² GWACC printed very creative and amusing flyers, drawn by George Kadash, to distribute along the way. The flyer depicted the "establishment," as a man who represented the Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Properties Corporation, who had two newspapers (the Williamsport Sun Gazette and The Grit) in his back pockets. The "establishment" gave a push to "urban renewal," another man who very clearly resembled William Miller. "Urban Renewal" then proceeded to kick "the homeowner" off his private property. (Appendix M)

George Kadash, acting pro se (in his own behalf), filed a federal suit against the city of Williamsport and the Williamsport Redevelopment Authority in December 1972. Mr. Kadash contended that the defendants actions constituted "extreme and outrageous conduct which have been intentionally and recklessly calculated towards the plaintiffs as to cause emotional distress."¹⁷³ He also alleged that the "Redevelopment Authority was taking his property without due process of law and that he was deprived of his constitutional rights against searches and seizures."¹⁷⁴ Kadash argued that the selling of the properties to the Industrial Properties Corporation violated the Urban Redevelopment Law which states:

No member or employe of an Authority shall acquire any interest, direct or indirect, in any redevelopment project or in any property included or planned to be included in any redevelopment area, or in any area which he may have reason to believe may be certified to be a redevelopment area, nor shall he have any interest, direct or indirect, in any contract or proposed contract for materials or services to be furnished or used by an Authority, or in any contract with a redeveloper or prospective redeveloper relating, directly or indirectly, to any redevelopment project. The acquisition of any such interest in a redevelopment project or in any such property or contract shall constitute misconduct in office.¹⁷⁵

Kadash argued the point that several members of the Redevelopment Authority Board were also directors of the Industrial Properties Corporation (a division of the Chamber of Commerce), so they had an indirect interest in the acquisition of the property. At one point in the testimony Judge Muir interrupted the proceedings to call a side bar conference. Judge Muir was not aware that the Chamber of Commerce was going to be

brought into the case. He explained that "over thirty years ago he was president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce or a predecessor organization. He also thought it was conceivable that he might have been on the Board of Directors ten or fifteen years ago."¹⁷⁶ Since he went on the bench in 1960, however, his only connection with the Chamber of Commerce was as a dues paying member. He did not want to explain this in open court because "the jury might think the fact that I belong to the organization is a plus factor for it."¹⁷⁷ The Williamsport Sun Gazette reported on December 21, 1972 that Mr. Kadash filed an affidavit in open court asserting that the judge was biased. Judge Muir removed himself from the case stating, "I am convinced that Mr. Kadash feels that I am biased...I have no option but to notify the chief judge to assign another judge."¹⁷⁸ Federal Judge William Nealon scheduled the trial for March 1973.

In the meantime, negotiations between the residents and the Redevelopment Authority proceeded. For a few residents, such as George Kadash, Carl Fila, Ed Danneker, and Joseph Ertel, no amount of money was satisfactory. But many of those who wanted to sell believed the Redevelopment Authority's offer was fair. The Redevelopment Authority purchased a home for Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Churba in South Williamsport in exchange for the house on Reach Road they built in 1964. Mr. Churba said the Redevelopment Authority was not overly generous, but he thought he obtained a fair exchange. After the Redevelopment Authority condemned the house on Reach Road, Mr. Churba paid them \$2,500 for the house

and he hired someone to move it to a lot on the southern side of Reach Road. By doing this, the Redevelopment Authority would not have to pay to have it demolished. Mr. Churba then sold this property.¹⁷⁹

On February 5, 1973, William L. Wilcox of the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs in Harrisburg wrote to Mayor Coder. The Department of Community Affairs decided to fund the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project. Mr. Wilcox listed several reasons for the decision:

1. The area involved is certified as blighted and from my visual inspection appears to be blighted,
2. The subject area has been zoned industrial for many years,
3. The site, when developed by industry, would connect Industrial Park on both sides,
4. It appears well sited from a rail and transportation point of view,
5. The project, at various times, has been approved by your City Council and city Planning Commission,
6. Additional industrial development will increase employment opportunities, and
7. When completed, the site should increase your property tax base.¹⁸⁰

Federal Judge William Nealon heard arguments in Kadash v. The City of Williamsport and the Williamsport Redevelopment Authority on March 16, 1973. The Plaintiff asserted that defendants harassed plaintiffs and deprived them of their constitutional rights by; "(1) continually pursuing an urban renewal project previously rejected in 1970 which would result in the condemnation of plaintiff's property and (2) attempting to condemn plaintiff's property and deed it to a private corporation for a non-public use."¹⁸¹ The plaintiff requested that the defendants be restrained from initiating future state

condemnation proceedings. The defendants argued that the federal court lacked jurisdiction, since plaintiff's rights would be adequately protected in the Pennsylvania state courts. The defendants also asserted that it was premature for the plaintiff to bring charges at this time since the Redevelopment Authority had not initiated eminent domain proceedings. The Court concluded that (1) it would not interfere with state court jurisdiction when available state court remedies adequately protect plaintiff's asserted rights; (2) the municipal defendants were not persons within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. Section 1983; and (3) no case or controversy presently exists.¹⁸²

In 1973, Mayor Coder appointed a task force to report on Redevelopment in Williamsport. G. Martin Packard was chairman of the group that consisted of fourteen members. A report by the Mayor's Task Force 73, made public on November 13, recommended that William Miller be dismissed. The report charged that Mr. Miller and his staff manipulated and harassed residents and that Mr. Miller failed to live up to the provisions of the Urban Redevelopment Law.¹⁸³ On November 28, 1973, the mayor's task force on housing and redevelopment presented their report to the Redevelopment Authority. Robert C. Wise, chairman of the Redevelopment Authority, argued that the report was "another chapter in Mayor John R. Coder's long continuing effort to destroy redevelopment in Williamsport."¹⁸⁴ Francis Carducci, a member of the Redevelopment Authority Board who was also the owner of a beauty school, maintained that the task force report

is a plan "to discredit some members of the authority."¹⁸⁵ Two new members of the Redevelopment Authority Board, William H. Schrum, a local businessman, and Charles R. Bidelspacher, an attorney, asserted that Mr. Miller lacked executive ability; however, they wanted to discuss this personally with Mr. Miller, before they voted on a resolution to terminate his employment. Ralph R. Cranmer, however, made a motion to retain Miller, which was seconded by Francis Carducci, and this forced a vote. The board voted unanimously to retain Miller, and agreed that they would publicly express their confidence in him. Both Mr. Schrum and Mr. Bidelspacher qualified their votes with statements that they be given future consideration to discuss Mr. Miller's role as executive director.¹⁸⁶

The 1975 mayoral election, based in a large part on redevelopment in Williamsport, was bitter. In a political pamphlet, published by the Committee to re-elect Mayor Coder, several statements and cartoons indicated what Mayor Coder felt about redevelopment. Mayor Coder stated,

"It is time that the meager accomplishments of the Williamsport Redevelopment Authority were looked at in light of the monies they have been allocated. The main function of the Authority has been to demolish existing structures which had been producing tax revenue for the city and replacing them with empty promises for the future."¹⁸⁷

He also mentioned the "folly of the \$500,000 walkway which no one may ever walk on, with a corresponding cartoon."¹⁸⁸ (Appendix M) Mayor Coder lost the mayoral election to Dan Kirby.

For the next year, negotiations proceeded in the Reach

Road Industrial Park Project. By October, 1974, there were still approximately fourteen property owners on the Redevelopment Authority's condemnation list. By this time, the appraisals needed to be updated again, so the Redevelopment Authority hired two local realtors, George Girio and George Koons.¹⁸⁹

The Redevelopment Authority filed a Declaration of Taking on March 26, 1976, which consisted of eleven properties. Four property owners -- Carl Fila, George Kadash, Ed Danneker, and Joseph Ertel -- decided that drastic measures were necessary. Mr. Fila talked to an attorney, but was not happy with what he had to say -- which was basically "you can't fight city hall." Mr. Fila told him, "I would not want you to represent me anyway because you have a defeatist attitude!"¹⁹⁰ Mr. Fila was in church one Sunday and began talking with a couple who had just moved here from the Poconos. When they lived in the Poconos they had a problem with the Department of Environmental Resources because of the disposal system on their property. It was a Swedish disposal system that DER said was not acceptable. DER took them to court, so they hired a man called George Thiel who helped them "beat" DER. Carl Fila, George Kadash, Ed Danneker, and Joseph Ertel contacted Mr. Thiel, who lived in Ohio, and he agreed to help them on one condition, provided they pay him \$400 a week in cash. According to Carl Fila, he was very sharp, so sharp that after he had been in town a while some of the attorneys wanted to hire him. Probably the best way to describe Thiel is as a roving paralegal. He drove around in a pickup

truck with a fairly comprehensive law library in the back. Each week, for eight months, the four men took turns paying Mr. Thiel \$400. Mr. Thiel wrote all the briefs and petitions required in the struggle to keep their properties, and the men signed them. Of course he could not represent them in court, but he briefed them and they had mock trials beforehand.¹⁹¹ These four men became the four primary protesters of the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project. (Appendix N")

Five of the eleven property owners listed in the Declaration of Taking filed Preliminary Objections within thirty days as required. William Sechler obtained local attorney, Joe Orso, as counsel. George Thiel prepared a Memorandum in Support of Preliminary Objections to the Declaration of Taking to the Court of Common Pleas of Lycoming County for the other four men. The Defendants charged that the Declaration of Taking was not constitutional. They maintained that "the general welfare of the people of the city of Williamsport is not centered on Defendants' property, nor will the taking of Defendants' property be to the general welfare of but a very few private citizens."¹⁹² The Defendants also alleged that they were unjustly discriminated against "by the fact that there are already three exemptions to the Plaintiff's actions."¹⁹³ They asked that a jury trial be granted in the interest of justice.

On May 26, 1976 the Plaintiff, Redevelopment Authority of the city of Williamsport, filed its Brief in opposition to Defendants' Preliminary objections. The Plaintiff maintained

that the condemnation of Defendants' property did not violate their constitutional rights. The Plaintiff charged that the Urban Redevelopment Law specifically empowers Redevelopment Authorities to "acquire by eminent domain any real property, including improvements and fixtures for the public purposes set for in this act."¹⁹⁴ The Plaintiff also asserted that the determination for which land is condemned and taken "will not be interfered with by the Courts if it is made in good faith and is not arbitrary or capricious."¹⁹⁵ The Plaintiff requested that the Preliminary Objections of the Defendants be dismissed.

