RAILROAD SURVEY RESULTS SHOW GREENBELT FAVORED OPTION

Results of a survey taken last spring of residents along the L&N Railroad corridor in the Vollintine-Evergreen community showed most homeowners preferred to turn the abandoned land into a greenbelt.

The survey results were released to the VECA executive committee in January by Dr. Michael P. Kirby, political science professor at Southwestern, who supervised the survey. The VECA general membership was scheduled to act on Kirby's recommendation to turn the abandoned right-of-way into a greenbelt at its Jan. 23 meeting. The Evergreen News' press time could not accommodate the meeting results in the February issue, but a full report will be given in March.

Eighty-six survey questionnaires were fully completed by residents living along the western, middle and eastern sections of the right-of-way. Respondents were given six options as to what might be done with the abandoned property. They were asked to rate each one in terms of excellent, good, average, not so good, or poor.

The survey found homeowners over 50 years old who have lived in the area for more than a year, most preferred a greenbelt, while their least preferred option was to do nothing at all.

"On the other hand," states Kirby in his conclusions, "residents who were under 30 years of age who rented their homes and had lived in the area for less than a year preferred the option of letting anyone purchase the land. Their least favorite option was to allow developers to purchase the land."

Response was mixed on allowing Memphis Light Gas and Water to purchase the land. But the option of allowing developers to purchase large tracts of the land for housing, including duplexes and multi-family units, was one which 49 percent of the respondents felt was a poor idea.

Sixty-one percent of the respondents felt turning the area into a greenbelt which would be owned either by the city or VECA was an excellent or good choice. Fifty-one percent felt the same about building a non-motorized bike path through the VECA area to the downtown area, connecting with the river promenade. Sixty-nine percent said they would be willing to pay a small fee to maintain the area.

In conclusion, Kirby states, "A greenbelt would make the neighborhood more attractive and would be the easiest option of all involved. A small yearly maintenance fee could be charged with little disagreement. It would be worthwhile to look into hiring a security patrol team to insure protection of the area, or form a neighborhood watch program."

(Continued on page 3)
COMMUNITY BABYSITTING CO-OP SEeks MORE MEMBERS

By B. J. Connor

The Vollandine-Evergreen community's babysitting co-op has gotten off the ground.

Now it would like more aboard.

The fledgling group, started in October, has five active members, for a total of 10 children. The idea is simple: you take care of my kids occasionally, and I'll take care of yours.

Members "pay" each other with paper credit slips, not money, based on the number of children and hours. The group includes employed and stay-at-home parents, so sitting is available both days and evenings.

Youngsters make new friends and look forward to going to each other's homes. Parents have the peace of mind of knowing their children are with conscientious adults familiar with such factors as medical emergencies. The co-op eliminates the frustration of calling numerous teen sitters who all have dates.

Although the co-op is a means of saving money, there is a price in terms of time for monthly meetings, taking turns handling bookwork, and vigilance during the actual babysitting. The time spent is well worthwhile, according to those involved.

Boundaries for membership are the VECA boundaries (Cypress Creek, North; North Parkway, South; Trezevant/Springdale, East; and North Watkins, West). The group welcomes new participants. For more information, please call B.J. Connor at 324-8508.

A few volunteers' names were accidentally left off the list of Evergreen News carriers which ran in the paper last month. They are Bobby Hill and Gladys Hampton, who take care of both sides of McNeil from Henry to Vollandine and Shelly Fingerette who delivers along University and Vollandine and University and Edwards.
Railroad Survey (Continued)

Results of the survey and VECA's recommendations will be released to city and state government officials who will have to answer three questions before any action can be taken on the greenbelt issue. Those questions are: Who legally owns the land? What price should be put on the land? Who will maintain the land until something is done with it?

The railroad survey results are available for public viewing at the VECA office in Lindsay Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1663 Tutwiler or at any VECA meeting.

NEWS BRIEFS

"Archaic Chinese Bronzes from the Morse Collection/Ancient Chinese Ceramics from Memphis Collections" will be available for public viewing at Brooks Museum of Art through March 4. These priceless examples of ancient Chinese bronzes and ceramics will provide museum visitors an in-depth view of the rituals, artistry, and sophistication of ancient Chinese dynasties.

EVERGREEN NEWS’ FINANCIAL REPORT

(Continued)

Income from advertising and donations amounted to $3,115.45. Expenses for printing were $2,998.31 and stamps and supplies cost $58.21 for total expenses of $3,056.52. The Evergreen News showed a profit of $58.93 which will be carried over to 1984 and be used for stamps and supplies or to supplement printing costs when advertising does not suffice.

