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THE PEOPLE IN PLANNING

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Edmund N. Bacon
of Philadelphia
City Planning Commission

Citizen participation is the cutting edge of the
future of planning. It is not citizen consultation, nor is
it citizen decoration. It cuts deep into the fundamental
tenets of the planning profession and the technology and
intellectual beliefs which support them.

The phenomenon of the new awareness of citizen
participation is extending across the face of the globe.
From the black ghettos of the North American cities to the
sunny calm of Brisbane is a long trip, but one well worth
making. Something of the extent of its revolutionary
character can be gleaned from contemplation of the simple
sentence, "Each person must have a hand in shaping his own
environment".

If this sentence is taken seriously it shatters many
of the basic assumptions on which the current practice of
planning is based, and requires a rethinking of the profession
from the ground up.

It would be presumptuous of me to imply that I can begin to define the scope of the revisions that must be made. By the same token, it would be irresponsible, after you had asked me here, to sidestep a try. I will avoid the temptation to escape coming to grips with the main issues by smothering them in a flow of technical terms. My whole belief in the process of feedback and in the viability of the dialogue requires me to set up a hypothesis in as bold and abrasive terms as possible, so that your disagreement with my view will progress the dialogue on account of the positive elements engendered through your disagreement.

Perhaps the most fundamental change that will take place when citizen participation is really present, and it is really present only when it assumes a central role in planning, is the revolution in the role of the planner himself; in his self image of his role. Up to this point the planner has had the luxury of the protection of a special niche, a self-constructed niche which up to now the community has been willing to accept, that happy mystique that planning comes up with the "right answer". In crudest terms, the idea is widespread that the planner knows what to do, if only the citizen or the politician would do it.

But the planner is a citizen.

It may seem almost silly to present relationships in such simple terms, yet confusion on this basic point has resulted in a series of accepted notions of planning

procedures which I think are altogether incompatible with a basic and viable citizen participation.

In the United States, and I can speak only from the bias of my U. S. experience, when a group of young people became dissatisfied with the social impact of what they regarded as authoritarian and willfully imposed planning dictated by professional planners, they proposed the planners role as that of preparing a series, perhaps five, alternate solutions to a problem and referring these five alternate solutions to the duly elected politicians who would then select one of these^{five}/for implementation.

To my mind this is just compounding the same error in its opposite disguise.

Expressed most brutally, the planner, having observed the deficiencies of his technical proposals, instead of trying to correct them himself, transfers the responsibility for them to someone else.

Because the planner may take refuge in the multiplicity of positions encompassed in his five alternatives, he is spared the painful soul-searching that he must undergo if he is to set forth and stand on one, and it relieves him of accountability for the consequences of his act, because he can point out after the fact out of the grab-bag of proposals, one which, if followed, would have led to a different conclusion.

And the irony is that all five are probably not very good. A truly creative achievement requires a concentration

of energies, an intensity of commitment that can never be achieved within the loose permissiveness of five alternatives, and, curiously, the bluntness of the hypothesis actually weakens or sterilizes democratic response.

So now we come to the question of a model of planning which avoids the stultifying effect of arbitrary imposition of authoritarian plans made by professional planners and, on the other hand, the vitiating effect of the planner abdicating responsibility altogether, and simply presenting society with a mish-mash of alternatives, as though he were somehow a disembodied observer of the scene.

The key concept here is that, in true citizen participation, the planner also is a participator, and not a detached technician. By the same token, he is a technician, and must recognize that he is, otherwise he fails to make his contribution to the public dialogue. It was the failure to recognize this latter point that led the young peoples' revolt in the United States, operating under the banner of "advocacy planning" into the deadend routes it so often followed.

In the new edition of my book, "Design of Cities", I have attempted to diagram a process for the interaction of people and ideas which is a distillation of twenty-one years of experience in trying to deal with these issues when I was Executive Director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

Essentially, I see planning as a continuous cyclical interaction between four components.

	<u>GENERAL</u>	<u>PARTICULAR</u>
IDEA	Principle	Project
ACTION	People	Persons

I make the distinction between "people" as the embodiment of general, prevailing community attitudes, and "persons" as the articulate, identifiable individual leaders, each interacting with and affecting the other. I make the distinction between "principle", a broad city or regional planning concept, and "project", a tangible act designed to reinforce the principle, each interacting with and affecting the other.

As to the process itself, I abhor the classical linear concept of sequential goal formation, gathering of facts, analysis of data, synthesis of data, plan preparation, citizen participation in plan review, and implementation. To my mind, the survival of this mode of thought into a period where it should long ago have been discarded, is one of the most serious problems in the contemporary practice of planning, and in the teaching at the universities which is designed to prepare the planners of the future.