President Judge Charles F. Greevy scheduled a hearing on June 10, 1976; however, on June 9, the Defendants filed their Petitions for Removal to the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. The Plaintiffs did not receive notification until June 10, 1976, so Judge Greevy held his hearing as scheduled and then continued the matter until federal Judge Malcolm Muir could ascertain whether the removal was proper.¹⁹⁶

In the Defendants' Brief in Support of Removal Petition, they maintained that the Plaintiff violated their constitutional rights. The Defendants maintained that the posting of an open ended bond did not constitute just compensation.¹⁹⁷ They also argued that they were denied "equal protection of the laws" guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment, because there were already three exclusions in the project.¹⁹⁸

In the Brief of the Redevelopment Authority of the city of

Williamsport Opposing Removal of these Actions from the Court of Common Pleas of Lycoming County, Plaintiff argued that there was no substantial federal question. Plaintiff cited Chicago & A.R. Co. v. Wiggins Ferry Co, 1883, 1 S. Ct. 614, 616, where the Court held that "the presumption in all cases is that the Courts of the States will do what the Constitution and laws of the United States require, and removals cannot be effected to the Courts of the United States because of fear that they will not."¹⁹⁹

Federal Judge Malcolm Muir scheduled the case for adjudication on September 1, 1976.²⁰⁰ However, because the complainants failed to file petitions within thirty days of service of the initial complaints made by the Redevelopment Authority, the case was returned to the local court.²⁰¹

On September 29, 1976, the Redevelopment Authority again voted on whether to retain William Miller as Executive Director. Charles Bidelspacher and William Schrum alleged that "he had not been fulfilling his duties and had several unexplained absences."²⁰² A resolution to terminate Mr. Miller's employment was defeated in a three to two vote, with Ralph Cranmer, Francis Carducci, and Robert Wise, a local attorney, voting to retain him.²⁰³

In October 1976, John Brockway, the editor of The Citizen Press, a weekly newspaper, stated that renewal in Williamsport "has not been carefully watched by local leaders and the local press."²⁰⁴ Mr. Brockway brought in an investigative reporter from Schenectady, New York, named Fred Padula, who wrote a series

of articles about redevelopment. Mr. Padula wrote, "Williamsport's urban renewal program in general, and the Redevelopment Authority in particular, is a high-price, high-promise, low-performance machine rolling downhill and carried along by its own dead weight." He also referred to the walkway as a "monument to mismanagement."²⁰⁵

Mr. Padula not only made charges about redevelopment in Williamsport, he also leveled charges about the elitism in Williamsport-- "how a handful of people have historically ended up deciding what is best for everybody in Williamsport." He examined the city's records and discovered that the same people or relatives appeared with regularity on various boards and authorities. He said that "every community has its pillars, but a social and economic structure also needs a foundation -- the residents."²⁰⁶

The Citizen Press interviewed several members of the community for the October 30, 1976, and asked for their opinions on redevelopment in Williamsport. State Senator Henry Hager, said, "I personally get angry over this taking of land, this leveling of property and then the maintenance of what follows at taxpayers' expense. It angers me to see these homes and businesses destroyed." Charles M. Pagana, City Council President, said that he was not for the bulldozer approach, but "was for rehabilitation and for maintaining the integrity of a neighborhood." Another Councilman, Carl M. Hunter stated, "what we need is better execution of projects now in progress." There

were some positive comments as well. Robert Wise, President of the Redevelopment Authority maintained that "the staff has done an excellent job overall." Mr. John E. Person, Jr., former President of the Redevelopment Authority, agreed that "redevelopment did a lot of good for the city through the years." Steven Lucasi, City Councilman, maintained that the most worthy redevelopment project was the Lycoming College expansion (construction of the Academic Center)." Francis Carducci and Ralph R. Cranmer refused to be interviewed.²⁰⁷

The Redevelopment Authority was not only receiving negative publicity from The Citizen Press, but also was being directed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to have the Department of Community Affairs conduct an audit.²⁰⁸ The Williamsport Sun Gazette reported that a special audit of HUD-funded activities raised some questions about Authority activities.²⁰⁹ At the Redevelopment Authority meeting on October 20, 1976, the Board concluded that they should restudy the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project.²¹⁰ Shortly thereafter, William Miller notified Robert Wise of his intent to resign his position as Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority effective November 1, 1976.²¹¹ The Redevelopment Authority Board promoted Carl Nolan to take his place.²¹² Previously Nolan served as a real estate assistant.

On November 8, 1976, George Kadash, Fila Construction Company, Danneker & Lear, Inc., and Ertel Plumbing and Heating filed an appeal in the United States Court of Appeals for the

Third Circuit in Philadelphia.²¹³ After the residents heard that the Redevelopment Authority was going to restudy the project, the appellants requested and received an extension to file briefs and appendices until February 16, 1977.²¹⁴

The Redevelopment Authority held a special meeting on December 3, 1976 at the site office at 217 Pine Street. Carl Nolan summarized what had occurred in the past four years regarding the Reach Road Industrial Park Project. He concluded that,

the costs are becoming exorbitant. The projected cost to complete this project was \$658,400. We would need an additional \$300,000 to complete this project. The \$300,000 could possibly be obtained from the city of Williamsport's Community Development program or we could apply to the state for another contract. The alternative would be to stop the project and sell what land we have acquired to date to the Industrial Properties Corporation. The reuse areas could be used for small service type businesses.²¹⁵

Mr. Nolan recommended that the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project be terminated due to changing times and the exorbitant costs that would be incurred to complete the project. Mr. Eugene Yaw, the acting City Solicitor, stated that there was no legal reason why the project could not be dropped. However, he advised the Redevelopment Authority to have the property owners sign a release which would "release and discharge the Authority, the City and the Commonwealth, together with their respective employees or officials, from any and all liability."²¹⁶ (Appendix O) The Redevelopment Authority resolved to terminate the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project

subject to approvals of the Department of Community

Affairs, City Council, and upon proper releases signed by the Redevelopment Authority and Industrial Properties Corporation holding the Redevelopment Authority harmless in regard to the original amount of land to be sold to Industrial Properties Corporation and subject to acceptance of sale of that land now owned by the Redevelopment Authority to the Industrial Properties Corporation and further that releases be signed by those individual property owners within the Industrial Park Project.²¹⁷

The property owners received a letter from Mr. Nolan explaining that the Redevelopment Authority and the city of Williamsport agreed to discontinue the Industrial Park Redevelopment Project. As soon as the property owners returned the signed releases to the Redevelopment Authority, they would go to Harrisburg and meet with the Department of Community Affairs to have the project discontinued.²¹⁸ The property owners had several misgivings about the release and refused to sign it. First, the property owners would be denied the right to file suit for any business losses that they had sustained. Second, the property owners did not exactly trust the Redevelopment Authority. They stated in a letter to the Redevelopment Authority, City Council, and Mayor Kirby:

We do not wish to indicate, by this letter or any related activity, contemplated or actual, that we are questioning the Redevelopment Authority...but please remember some of us have tolerated gross abuse from an un-elected, unsovereign bureaucrat (emphasis added) for as long as thirteen years. This thirteen year period defies any logical description. Suddenly, we see some light at the end of a very long tunnel, and you have correctly assessed our attitude as being extremely anxious to accept an end to these condemnations. But therein lies the key -- and end, not any end, and especially not a temporary end.²¹⁹

They insisted that the Redevelopment Authority file a Decree of

Relinquishment at the Lycoming County Court House. They contended that "upon relinquishment of the properties by the condemnor, title is revested in the condemnees as of the date of the filing of the Declaration of Taking. The property is then in the position as if there had been no condemnation."²²⁰

The Redevelopment Authority scheduled a meeting for February 11, 1977, to try to resolve points of difference concerning the release agreements, however, the property owners would not compromise. On March 21, 1977, the Redevelopment Authority resolved to file a Decree of Relinquishment at the Lycoming County Court House, because they had insufficient funds available to carry out land acquisition and had no prospects for sufficient funding.²²¹

The Redevelopment Authority now had to decide what to do with the properties it had already acquired. The Redevelopment Authority allowed Ronald Churba to buy back the lot on which his house once stood. In addition, he bought his parent's homestead on Reach Road which the Redevelopment Authority had purchased and converted it into the "Reach Inn." Mr. Churba is not upset or bitter about what transpired. He is still living in South Williamsport in the house that the Redevelopment Authority purchased for him.²²² The Redevelopment Authority offered Michael Kopko the opportunity to buy some land that was adjacent to his property, and he accepted.²²³ The Industrial Properties Corporation did acquire some land on Reading Avenue from the Redevelopment Authority and sold it to Trengo, Inc.

The long struggle was over for those who fought to keep their property. George Kadash still lives on Catawissa Avenue doing what he loves best -- gardening. He still finds time to go to nearly every City Council meeting. Although he is often the brunt of jokes, he still believes that it is his duty to keep a close watch on local government. He often calls in to "Speak Your Piece," one of the local radio talk shows. He knows he is often ignored, but even this does not bother him. He said in a interview with the Williamsport Sun Gazette, "If you tell government over and over and over and over, like a young child, they finally do something about it."²²⁴ The Williamsport Sun Gazette asked him when his decades old feud with city government would end. He replied, "If I die."²²⁵

Carl Fila still lives on Reading Avenue, a fact he attributes to George Theil. He believes that he, Joseph Ertel, Ed Danneker, and George Kadash would have won on appeal, and even if they did not, he was prepared to appeal to the Supreme Court if necessary. At one time, Mayor Carey accused Mr. Fila and the others of holding out for more money. This, says Mr. Fila, "could not be further from the truth. Money has no value if you don't fight for what you believe in. If you can be bought, then you should not have fought in the first place."²²⁶ Ed Danneker agrees with this statement. He stated, "We told people who wanted to join in our group that if their only interest was money we did not want them."²²⁷ Amazingly enough, there is little if any bitterness felt by Mr. Fila or Mr. Kadash. Today, they are

good friends with some of their former adversaries.