FINANCIAL REPORT

by Martha Heinemann, VECA Treasurer

Since the officers of the Vollentine Evergreen Community Association are elected in March, the fiscal year is April 1 through March 31. This report covers the period April 1 through October 31, 1983.

The funds of VECA are deposited in two accounts: United Cash Management Open Account, a money-market mutual fund, and a non-interest-bearing checking account at Union Planters National Bank. There are no service charges on the checking account.

The balance in the UCM account on April 1 was $1,661.33. On October 31, it was $1,744.76, the total increase being interest earned. We made no deposits or withdrawals.

On April 1, the balance at Union Planters was $980.91. On October 31, it was $742.41. Receipts and expenses are itemized below:

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>dues, new and renewal</td>
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<td>reimbursement from Trophy Co.</td>
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<tr>
<td>sale of bumper stickers &amp; posters</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<td>gift for retiring officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>postage</td>
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<tr>
<td>office supplies, photocopies</td>
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<tr>
<td>contribution to Lindsay Memorial Presbyterian Church for use of facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>contribution to Crimestoppers</td>
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<td>miscellaneous</td>
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<tr>
<td>ads for VECA yard sale</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$372.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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It's convenient... economical!

All These Products Can be Delivered to Your Door

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- ½ Gal. Homogenized Milk
- Qt. Homogenized Milk
- Gal. 2% LowFat Milk
- ½ Gal. 2% LowFat Milk
- ½ Gal. LesCal Skim Milk
- ½ Gal. Buttermilk
- Qt. Buttermilk
- Qt. Bulgarian Style Buttermilk
- Qt. Chocolate Milk
- Pt. Half & Half Cream
- Qt. Half & Half Cream
- ½ Pt. XX Whipping Cream
- 6½ Oz. Can Whip Topping
- 8 Oz. Sour Cream
- 8 Oz. Chip Dip (French Onion)
- 12 Oz. Cottage Cheese
- 24 Oz. Cottage Cheese
- 8 Oz. Yogurt
- 1 Lb. Creamery Butter
- 1 Lb. Margarine Quarters
- 1 Dz. Extra Large Eggs
- ½ Gal. Vanilla Ice Milk Mix
- Gal. Pure Orange Juice
- ½ Gal. Pure Orange Juice
- ½ Gal. Tropicana Orange Juice
- Qt. Tropicana Orange Juice
- Qt. Tropicana Grapefruit Juice
- ½ Gal. Pure Lemonade
- Qt. Fruit Drink
- ½ Gal. Fruit Drink
- Gal. Fruit Drink
- 10 Lb. Low Suds Detergent
- 25 Lb. Low Suds Detergent

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- Worship: 11:00 a.m.
- Wednesday's Supper & Program 5:45 p.m.
- Minister: W. Ned Hollandsworth
- Recreation Center 6 Days a Week
Editor's Note: Does dilapidated housing on your street bring you to a slow boil? The following article was written by the city official who usually takes the heat about decaying housing in Memphis. The Evergreen News invited R.G. Holladay, Jr., deputy director of Housing and Community Development to author an article concerning this common neighborhood problem. What he submitted (many more months ago than the Evergreen News cares to admit) is an insightful look at his department, the balancing of human needs and human hardships and his belief in housing as a precious asset. We appreciate Holladay's article and his patience in seeing it printed.

**HOUSING: A PRECIOUS RESOURCE**

by R.G. Holladay, Jr.

Thank you, *Evergreen News*, for the chance to talk to the people of the VEGA area about housing. You have a strong neighborhood, with many fine and substantial homes. The notes below will tell you something about what at least one city department does to try to keep it that way.

Almost every neighborhood has a “problem house” or two. The phrases we most frequently hear about them are — “nothing is being done” or “why don’t you do something?” Believe me, there are times when I wish I had a giant laser gun so I could just dematerialize the offending structure. But it shouldn’t be that easy and it isn’t.

The truth is that somewhere between 90 and 95 percent of the housing which will exist in the year 2000 is already out there — it is already standing — it is already in your neighborhood or mine. That means we have to concentrate on preserving what we have and that takes patience.

The City’s Housing Code exists for the purpose of protecting public health, safety, and welfare in buildings used for dwelling purposes by establishing minimum standards and by fixing the responsibilities of owners and occupants. Its collateral mission is the conservation and preservation of the city’s aging housing stock.

Housing Improvement, a department of the Division of Housing and Community Development, is responsible for housing code inspections in Memphis. Unlike many cities in which housing code inspections are one function of the building inspection department, the City of Memphis has separated the inspection of existing housing from that of new dwellings and other types of buildings.