To my mind the process must be seen as a continuous cyclical interaction between all four of these elements, shuttling back and forth between idea and action, testing ideas in action and evaluating action in terms of idea, with no end and no beginning, and no hierarchial sequence.

The speed with which the cycle is traversed is critical; the more nearly the feedback approaches simultaneity with hypothesis formation, the more healthy the process.

Essential to the validity of this process is the injection into it of comprehensive, tangible hypotheses for action, and the continuous restructuring of these hypotheses in the light of feedback

I have made a diagram, so far as I know unique in the field of planning literature, of how this restructuring of the hypothesis should take place. The planner, whether he or she be a member of the Royal Australian Planning Institute, a city manager of a large city, or a leader of a neighborhood group in a low income black community, puts before the community some system of order designed to achieve some social purpose. In my diagram I have structured this as consisting of four elements related to each other in a definite way.

The community, which may be the neighborhood committee, the planning commission, the city council, the national parliament, the United Nations, or any combination of these and many others, then goes to work on this hypothesis and tears it apart.

My special contribution here is the idea that what the community does is destructure the hypotheses, putting each of its parts through a process similar to that of a

computer, a simple binary system of "accept" and "reject". Fundamental is the notion that the community breaks up the hypothesis according to its own value system. It is the community who decides how the various parts will be classified, which accepts and which rejects. ^{where the culture has been} The product of community review, in this case acceptance of three of the four elements and one of the two connections, provides the raw material for the next go-round on hypothesis formation, but the product is not a new system of order, but rather several disconnected fragments. It then becomes the job of the hypothesis formulator, hopefully the planner, to restructure these fragments, acceptable to the community, into a new system of order for its further review. In order to do this, new elements must be added and new connections proposed. In my diagram I carry this process through four stages, finally producing a result which the community can accept, and which, hopefully, is carried into action so it may be tested in terms of its actual effect on the quality of people's lives, and so contribute to the next go-round of hypothesis formation. The diagram shows that each trip around the cycle may produce an hypothesis richer and more inclusive than the one before.

The most important thing about this diagram is that the planner plays a critical professional role in hypothesis formation and reformation, but the final product is the work

of neither the planner nor the community, but the product of the interaction of each. When a planner has travelled through this life-experience many times over he will be unable to tell which of his beliefs came from his own inner drive and which are the products of community confrontation, but he will be the better man for having been tempered in the heat of community action.

I submit that, this diagram, if it actually became the basis for planning activity, would strike at the roots of the beliefs of the planning profession as it is now practiced.

I said in the beginning that I do not have a monopoly of wisdom in this field, rather that I wanted to share my experience with you in such a way that you can tear my conclusions apart and formulate your own on the wreckage of mine. That is the reason I give you so specific a model of my thoughts on the process, your deconstructing of it is inbuilt.

Additionally, I think we should consider the broad context of public attitudes which surrounds our work in the various countries as we try to deal with these problems, and the subtle changes which are occurring and which we are in danger of overlooking.

Curiously, in my own country, during the time between the start and the finish of this writing, there has been furnished startling evidence of new forces afoot in the person of the Democratic National Convention. Scarcely a paradigm of the planner's dream of orderly preparation of

a total plan for action, and orderly carrying out of that plan, this tumultuous public occurrence may preview what will become accepted standards for social action. I think you know that dissatisfaction with the previous Democratic Convention in Chicago led to the setting up of guidelines controlling the make-up of the State delegations so they would be nearly representative of the people of the State, including such minorities as the young, the blacks, the poor, and, not really a minority but previously underrepresented, women. You know the bitter fight about seating the delegation of the all-powerful Chicago Mayor Daley, and you know that most of the established leaders of the Party were excluded from central positions of power, and many were excluded physically.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., a noted historian, speaking on television from the Convention, pointed out that the Democratic Party in the United States is the oldest political party in the world. He went on to say that the reason was a special ability of the Party, at critical times, to restructure itself to let new people in. He spoke of the days of Andrew Jackson in the early Nineteenth Century and of Franklin Roosevelt in the early Twentieth Century, indicating that a similar thing had occurred at the Democratic Convention in July 1972.

To many observing the tumult, the disorder, the bitterness and the fights at the Convention, the confusion would seem to do nothing but sap the strength of the Party.