Ed Danneker remained in business in the Foresman Plot for about four years until he began to have some union problems. He sold his company and bought AM Sheet Metal in South Williamsport. He also believes that they would have won on appeal because of the conflict of interest between the Redevelopment Authority and the Industrial Properties Corporation. He contends that "this would have opened a can of worms," and that is why the project was dropped within a month of filing an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals. He, like Carl Fila, would have taken the case to the Supreme Court. It was not an issue of money -- it was the principle.

CONCLUSIONS

There are significant differences between the Canal Street and Reach Road Projects. The Canal Street residents had such close ties with one another, yet they did not join together to fight the condemnation of their homes. It is possible that many of the older residents who had come over from Italy were not familiar enough with the machinery of the U.S. government to engage in court battles. Certainly money played a large part in their considerations. Although George Kadash, Carl Fila, Ed Danneker, and Joseph Ertel did not have an attorney, together they paid George Theil approximately \$13,000. The Canal Street residents' incomes were, with few exceptions, low. It is also

possible that the prejudice that existed against Italians at that time made them less likely to fight. Many were used to being denigrated, and perhaps were apprehensive about standing up for their rights. At the public hearing for the Canal Street Project, not one person spoke in opposition. At both public meetings for the Reach Road Project, almost all the property owners were there, and it was impossible to keep them quiet.

There was abundant suspicion of the Redevelopment Authority and local government in both the Canal and Reach Road Projects. The Canal Street residents believed that some members of the Redevelopment Authority were taking items from condemned homes and selling those items for personal gain. They also believed that the Redevelopment Authority's offers were low when compared with what some residents received from a Board of View. In Jennie D'Addio's case the difference was \$11,000. There is also another instance where the Redevelopment Authority offered Anthony Tagliaferri \$8,750.00 and the Board of View awarded him 18,000.00.²²⁸ Although this took place in the Lycoming College Expansion Project, it does indicate that this was not an uncommon occurrence.

The protesting Reach Road residents believed that there was a conspiracy among the Redevelopment Authority, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Industrial Properties Corporation, and both local newspapers. There are also rumors that the reason William Miller resigned was because HUD directed the Redevelopment Authority to have the state Department of

Community Affairs conduct an audit. Some residents believe that Mr. Miller "got caught with his hand in the cookie Jar."²²⁹ Carl Fila heard that Miller went to Canada after he left Williamsport. All efforts to locate Mr. Miller to obtain an interview have been fruitless.

Could any of the suspicions concerning the Canal Street and Reach Road Projects been alleviated in some way? One way to ensure trust concerning the appraisals would have been to let the residents see both of them, and then try to negotiate a fair "middle range" price. The Redevelopment Authority actually could have saved money that way instead of expending money for attorneys to represent it at Board of View hearings and jury trials. In 1973, the state addressed the problem of appraisals by allowing up to \$500 for a resident to obtain his/her own independent appraisal.²³⁰ Another way to avoid suspicion could have been to allow residents to participate in all meetings that concerned them and to allow them to inspect the financial records or to have them published in the newspaper on a yearly basis. If the residents were reasonably certain that the Redevelopment Authority was treating them fairly many of these problems could have been resolved. A third way to avoid unnecessary problems would be to allow the residents of the community decide by a referendum vote what projects they considered "good for the community" instead of allowing a small group of government officials decide.

The suspicions contributed to much of the ineffectiveness

of the Redevelopment Authority, but there were other problems as well. Consider Joe Bendel, of the Redevelopment Authority, encouraging Danneker Lear to relocate his business in the Foresman Plot and then four years later the Redevelopment Authority condemning it. Consider also the Redevelopment Authority undermining its own project by allowing only certain exemptions. On what criteria did it base its decisions regarding who could remain and who had to go? Obviously Oberjoch Kennels and Hope Enterprise could not by any stretch of the imagination be considered "heavy industrial." Yet others, such as Carl Fila's construction company, Danneker and Lear Inc., and Joseph Ertel's Plumbing and Heating had to go. The Williamsport Sun Gazette quoted William Miller as saying, "These businesses would hamper the park development, but Oberjoch's would not. He also stated that the difficulty of relocating Oberjoch's is also a factor."²³¹ Robert Wise, the Redevelopment Authority Board Chairman, stated that Carl Fila's property was not excluded "because it would create an irregularly shaped lot, not suitable for future industrial expansion."²³² The issuance of a building permit in 1964 for a home on land that the Codes Department zoned industrial also makes one wonder if anyone knew what they were doing. The Redevelopment Authority was forced to pay for a home and a lot, when they should have only paid for the lot.

The Reach Road residents also focused on the elitism that existed in the local government, Chamber of Commerce, and various boards in the city, and this deserves mention. A select few,

such as Ralph Cranmer and John Person Jr., served in many capacities, but they certainly were not alone. For instance, William E. Nichols stated that Charles Bidelspacher, a Redevelopment Authority Board member, served as the attorney for several boards and authorities at the same time. When asked if this constitutes a conflict of interest, Nichols stated, "Today, it would be considered a conflict of interest, but at that time the standards were different."²³³ Another indication of the "elite's" power (and reluctance to give any up) is in the Industrial Properties Corporations By-Laws adopted on December 6, 1971. It states that "in a Board of eleven directors all shall retire from the Board at seventy years of age except (emphasis added) James E. Axeman, Ralph Cranmer, Frank Earnest Jr., Charles E. Fugua, Harry Gibson, Richard Lundy, Thomas Rider, and George L. Stearns."²³⁴ Any Williamsporter recognizes these names as some of the most powerful men in town, and it is obvious that they were not willing to relinquish their power until they died. Former Mayor Jessie Bloom tried stop this practice of certain people serving on several boards and authorities at the same time. She maintained that too much power was concentrated in the hands of a few.²³⁵ Is it any wonder the Reach Road residents were suspicious?

Yet, urban renewal was very attractive to most, if not all, communities. Cities only had to bear one-quarter of the cost of renewal projects. According to Carl Nolan, the money HUD allocated to the Redevelopment Authority "had to be used if the

Redevelopment Authority expected the same amount or more in following years."²³⁶ Could this have been the reason the Redevelopment Authority built the unbelievably expensive "walkway to nowhere" that it sold later for \$1.10?

The hypothesis of this paper is that a successful renewal project requires the involvement of professionals who are qualified in urban planning. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, urban and regional planners develop programs to provide for growth and revitalization of urban, suburban, and rural communities and their regions. They also help local officials make decisions on social, economic, and environmental problems. A master's degree in planning, architecture, or engineering is the usual requirement for an entry level position.²³⁷

In Williamsport, the Redevelopment Authority's Board consisted of several attorneys, local businessmen, one Certified Public Account, and the presidents of The Grit and the Williamsport Sun Gazette. The educational background of the Redevelopment Authority staff during this period is not available at this time, but the current Executive Director is the owner of a local real estate agency. Arthur Sterngold, in Strategic Recommendations for the Economic Development of Williamsport emphasized that it is vital that urban planning and design incorporate the involvement of experts (e.g. urban planners and architects). Mr. Sterngold maintained that in the "absence of urban planning and design, downtown will continue (emphasis

added) to grow in a fragmented manner, and opportunities to make it a more accessible, convenient, functional and appealing place may be lost."²³⁸

The goal of the Canal Street project was to ensure the continued vitality of downtown Williamsport as a commercial center. The project's success hinged on Sears and Roebuck relocating there, and when it did not, the Redevelopment Authority did not have an alternative plan! Surely, a good plan would assume that the worst could happen and have a viable option. However, as late as 1976, there was still a great deal of confusion as to what should be done with the vacant land in the Canal Street area. The Williamsport Sun Gazette reported on the difficulties Alan J. Finlay, a developer for Humford Equities of Wilkes Barre, had in obtaining a definitive answer as to how much land was available for commercial development in the Canal Street area. Finlay, who was apparently very frustrated, stated, "I can't deal with everyone in town!"²³⁹ The amount of land available for commercial development is something that should have been known from the plan's inception.

John Albarano, a local developer who was not associated with the Canal Street or Reach Road projects in the city, stated that the city has always lacked proper planning. He also contends that,

our system of government has created authorities that result in the authorities becoming a power in themselves. These authorities eventually become uncontrollable by elected officials. Life goes on within the authorities without a real cooperative effort and direction of a central force that would best serve the city as a whole,

and not private interest groups.²⁴⁰

A lack of proper planning was also the reason the Reach Road Project failed. In this instance, the Redevelopment Authority succeeded in removing some of the residents, but then got entangled in court battles that forced them to terminate the project due to financial concerns. Surely, a good plan would factor in extra money in the event that the Redevelopment Authority would have to go to court. They did not anticipate there would be so much resistance to the project, but even this could have been avoided. Out of the four primary protesters, three owned businesses, Carl Fila, Ed Danneker, and Joseph Ertel. If the Redevelopment Authority had allowed them to remain where they were, along with the other businesses the Authority excluded, that would have eliminated a substantial amount of resistance. It is also possible that the reason the Redevelopment Authority ran out of money was that the original gross project cost of \$568,875 was inaccurate (this figure is very low compared to the Canal Street Project which was \$7,788,700).²⁴¹ The Redevelopment Authority spent a great deal of time and money to acquire one small plot, approximately 47 acres. Surely there was more vacant land in the Williamsport area available for industry.

Another point that should be emphasized is that the City Council approved the Reach Road Project, and the Redevelopment Authority proceeded with it even though the City Planning Commission had rejected the plan (the second time). Because the

City Planning Commission records for that period are not available, the reason it rejected the project remains unknown. In the resolution approving the Reach Road Project, City Council stated that it, "had duly considered the City Planning Commission's report, recommendations, and certifications."²⁴²

The Redevelopment Authority Board did not consist of professional urban planners or architects, and both projects were failures. Therefore, at least in these two cases, the hypothesis of this paper is true. A successful urban renewal project requires the involvement of professionals in order to achieve the goals of the projects. The Redevelopment Authority had many dreams as to what it could accomplish with federal and state funds. However, its dreams were the Canal Street and Reach Road residents' nightmares, years lived in uncertainty and hard earned money spent in court. The Redevelopment Authority envisioned a program of "participation and progress." The participation was in fact "participation of a select few", and the progress anticipated, at least in these two projects, turned out to be empty promises. One must commend the Reach Road residents for their lack of bitterness -- but it is doubtful whether the Redevelopment Authority will have their undying gratitude.