This separation of functions offers Memphis an advantage that few cities have. Housing code inspections are not subordinated to building code inspections in a department primarily oriented toward improving the quality of new construction. Instead, they are part of Housing and Community Development and neighborhood preservation efforts by a department whose primary concern is strengthening the existing community and housing stock.

The Housing Improvement Department conducts two major types of activities: systematic house-by-house inspections of designated geographic areas, and inspections in response to complaints throughout the city. Both interior and exterior inspections are conducted as part of both types of activities. In conducting housing code inspections, the Housing Improvement Department’s general approach is to apply the housing code as equitably as possible, using the same standards for all types of owners and neighborhoods.

In recognition of the physical, financial, and market conditions that affect an owner’s ability to afford housing repairs, however, the department attempts to analyze problems on a case-by-case basis. Like most housing codes, the minimum code used in Memphis establishes only general standards that rely in part on the interpretation of individual inspectors.

For example, the code states that “every foundation, exterior wall, roof and all other exterior surfaces shall be maintained in a workmanlike state of maintenance and repair and shall be kept in such condition as to exclude rodents and other vermin.” Phrases such as “workmanlike state maintenance,” “safe to use,” “safe condition,” and “reasonably free from dampness” leave exact interpretation to the inspector. In very few instances does the code specify exact standards.

Consequently, some flexibility exists in the code for inspectors to take into account factors such as the owner’s financial capability when determining repair needs. An elderly owner-occupant with limited income might not, for instance, be required to repaint all surfaces covered with lead base paint in a home where no children reside. *Removal of basic health and safety violations is however considered a necessity in all cases.*

The department uses a variety of administrative procedures, in conjunction with monthly reinspectons and owner contacts, to encourage the repair of property which is below standard. There are at least five possible resolutions for cases:

1) The house is sufficiently repaired and the case is closed.

2) The owner or responsible party cannot be located or ownership is disputed. The City Council condemns the property and it is eventually demolished.

3) The owner is unable to sell the property; abandons it; and the property is demolished through the Abandoned Structures Program.

4) The absentee owner is unwilling or unable to make repairs. The tenant is ordered to move out and the house is closed down. Often vandalism and eventual condemnation follow.

5) The owner-occupant is unable to make repairs and applies for and receives exemption as a hardship case. At a later date, certain repairs may be effected on the structure by the department itself under the hardship repair program.

The real truth, of course, is that the department does not have the influence we might wish for it. It cannot manipulate the forces of the marketplace; it cannot dictate an owner’s confidence in his neighborhood; it cannot prevent sickness or old age or job loss. After all, a housing problem is always the symptom of a people problem. There is no way on earth the city can make people spend money they don’t want to spend or don’t have in the first place.

What the city can do is what VEGA can do — encourage people, give them confidence, make them believe. We can intervene when things are going the wrong way. We can educate. We can remind people, again and again, that housing is both a precious and a wasting asset. We all need to continue to contribute what we can to its future.
In truck and on bike, we journeyed through the rural autumn countryside and discovered the overall volunteer spirit of Tennesseans. They lent hands of support, stared in curious disbelief, and genuine friendliness. Averaging about 80 miles per day, I wheeled into Confederate park on a jubilant Saturday where a crowd of well-wishers welcomed me back to the flatlands.

VECA ELECTIONS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER
By Kathie Jarmon Kerr

March is an exciting and important month for the Vollintine Evergreen Community Association. VECA's general membership will elect a new president and vice president at its March 26 meeting, 7 p.m. at Lindsay Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1663 Tutwiler. The new officers' terms begin immediately.

The VECA executive committee has appointed a nominating committee of three people to seek out qualified and willing candidates for the positions. They will make their suggestions at the March 26 meeting, at which time nominations also can be made from the floor. Candidates must be members of VECA but may join at any time prior to the meeting.

There has always been a wide selection of qualified applicants, but very few willing ones. People are put off by the time and commitment the jobs call for and are hesitant to tackle issues like the abandoned L&N right-of-way, the fate of the I-40 corridor through Midtown, and the realization of a VECA brochure. But people in this community have never been the kind to back off from tough jobs, and we don't think they'll start now.

Perhaps more than ever before, VECA needs strong leaders who will energize the community association with fresh ideas and convince more of its 220 members to become actively involved. The more people willing to shoulder the work, the more we can get accomplished.

Please help make this election year for VECA a successful one by volunteering your services or by letting one of the following people on the nominating committee know of someone you think would make a good president or vice president. The people to call are Rebecca Smith, at work, 324-7101; Martha Heinemann, at home, 725-7228; and Joe Hough, at home, 274-5551.

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