Others saw it as an expression of new vitality. Our Life Magazine, not known for its radical approach, printed an article by Hugh Sidey in its July 14, 1972, issue, entitled "The Human Side of Discord". Among many things he said, " 'People' to many in the Nixon circle are concepts, statistics, scratches on a yellow legal pad. Somehow this White House never sees them as human beings who can fight and bawl, make up and make love, change their minds and their lives, come together even in passionate diversity". I think it hardly needs laboring; the close parallel between these political words and so many of the tenets of the planning profession today.

Before I close I just want to say a few words about who the people are.

I had the privilege of representing the Mayor of Philadelphia in a dispute between Temple University and the surrounding, predominantly low income black community arising out of the Temple program of expansion into the area, causing demolition of many houses and dislocation of their occupants.

The issues were the subject of a month-long "charrette", an elaborate dialogue between the University, the planners and the community. This finally resolved itself into intensive sessions with members of the Governor's Cabinet, officials of Federal, State and City agencies, University officers and trustees, and members of the community. The effort was to produce a document of agreement to direct the course of future action.

The low income community representatives, with perhaps twenty or thirty leaders, continuously changing, proved to be remarkably reasonable negotiators, and capable of arriving at agreement despite the informality of the organizational base which held these leaders together.

There was just one point on which these leaders refused to budge an inch, and that was that nobody outside the community was going to tell the community who its leaders were.

The specific point at issue was the insistence of the University lawyers that five people be designated as the responsible leaders of the community, and so the contract would be between two neat, known and legally defined bodies.

The idea of a contract with an amorphous, fluid community without clearly designated, responsible officers, was a new one for the University lawyers, and a difficult one for them to grasp. But, law or no law, the community exists, it has its sentiments, it can act to implement a plan or to obstruct a plan, to disrupt or, indeed to damage the University. Any part of this can happen whether or not a specific set of leaders survive, and it was the community which knew it.

As a final outcome, the document of agreement was drawn up and was signed in the presence of the community leaders by the Mayor, the Governor, many officials, the President and Trustees of the University, and five individuals for the community. So, perhaps, a new legal concept

is formed, and the citizen participation which is occurring as the agreement is being carried out sets a new pattern in the canons of law.

In the time available it was, of course, impossible to present a comprehensive coverage of the subject of citizen participation. I have tried to be very specific and very general, in the hope that this would help to illuminate the great middle ground.

My most important message is that the thinking, feelings, hopes, hates and loves of the regular people have got to play a role in the process of planning they have never had before, and which they do not have today.

Lest you think this is just a lot of talk, I remind you of the \$34,000,000 Pruitt Igoe project in Saint Louis which was built as an act of civic virtue to provide thousands of low income families with "decent, safe and sanitary" housing. Just recently in Life Magazine was a full page picture of two of the thirty four structures being blasted down in consequence of the project being virtually abandoned by its former occupants because the thinking that went into it was based on abstract planning values rather than warm facts about human life.

For myself, I believe that the planner of the future will not come out of the classical planning schools as now constituted, with their belief in the rational plan as a discrete object, but rather from disciplines such as public

administration or business administration; that the planner of the future will earn the right to be heard by the actual service he provides to the people he wants to hear through his demonstrated competence in the management of large public service delivery systems.

I think the planner of the future will be a man who is able to manage effectively extensive action programs; regional transportation systems, provision of public energy networks, public power, sewerage and water systems which should determine the form of the outflow of the city, a man who is able and willing to plunge into the controversies of large public action programs, who learns of citizen will not by third hand surveys but by actual confrontation with irate citizens, a man who is capable of receiving the feedback of day-to-day responses to practical public programs, and to utilize this feedback constantly to restructure the hypothesis which underly these programs and give them their form. Only in this way will the impact of feedback and of citizen response be fed into hypothesis formation fast enough to meet the pace of modern life. Only through the kinds of insights which come from really human, man-to-man, responsible interactions can grow truly relevant public policy.

By the analogy of the U. S. Democratic Convention, I have tried to imply that this will shake up the establishment, that many of the leading lights of the profession will experience an undercutting of their privileges and prerogatives as did Mayor Daley of Chicago.

I have tried to show that this is not just an issue of "good will", of caring about people affected by planning, but rather of a revolutionary revision of the technology of planning, of the self-image of the planning profession, of the procedures of planning and its legal base, and of its education.

Citizen participation should be planner participation as a citizen, not as an oracular, disembodied being, and when this occurs the words "planner" and "citizen" will cease to represent a dichotomy, but will merge into one concept, civic participation for a noble end.

Perhaps the greatest challenge before any planner today, young in age or young in spirit, is to bring life into the words, so easily just a pious protestation, "Each man must have a hand in shaping his own environment".

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