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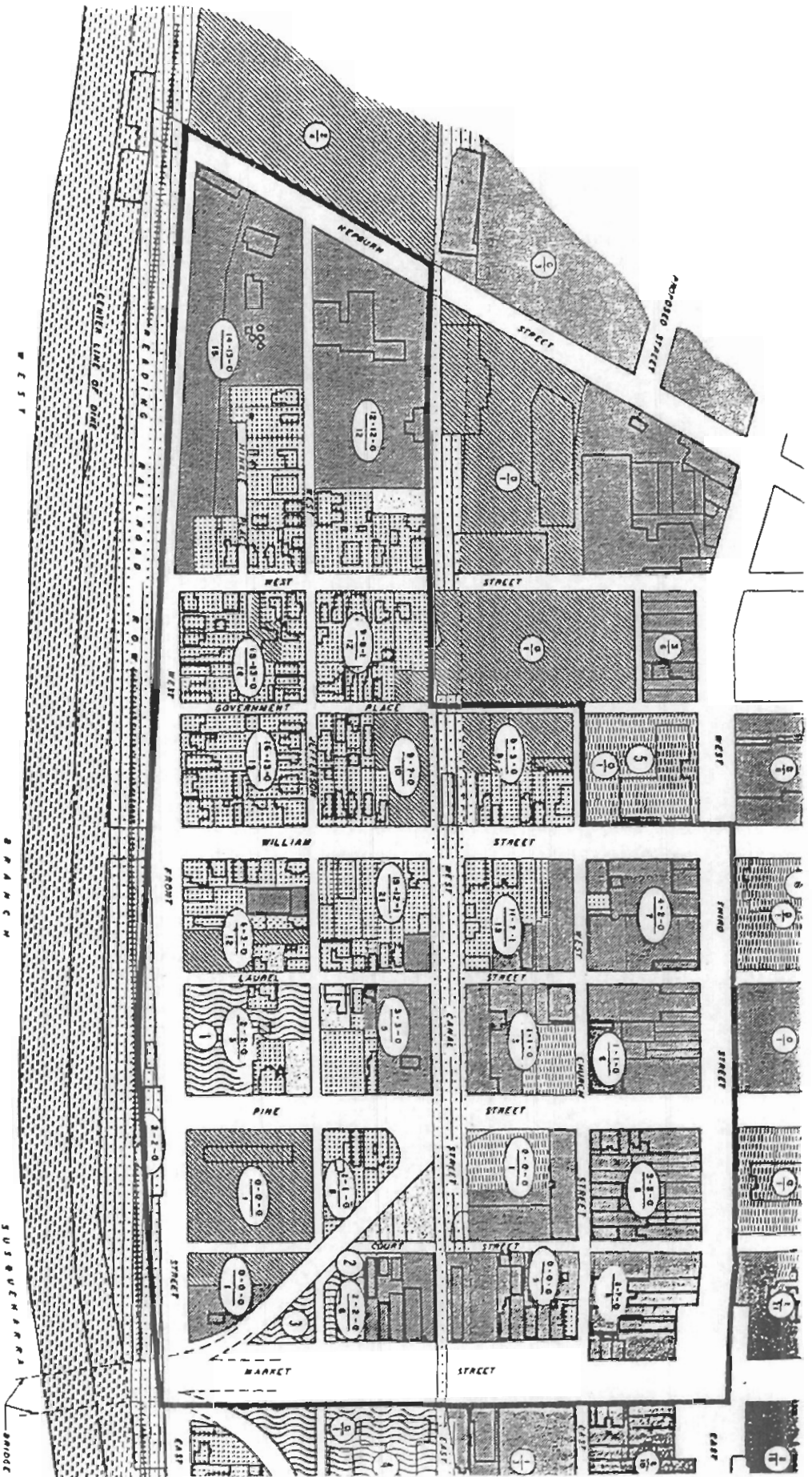
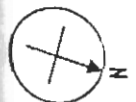
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APPENDIX A








-  RESIDENTIAL
-  PUBLIC (RES. RELATED)
-  SEMI-PUBLIC
-  NON RESIDENTIAL UNIMPROVED
-  COMMERCIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL






- ① PUBLIC PLAYGROUND
- ② YOUNG MEN'S REPUBLICAN CLUB
- ③ PUBLIC PARKING
- ④ ST. MARK'S CHURCH
- ⑤ GEORGE WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- ⑥ COUNTY PRISON
- ⑦ COURT HOUSE

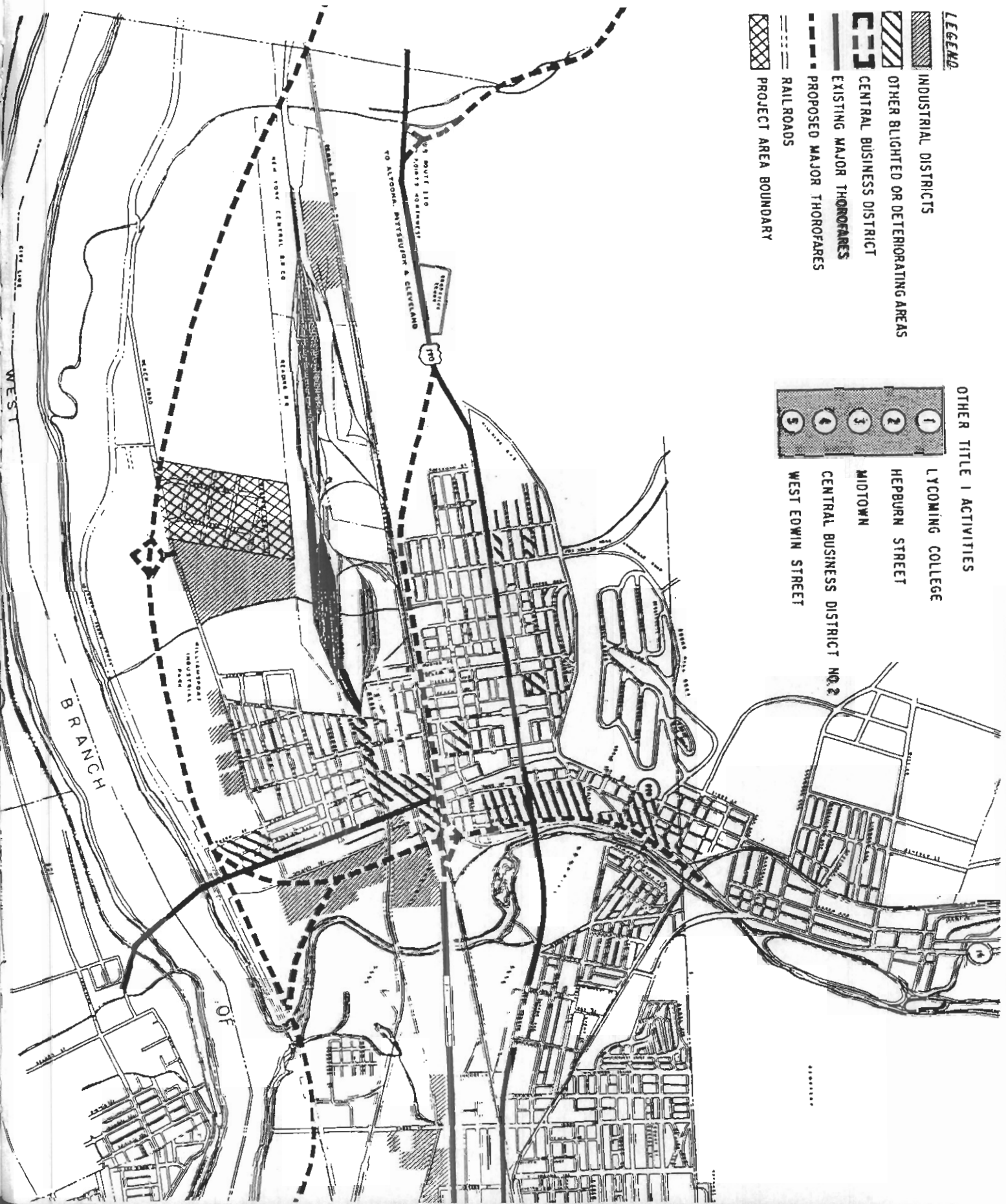
-  TOTAL NO. OF BUILDINGS WITH DEFICIENCIES
-  TOTAL NO. OF BUILDINGS IN BLOCK
-  TOTAL NO. OF BLDGS W/DEFICIENCIES WARRANTING CLEARANCE
-  TOTAL NO. OF BLDGS WARRANTING CLEARANCE TO REMOVE A BLIGHTING INFLUENCE
-  TOTAL NO. OF BLDGS IN BLOCK



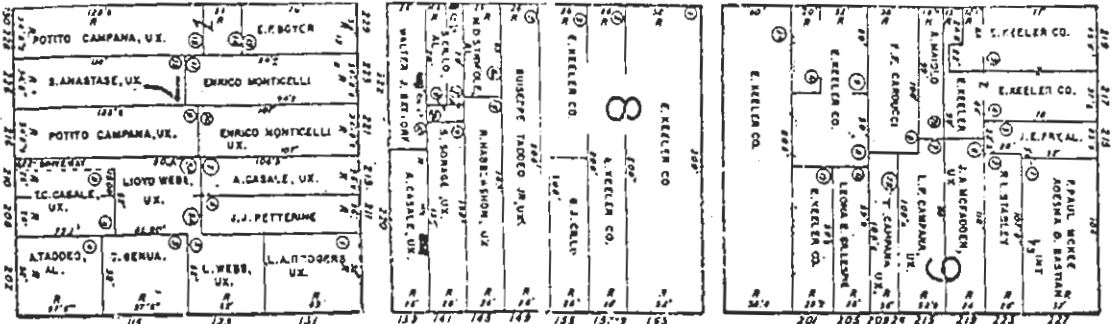
APPENDIX B

- LEGEND**
-  INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS
 -  OTHER BLIGHTED OR DETERIORATING AREAS
 -  CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
 -  EXISTING MAJOR THOROFARIES
 -  PROPOSED MAJOR THOROFARIES
 -  RAILROADS
 -  PROJECT AREA BOUNDARY

- OTHER TITLE I ACTIVITIES**
-  1 LYCOMING COLLEGE
 -  2 HEBURN STREET
 -  3 MIDTOWN
 -  4 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT NO. 2
 -  5 WEST EDWIN STREET

