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RESOURCE USE ISSUES
AND
THE PLANNING PROCESS

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Proceedings of
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and
The Extension Public Policy Committee

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FOREWORD

This publication represents a collection of papers which were presented before the Second Northeast Extension Seminar of The Northeast Regional Committees. The conference, which was held in Boston, October 11-13, 1966, explored the topic of "Resource Use Issues and the Planning Process."

The seminar was attended by professionals in rural and urban planning, economics, and sociology; landscape architects; educators, agricultural agents; and extension specialists in forestry and wildlife, area development, and public affairs.

Included in this publication are all papers which were presented before the four committees and those presented before the Northeast Regional Extension Public Policy Committee. They represent current thinking in the field of resource use and planning.

Much guidance and support was given by Henry M. Hansen of the University of Connecticut, and Joseph Ackerman and R. J. Hildreth of the Farm Foundation to the Boston Conference and the publication of the papers presented there. Financial costs were underwritten by the Farm Foundation and the Institute for Research on Land and Water Resources of The Pennsylvania State University.

Finally, we salute Jack Brown and Carroll D. Price, II who devoted many hours to the editing of this compilation of papers.

John C. Frey, Chairman
Northeast Regional
Extension Public
Policy Committee

DISCUSSION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA PAPERS

by George E. Whitham*

EXTENSION'S APPROACH

There are many ways for Cooperative Extension personnel to look at programs in community and resource development and land-use planning, but one of the principal ways may be to recognize problems and opportunities and then bring together the responsible local people and technically qualified personnel in such a way that effective work can be undertaken. Stan Lembeck's paper points out this need and how Pennsylvania is programming for it.

To do this there may be two ways in which Extension will make its greatest contribution to land-use planning as a part of community and resource development:

The first is to present to responsible people that we are a resource agency that already has established itself with technical competencies in fields related to land-use planning. Under this might be listed working with town planning commissions, regional planning agencies and the general public on training meetings in subjects such as soils and their relationship to comprehensive planning, open space needs and how best to achieve them, and sociological changes and their reasons; how to interpret census material and other information needed in making decisions in relation to the planning process; how to run meetings, and methods of conducting public hearings.

The second way is as a resource person for social action. Here I am thinking of those things that aid in the development and the motivation of people -- such as teaching the planning process; identifying lay leaders, innovators, and early adopters; developing personal acquaintances necessary to discuss political facts, which so often control the success and future of many worthwhile programs. In other words,

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recognizing the place and importance of the political process -- not "playing politics."

There is one thing that we are not when we think of land-use planning. We are not planners, per se. We may have information, teach how to use the information, teach the planning process, but we should not be in the business of preparing plans for land-use regulations or giving direct advice on technical matters such as zoning and subdivision control, all of which should be left to technically qualified persons who are responsible for the interpretation of legislation on these and similar matters.

STIMULATING PARTICIPATION

Now, I am supposed to discuss the papers presented from Pennsylvania. I think it is presumptuous to feel that I can discuss action programs of another state. Particularly when I am only familiar with New England, and more specifically southern New England.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that one of the strong things going in the Pennsylvania program is the effort they make to involve people and organizations in discussions that will lead to action to facilitate the adjustment of human, natural, and institutional resources in a way commensurate with the well-being of their state. They have recognized that this job is of such a magnitude that it cannot be done alone and through joint educational programs have stimulated citizen and organizational participation and involvement in the development of the resources of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As Bill Carroll said, "the strength of [their] program lies in that it is comprehensive when Extension participates," and they do not choose up sides between different positions that action agencies may have. In recognizing the differences between communities, a real effort is made to develop the necessary relationships between people and their communities as part of an effective educational experience. Also, as part of their educational effort they are sure that "thoughtful people from all walks of life learn about planning procedures from a variety of sources."

In Bob Wingard's comments, there is an extremely important observation in the statement "too long there has been too little communication and understanding between the social sciences and the natural sciences in public affairs [educational] work." I know that we were trying to overcome this in Connecticut when we recently set up a Community and Resource Development Impact Team whose membership represents both the social and natural sciences.

FOCUS ON PUBLIC INTEREST

The Pennsylvania program is also broad-based in that, through its training program of agents and specialists, it attempts to deal with public policy issues as represented by the public interest versus the exclusive private interest viewpoint. This, I think, is extremely important as Extension can well get itself into a untenable position if it is recognized only as a champion of one position, such as the rights of agriculture. For example, in Connecticut one of our agents became so engrossed in the problem of taxation of farm land that he was ineffective in talking with people such as selectmen, assessors, and others interested in the general welfare as opposed to those interested in only the agricultural viewpoint.

When this broad-based viewpoint is taken, I feel that Extension can make a real contribution to the orderly growth -- economic, social and institutional -- of the communities of our respective states.

Research and education do have the resources to help all groups concerned with an understanding of land-use issues. There is a challenge here that Extension and research must accept and I believe accept more completely than it has up to this point. As Bob said in his comments, land-grant universities are attempting to strengthen research and educational efforts in resource planning and development but none have fully met the need. They could and should move more aggressively to respond to the challenge of citizens' concern for the natural environment.

Personally, I think we have talked this subject to death, and the time is ripe for action rather than words.