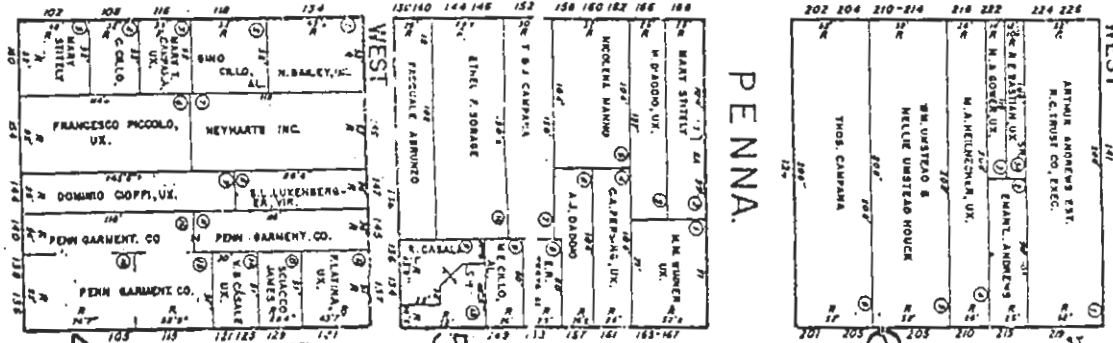


APPENDIX C



WILLIAM

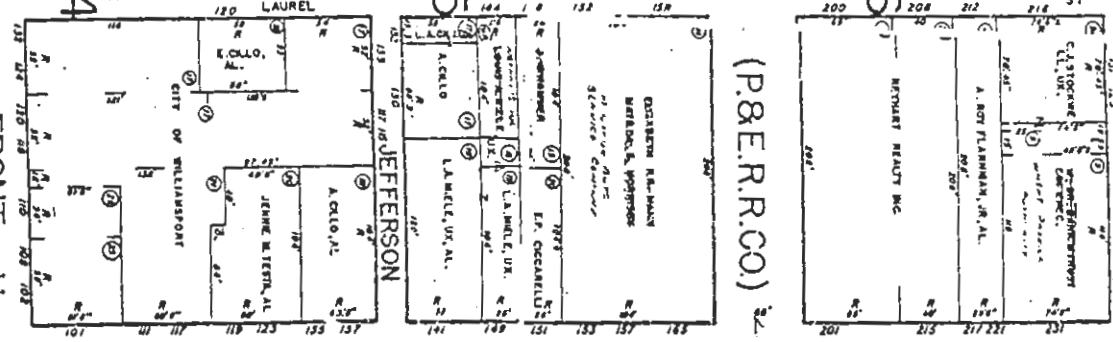
STREET.



SOUTH LINE OF FRONT ST AS EXTENDED BY COUNCIL IN 1913

WEST

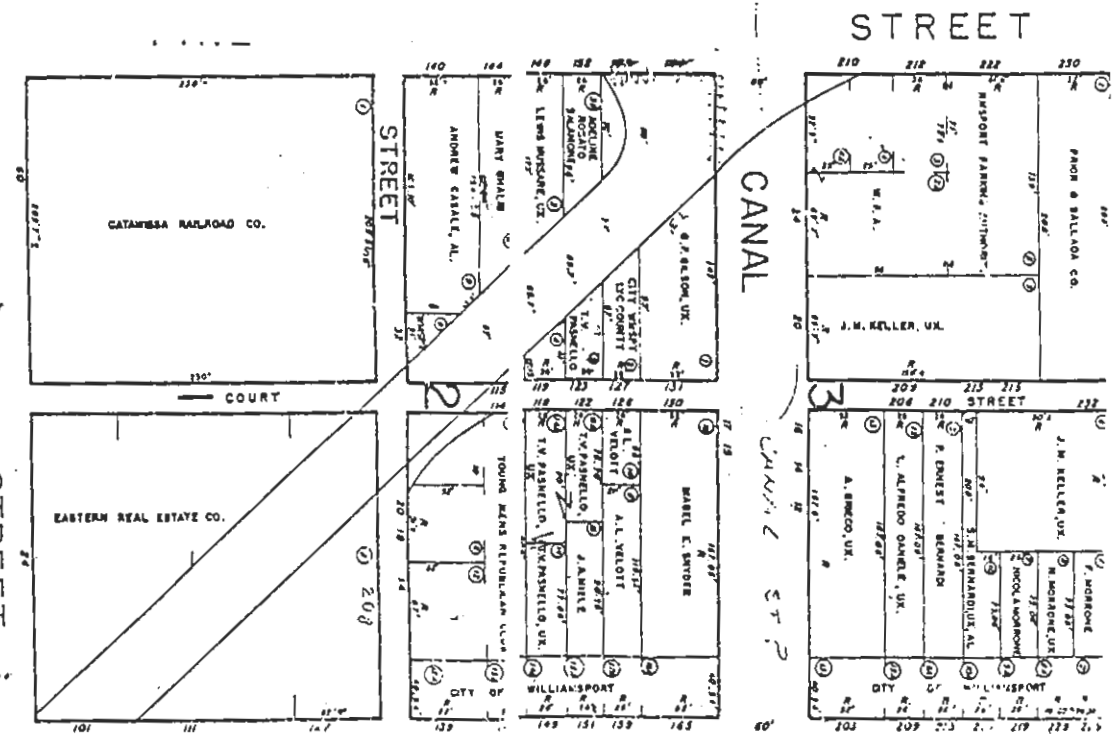
FRONT



L&N PARKWAY STATION

WEST

FRONT



COMM. OF PA.

54

CANTONIA RAILROAD CO. AT.

100° E. 302.35

32° 44' 20" E. 130'

DE

WEST

Church

ST

STREET

PENNA.

(P.&R.R.CO.)

CANAL

CANAL ST

MARKET

STREET

APPENDIX D

TO: Harry I. Sharrott
Assistant Regional Administrator for Renewal Assistance

FROM: Name of LPA : Redevelopment Authority of the
City of Williamsport
Locality : Williamsport, Pennsylvania
Project Name : Central Business District #2 (Canal Street)
Urban Renewal Area
Project No. : Pa. R-276

SUBJECT: Section 307 Determination

"Notwithstanding any other provision of this title, no contract shall be entered into for any loan or capital grant under this title for any project which provides for demolition and removal of buildings and improvements unless the Administrator determined that the objectives of the urban renewal plan could not be achieved through rehabilitation of the project area."

SECTION 307 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1964

1. Statement of Project Objectives

a. Urban Renewal Plan Objectives

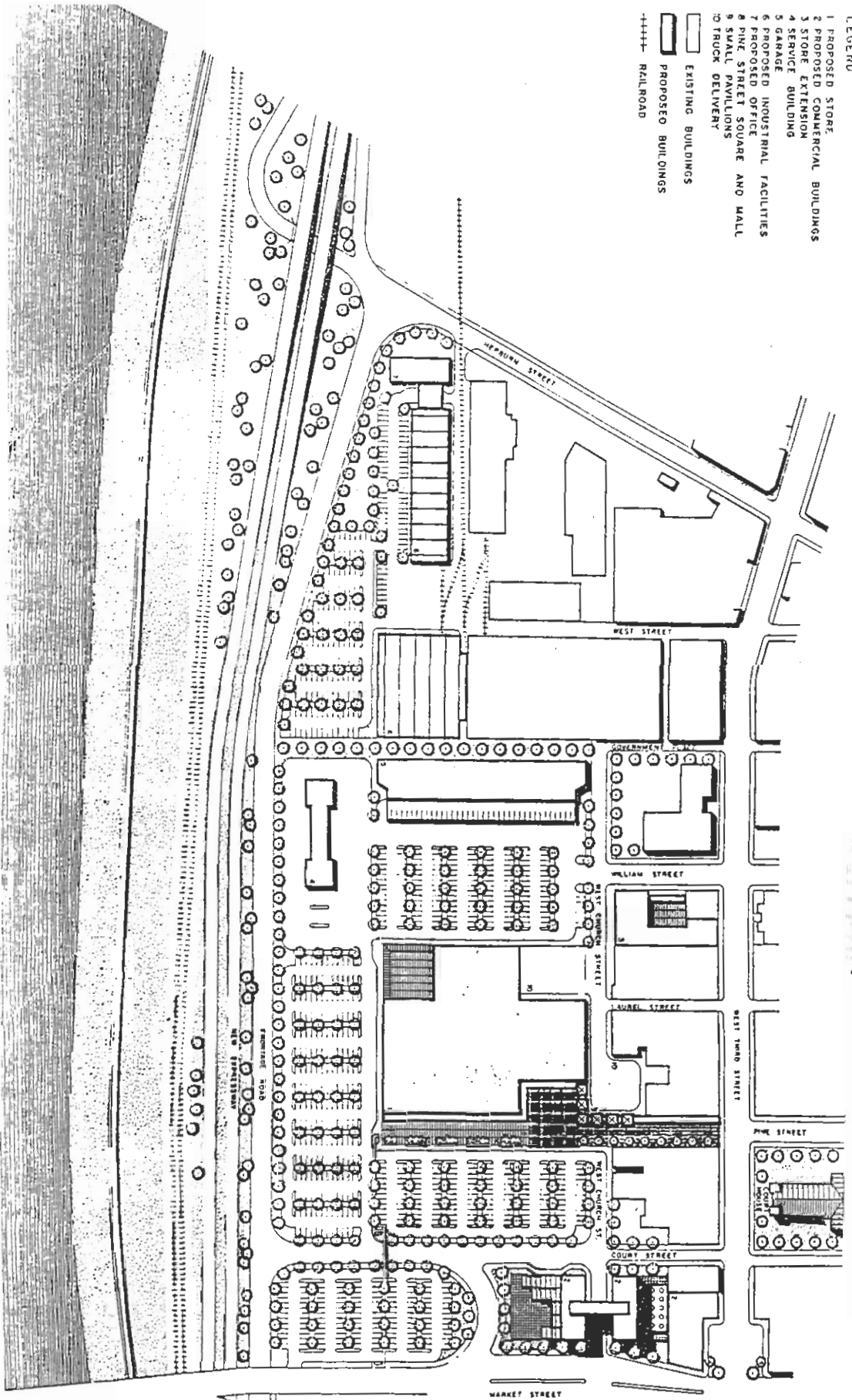
1. Clearance of structurally substandard buildings.
2. Clearance of those buildings which have a blighting influence on the area or are incompatible with the commercial and public uses proposed.
3. Assemblage of parcels for redevelopment.
4. Provide an environment which will generate a strong, healthy Central Business District to assure the continued viability of downtown Williamsport.
5. Achieve changes in land use.
6. To improve existing public facilities which will serve the community and provide those facilities which currently do not exist but which are necessary for such a community.
7. To make changes in the street pattern to assure better circulation for this area.

2. Tabulation of Buildings

- a. Total number of buildings in project area.....199
- b. Total number of buildings to be cleared.....180
- c. Number of buildings structurally substandard and requiring clearance.....110
- d. Number of buildings which must be cleared to remove blighting influences..... 0
- e. Number of buildings proposed for clearance in addition to those included in items c and d..... 70

APPENDIX E

- LEGEND
- 1 PROPOSED STORE
 - 2 PROPOSED COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS
 - 3 STORE EXTENSION
 - 4 SERVICE BUILDING
 - 5 GARAGE
 - 6 PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES
 - 7 PROPOSED OFFICE
 - 8 PINE STREET SQUARE AND MALL
 - 9 SMALL BUILDINGS
 - 10 TRUCK DELIVERY
- ▭ EXISTING BUILDINGS
 - ▭ PROPOSED BUILDINGS
 - ++++ RAILROAD



ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN
 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AREA NO. 2
 CITY OF WILLIAMSPORT

APPENDIX F

RUSSELL L. HERBICEK, LTD.

13234 Harbour Ridge Blvd.
Palm City, FL 34990-4861

November 22, 1993

Cathy Best
2370 West Southern Avenue
South Williamsport
PA 17701

Dear Cathy:

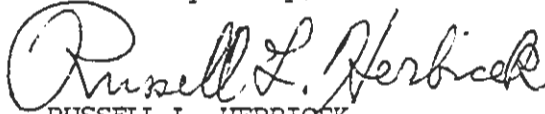
This will confirm our telephone conversations with regard to why Sears, Roebuck and Co. did not locate one of its retail stores in the Williamsport Urban Renewal area some years ago.

At the time I was the Real Estate Representative for Sears in charge of the State of Pennsylvania, among others, and I conducted the negotiations with the Mayor, City Council, and Urban Renewal executives in Williamsport. I found all of the above gentlemen cooperative in every way, as were the local businessmen represented by The Chamber of Commerce.

After many months of effort on the part of everyone mentioned above, it was not possible to develop a tract of land adequate to accomodate a Sears Store, Automotive Service Station, and customer parking in the Canal Street Project.

The help I received from local business people was truly remarkable. In no case, to my knowledge, was there ever any opposition by anyone. It stands to reason that the business operators and real estate owners in down town Williamsport were anxious to keep Sears and its customer traffic from leaving the City; they would have been in opposition to their own self-interest had they shown opposition. I hope that this letter will clear up the matter for you. Please call me if you have any further questions.

Yours very truly,

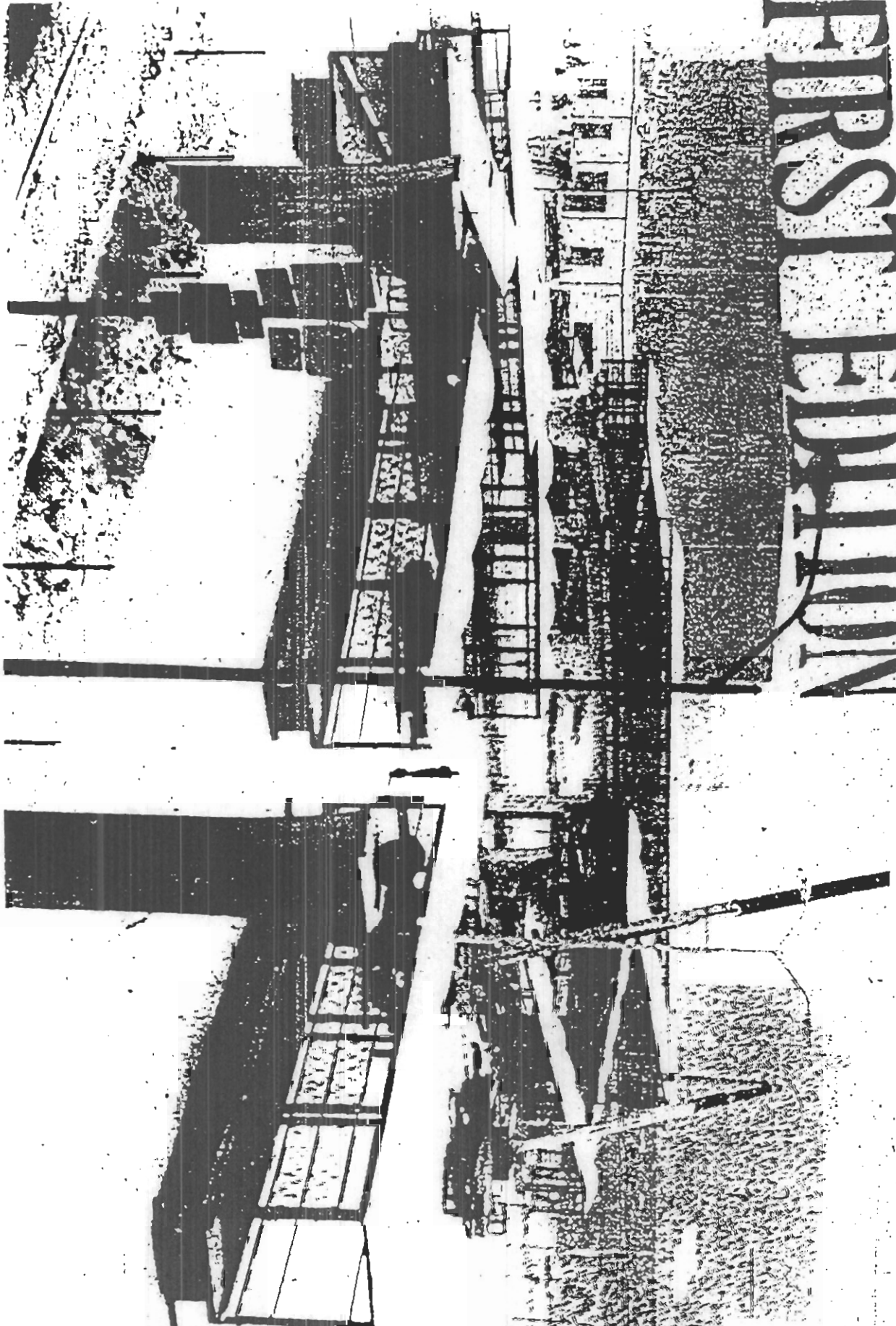


RUSSELL L. HERBICEK

RLH:s

FIRST EDITION

APPENDIX G



WITH WHITE STUFF falling all around, workmen for Allison Inc. and Stopper Construction Co. today continued to dismantle the pedestrian walkway that used to connect the Market Street bridge with the Canal Street renewal area. Allison employees are using that firm's equipment to remove the ramps and bubble-like plastic coverings in sections. Employees for Stopper will be removing the piers (foreground) and repaving those areas. The entire

walkway should be down next month and the repaving done in the spring. Said Benjamin E. Stopper, president of the Stopper firm. He said the two contractors already are working on "four-decks" calling for the purchase of portions of the walkway for reuse elsewhere. The contractor's paid the city \$1.10 for the right to remove the structure, which cost \$400,000 to construct in 1972.

APPENDIX H

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, from the east side of Hepburn Street, west side of market Street and Front Street to Church Street was nicknamed "Little Hollywood"; and

WHEREAS, "Little Hollywood" consisted of ninety-seven homes, factories, businesses and a playground; and

WHEREAS, a number of residents from "Little Hollywood" went onto successful positions as lawyers, doctors, priests and business owners; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, the Williamsport Redevelopment Authority claimed the land in those boundaries and forced the residents to move on; and

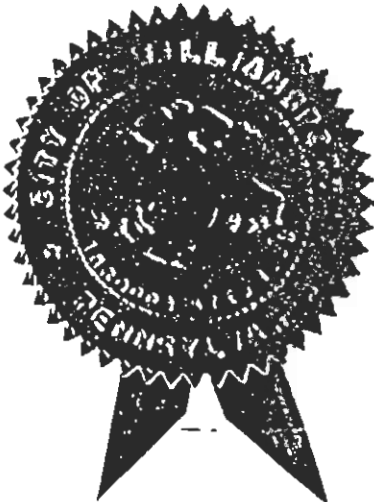
WHEREAS, in 1970, the last of the residents left their neighborhood of "Little Hollywood" to begin anew.

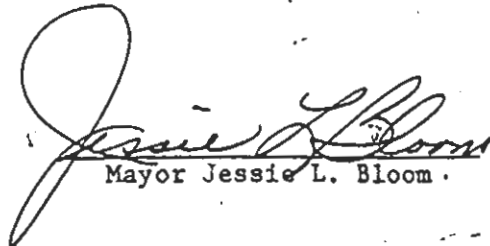
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jessie L. Bloom, Mayor of the City of Williamsport, do hereby proclaim, Sunday, August 4, 1991, as:

"LITTLE HOLLYWOOD DAY"

and wish the residents of that community well as they celebrate their Twenty Year Reunion in Brandon Park.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Williamsport to be affixed this 3rd day of August, 1991.




Mayor Jessie L. Bloom.

APPENDIX I

Remembering Little Hollywood

Separated by space but not in spirit..residents of Little Hollywood
will reunite after many years

To reminisce with friendly faces; to mend some fences
To share memories with sad and happy tears

Remembering how the so-called "progress" of redevelopment swept down
and public domain prevailed

Never forgetting how some fought the court, to the bitter end, only
to witness a system failed!!!

The names..Schemery, Novello, Campana, Casale, Fry and Piccolo.....

Cioffi, Stabbing, Smith, Miele, Cillo and Taddeo

Walking along Market, Hepburn, Church or Pine Street....Front, Laurel
or William Street...with always a friendly face to greet!

Good neighbors whose doors were never closed

Whose hearts were always open

Together struggled, worshipped, laughed and cried...

Shared the joys of birth...and mourned those that died..

They watched out for each others children and cared for the sick

No matter what tough times brought their way they stood united through
thin and thick

Creative people with vision to build the first playground..which served
as the model for many more to come

I have only fond memories of romping there...when I was very young

I will never forget the last visit to my Uncle's house....

The same house my Grandparents raised their family in, so many years before
And when I crossed the bridge home I cried..knowing that house would stand
no more

This summer I crossed that bridge again with my husband and son..taking
our boy to baseball camp..telling him the tales of happy times since gone
It dawned on me, one day my grandchild may cross that very bridge and
it'll be my son who will pass the legacy of Little Hollywood on.

To complete the circle, this week when we pick up our son....my folks
will watch him play.....

And when we head back I'll know not only a piece of my Mom's heart and
mine..but a piece of my son's heart will always stay

I suppose on the journey it will be no sudden surprise

That tears for this wonderful place will fall from another generations eye

Always Remember!

"Separated By Space But Not In Spirit"

Dominick Cioffi - 1991

As a tribute to my Uncle Dom for his dedication to organizing the
1991 reunion of Little Hollywood residents on August 4th, 1991 at
~~FRANCOIS~~ Park. Thank you for instilling, through your fine example,
a strong sense of family and community in all of us..no matter where
we are.

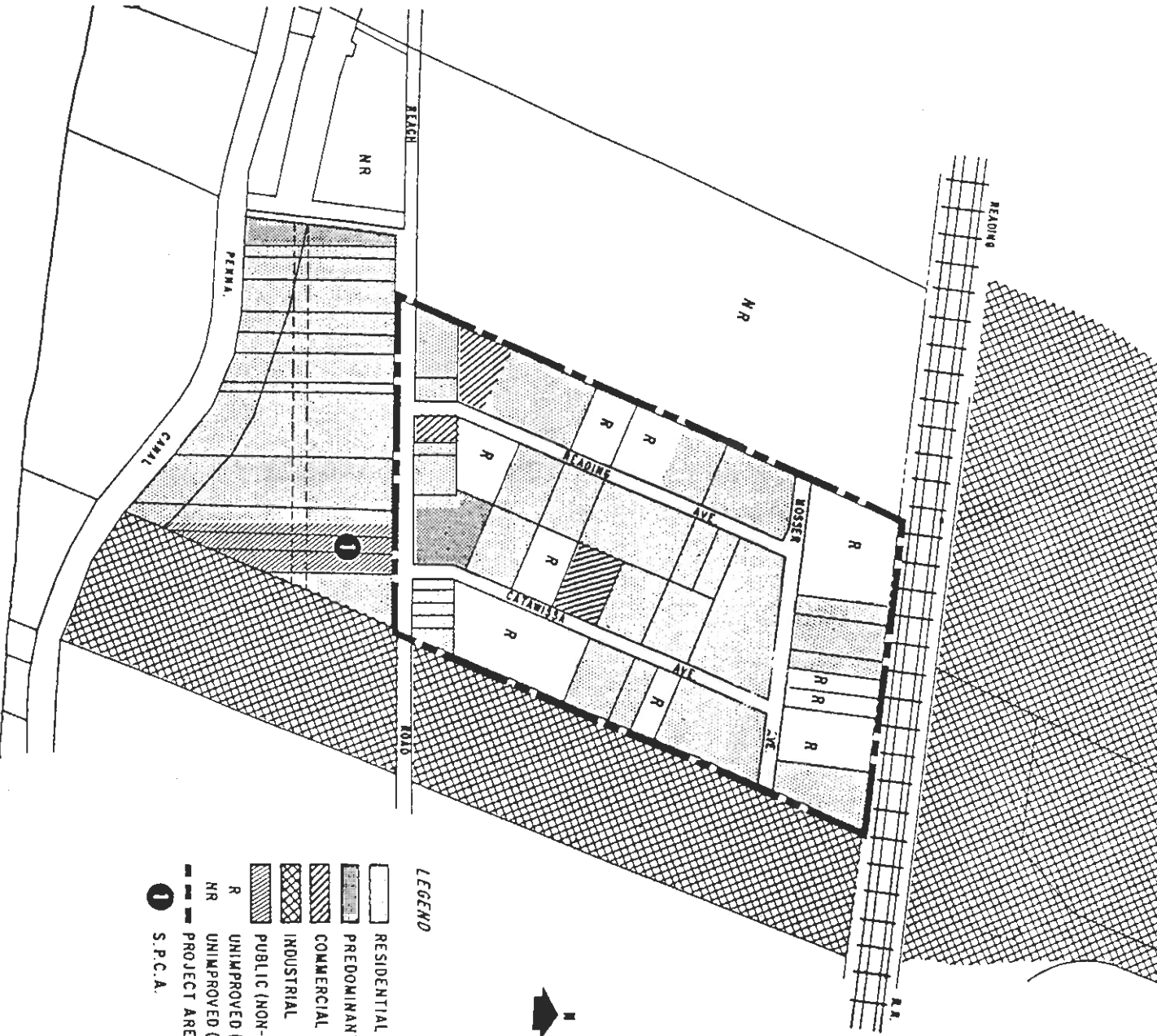
Your loving niece,










Fran Bisapia...Daughter of Anna Cioffi

Grand-daughter of

Guiseppe & Lucia Cioffi

APPENDIX J

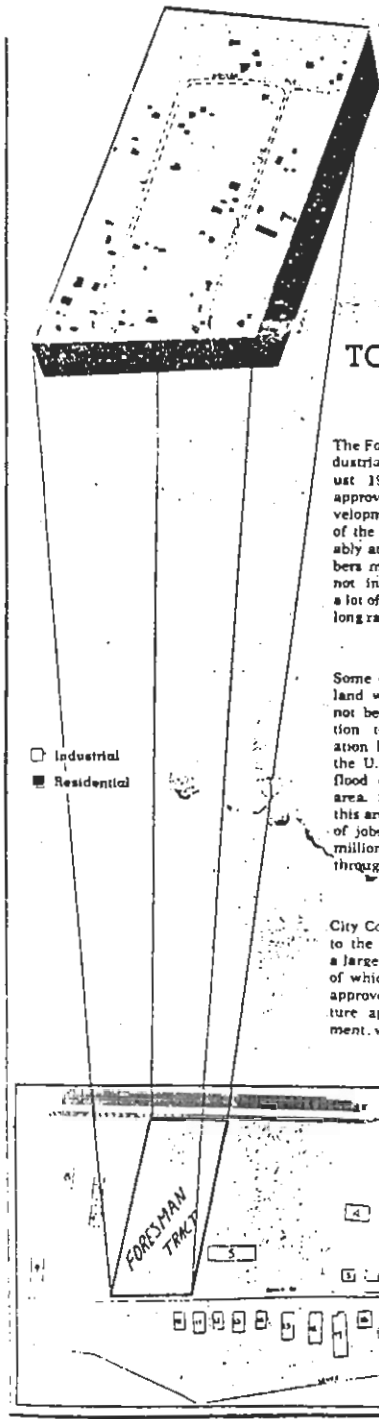


- LEGEND**
-  RESIDENTIAL
 -  PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL
 -  COMMERCIAL
 -  INDUSTRIAL
 -  PUBLIC (NON-RESIDENTIAL RELATED)
 -  UNIMPROVED (RESIDENTIAL RELATED)
 -  NR UNIMPROVED (NON-RESIDENTIAL RELATED)
 -  PROJECT AREA BOUNDARY
 -  S.P.C.A.



APPENDIX K

Jobs Lost?



City Council by a 3-2 vote, disapproved the plan to acquire the Foresman Tract* within the Williamsport Industrial Park

THIS ACTION IS A SERIOUS BLOW AND SET-BACK TO FUTURE JOBS FOR WILLIAMSPORT

Let's look at the facts!



The Foresman Tract has been zoned "industrial" since 1960. As long ago as August 1967, City Council unanimously approved the project for industrial development. Three of the five members of the present City Council voted favorably at that time. Present council members must realize that this project was not initiated hastily, to the contrary, a lot of time and money has gone into the long range planning.

Some council members forget that this land would be almost valueless had it not been for the predecessor organization to Industrial Properties Corporation having the foresight to persuade the U.S. Corps of Engineers to provide flood control for all the Reach Road area. Since industrial development in this area began it has provided hundreds of jobs for our people and contributed millions of dollars to our economy through payrolls.

City Council is not giving consideration to the fact that the state has invested a large sum of money in this project all of which will be lost if council does not approve by June 30. Furthermore, future applications to the state government, will be given little consideration

If a council unanimously approves a project and then after high expenditures of governmental money they veto a resolution which was originally recommended which would result in more jobs and less taxes for all the citizens.

It was reported on June 6 that one council member said possibly he would vote for the project in the future if he felt sufficient housing were available. Definite progress is being made by The Williamsport Housing Authority and other organizations. A recent survey of available housing in Williamsport indicates over 150 homes in the \$5,000 to \$15,000 range.

In every city some people are always hurt no matter what program is developed, but the final decision must be in the interest of and for the benefit of all the people and the community as a whole.

Without industrial development, the creator of more jobs, Williamsport and the area will slide backwards.

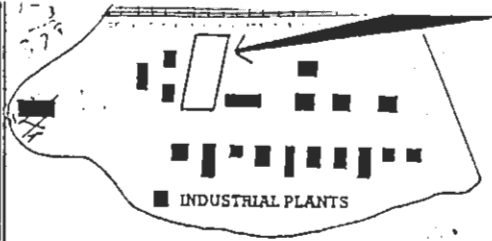
We sincerely hope the present city council will reconsider their action before June 30 and make it possible for Williamsport to move forward in the field of creating more jobs.

INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES CORPORATION

A public service non-profit organization
Division Greater Williamsport Chamber of Commerce

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mucke Vending | 8. C. A. Reed | 15. Isell |
| 2. Cobblers | 9. Kemper Brothers | 16. Hopeman Lumber |
| 3. Roler | 10. Glamorise | 17. Craftool |
| 4. Alean Coble | 11. H. P. Rattmell | 18. Ila Electric |
| 5. M. W. Kellogg | 12. E. H. Hall | 19. Tolley Tea |
| 6. Farvill Mills | 13. Aveco | 20. Greunberg Elec. |
| 7. New Industry | 14. PMF Industries | |

APPENDIX L



RESIDENTIAL
-- OR --
INDUSTRIAL



The Foresman Tract as a part of
Industrial Park will produce **MORE**
Taxes for the City, County and
School District.

	FORESMAN TRACT AT PRESENT With RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES (No expansion expected)	FORESMAN TRACT AS PROPOSED WITH FUTURE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
	NOW PRODUCES	WILL PRODUCE
	<i>Annually</i>	<i>Annually</i>
REAL ESTATE TAXES:		
• CITY	\$2,234.00	\$22,500.00
• COUNTY	850.00	9,333.00
• SCHOOL DISTRICT	2,307.00	25,333.00
PERSONAL TAXES:		
• Wage Tax	56.00*	57,984.00
• Per Capita		
• Occupation		
• Occupation Privilege		
TOTAL	\$10,991.00	\$115,150.00*

**CAN THESE TAXING BODIES AFFORD TO
LOSE \$104,159.00 IN ADDITIONAL REVENUE** ?
AS A TAXPAYER, CAN YOU AFFORD IT?

The protest of the people living in the Foresman Tract is understandable, but Council's decision **must** be in the interest of the entire community.

New job opportunities are essential if Williamsport is to reverse its population decline.

You're Invited

to drive through the Industrial Park and determine
for yourself why this land should be used for
industrial expansion.

INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES CORPORATION

A public service non-profit organization

Division Greater Williamsport Chamber of Commerce

* Approximate

APPENDIX M

g... ..

Go Ahead Son... Kick-em Again. They can't hurt
 U.S... Councils on our side.

IT'S OUR
 GOVERNMENT
 TOO!

HEMELER
 HUNTER

PRIVATE PROPERTY

URBAN RENEWAL
 SMOOSH
 RED DEVELOP

ESTABLISHMENT
 CHAMBER
 OF
 COMMERCE
 SUNGRLT
 I.P.C.

"Maybe We Shouldn't"
 "I Say Yes"
 "Youngman Says Yes!"
 "I Vote No!"
 "The Area is Blighted"
 "The Chamber Wants IT"
 "We Have No Choice"
 "I object"
 "Get the Police!"

RIGHTS ARE UNDER ATTACK
 PROTECT THEM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
 Is the RIGHT to own your home worth defending?

JOIN the PROPERTY RIGHTS MARCH on CITY HALL

This Thurs. October 12th 5:45PM AT W.A.C.C. W. THIRD ST.

CITY HALL
 POLICE
 CITY COUNCIL

The development of the community of Williansport has been stalled too long by the procrastination of a few men on the Williansport Redevelopment Authority.

It is time that the meager accomplishments of the Authority were looked at in light of the monies they have been allocated. The main function of the Authority has been to demolish existing structures which had been producing tax revenue for the city and replacing them with empty promises for the future. The delays on Canal St., West Edwin St., and Industrial Park are inexcusable and the loss in taxes due to demolition has cost the people over half a million dollars in the past 5 years alone.

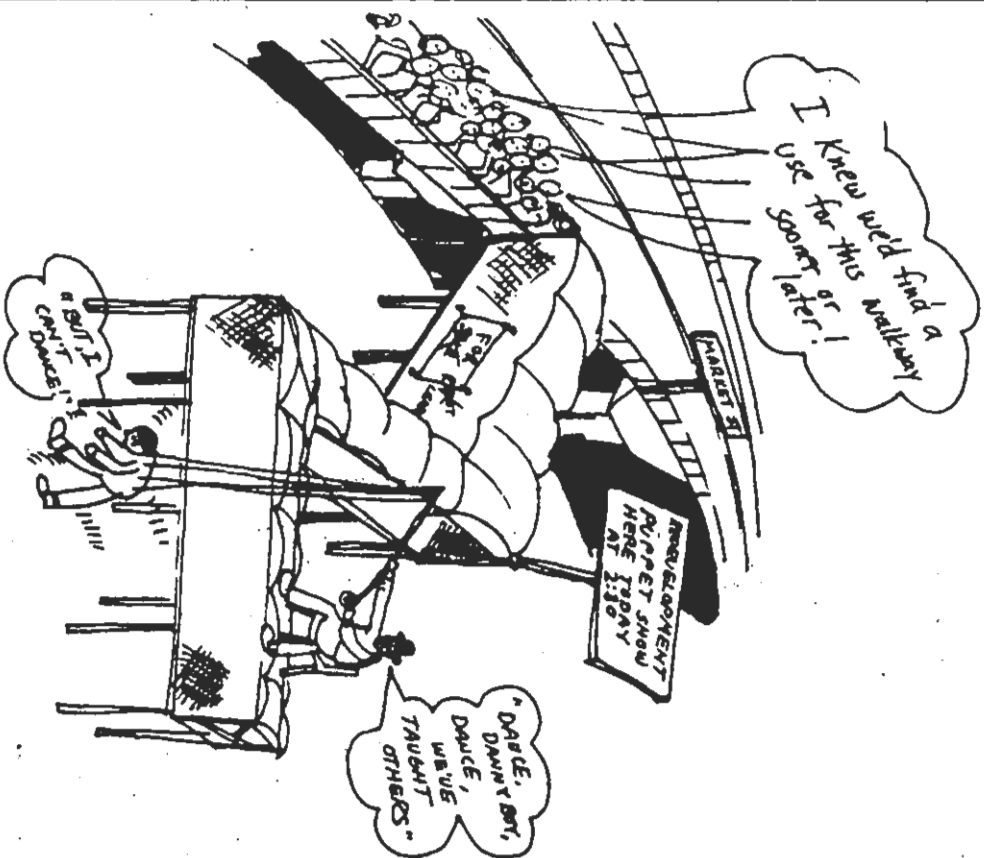
Their administrative budget is \$101,000 per year, most of which goes to salaries. Last year the fruit of their labor was a \$70,000 energy conservation program which consisted of insulating a few homes. Although energy conservation is vital, this is a very poor showing when considering they spent over two dollars on administration for every dollar in programs. Consider also the folly of the \$500,000 walkway which no one may ever walk on.

A new direction must be taken on the Redevelopment of Williansport. The Mayor feels that the issue has been bogged down for too long. A program of housing rehabilitation, housing establishment, and an achievable approach to development is needed.

The Mayor believes that this great responsibility would best be centered in the Community Development Program in City Hall where it would be closer to the Mayor's office and closer to the people of this community whom it is supposed to help. The City is now entitled to \$1,080,000 yearly in Community Development funds and the Mayor is to be responsible for their administration.

Redevelopment is a full-time job and it is time the people of this community got the job they pay for.

APPENDIX N



51. Francis A. Daniele, Interview by author, 25 October 1993.
52. Francis A. Daniele, Interview by author, 25 October 1993.
53. Carl Nolan, Interview by author, 23 November 1993.
54. Carl Nolan, Interview by author, 28 November 1993.
55. Leo L. Taddeo, Interview by author, 27 October 1993.
56. Jennie T. D'Addio, Interview by author, 3 November 1993.
57. Carl Nolan, Interview by author, 24 November 1993.
58. Jennie D'Addio, Interview with author, 3 November 1993.
59. Jennie T. D'Addio, Interview by author, 3 November 1993.
60. Antonette Casale, Interview by author, 18 November 1993.
61. Antonette Casale, Interview by author, 18 November 1993.
62. Dominick Cioffi, Interview with author, 27 October 1993.
63. Ernest Noviello, Interview with author, 19 November 1993.
64. Carl Nolan, Interview by author, 16 November 1993.
65. Ibid.
66. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Office of the Auditor General, Audit Report for the period beginning 16 June 1960 and ending 30 June 1972, dated 14 September 1972.
67. Ibid.
68. Dominick Cioffi, Interview by author, 27 October 1993.
69. Dominick Cioffi, Interview by author, 27 October 1993.
70. Carmen Genua, Interview by author, 19 November 1993.
71. Antonette Casale, Interview by author, 18 November 1993.
72. Ibid.
73. Leo T. Taddeo, Interview by author, 27 October 1993.
74. Francis A. Daniele, Interview by author, 25 October 1993.
75. Francis A. Daniele, Interview by author, 25 October 1993.

APPENDIX O



PROTESTERS IN THE FORESMAN PLOT They stand together . . . ERTEL .. FILA .. KADASH .. DAN-NEKER

APPENDIX P

RELEASE

I/WE do hereby compromise any and all claims against the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Williamsport, the City of Williamsport and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania arising out of the actual or proposed condemnation of my/our property located in the Industrial Park Project of the said Authority and do release and discharge the Authority, the City and the Commonwealth, together with their respective employees or officials, from any and all liability, from all claims for all injuries that may hereafter develop, as well as those now apparent, and also do release and discharge the aforesaid from all causes of actions and claims for injury and damages, which I/we have or might have arising out of such injuries, either to my/our person or property, real or personal, and from all claims, demands or causes of action whatsoever which I/we may have against the Authority, the City and the Commonwealth and their said employees or officials, and do hereby acknowledge full satisfaction of all such liability and causes of action, it being the intention of the parties that all matters of differences between them shall be and are hereby compromised and settled.

As consideration therefor, it is agreed that the Redevelopment Authority will discontinue its plans for the acquisition of property in the Industrial Park Project and that all condemnation actions involving said project currently in progress in the United States Federal Courts and the Courts of Lycoming County as well as those planned for the future will be

discontinued and the Authority will abandon the project, provided, however, that the Authority's decision to abandon the project must be approved by the City Council of the City of Williamsport, as well as the appropriate agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

It is understood and agreed that this Release is also made conditional upon similar Releases being signed by every other property owner whose property has been condemned or subject to condemnation by the Authority and who have not settled to date with the Authority in the Industrial Park Project.

It is agreed that the above named consideration is the sole consideration for this Release, and the consideration stated herein is contractual and not a mere recital, and all agreements and understandings between the parties are embodied and expressed herein.

I/We have read this Release. I/We know that I/we am/are settling all matters of every kind and description between the parties, and that no representation of any kind has been made to me/us.

In witness whereof, I/we for my/ourselves, my/our heirs and assigns, and intending to be legally bound, have executed this Release this day of , 197 .

WITNESS:

PROPERTY OWNERS

_____ (SEAL)

_____ (SEAL)