



Newport's Opportunity

by

J. B. Morlidge

CITY MANAGER

During the past decade, the year 1946 was indeed a most eventful one for the City of Newport. On the second day of April of that year, the citizens of this city witnessed the actual physical start of its Six Million Dollar Federal Flood Protection Program. In fact, that day can always be referred to as being the most outstanding one in the history of the city; a city that was established by an Act of the Kentucky Legislature on December 14, 1795, more than one hundred and fifty years ago. The Town of Newport, as it then became

known, had originally been a small frontier settlement founded by some of the pioneers who, with George Rogers Clark, in the year 1788, made their way down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh. Subsequently the City of Newport became the nucleus of what is now known as the Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Area, in which more than a million persons now reside.

Also, that day will mark the real beginning of an effort to arrest further advance of the blight that has been brought into existence in the city because of the

ravages of recurring Ohio River floods. Blight is malignant, and, unless stopped, will eventually make slums of once good neighborhoods. Slums are the breeding places of crime, disease and death. Blighted neighborhoods do not bear their part in the tax burden.

Because of the frequency of these floods, a condition now exists whereby the properties situated within the areas subject to inundation are responsible for less than their proper proportionate part of the city tax revenue. Conversely, the cost of furnishing municipal service for the blighted area is far in excess of that for those parts of the city that are beyond the limits of the inundated area. The result is the existence of a condition that is an unbalanced one to say the least.

Now that the first faint ray of the dawn of a "New Era" for Newport is definitely within visible offing, let us make certain that we capitalize upon the opportunity that is now present. The completion of Newport's Federal Project will mark a distinct epoch in the community life of this city. The possibility of future devastating floods entering the city will be forever banished. The extreme importance of this flood protection scheme can best be appreciated when it is real-

ized that all of the plans for the future of the city have been predicated on the completion of this basic project.

Co-ordinated with the flood protection program is the work now being done by the Planning and Zoning Commission. This branch of the municipal government will play a vital part in the future development and rehabilitation of the city. A zoning ordinance based on plans prepared by this commission can and will designate and control, in a reasonable manner, the future use of all properties within the city, and in the unincorporated areas within a radius of three miles from the city. This commission will also evolve a special plan for the complete redevelopment of the inundated areas of the city. Because of its close proximity to the heart of the Cincinnati Metropolitan Area, a great opportunity is now made available to those now engaged in the compilation of such a plan.

If the program now in mind can be put into effect, the blighted section of the city, now a heavy liability in every sense of the word, can be converted into one conforming in type and character to the most modern standards. The ultimate result of the entire plan for the orderly development of the city would obvi-

ously provide for the beginning of a better and more prosperous community. Likewise, it will make possible a more equitable distribution of the tax burden. It then follows that a very substantial reduction could be made in the tax rate. With the ending of floods now definitely in sight, and in anticipation of the security that such a situation will provide, the plans already made, and in some cases actually put into execution, will add impetus to the beginning of Newport's long delayed "March of Progress."

As a necessary adjunct to the foundation to be provided by the permanent curbing of the heretofore uncontrolled antics of "Old Man River," and upon which the hope for Newport's municipal salvation is to be based, a brief resume of some of the pertinent measures already put into effect in the city during the past decade will include such items as:

Newport's freedom from floating indebtedness.

Regular and substantial payments of principle on the city's bonded debt, resulting in an A-1 plus financial rating.

A "Pay As You Go" financial policy, enabling discount purchases.

Toll-free highway bridges connecting Newport with Cincinnati and Covington. (Made possible

by the Kentucky State Highway Department.)

Establishment of a Grade A Milk Program, since put into effect by all northern Campbell County municipalities.

Civil Service for all classified city employees, with provision for Pensioned Retirement.

Nine years of keeping within annual budgets.

Construction of a modern Newport High School Stadium and Municipal Recreation Field.

Complete reconstruction of Ohio River Pumping Station of Newport Water Works, with very substantial reduction in operating costs.

Added volume and pressure of water supply to all high level areas of the city.

Execution of a Federal Works Agency contract for an advance of federal funds for plans for the enlargement and modernization of the reservoir filter plant, and provisions for supplying water to all northern Campbell County cities.

Wage increases and better working conditions for all employees.

Parking meter installations and better traffic control.

Planning and zoning of entire city and adjacent unincorporated territory.

Actual beginning of the city's

six Million Dollar Federal Flood Protection Program.

The creation of a Sanitation District, to provide for elimination of river pollution.

A continued effort for municipal participation in locally collected state revenues.

If the citizens of this community can be made to appreciate the importance of grasping the opportunity that is soon to be made

available to them, and if the interest of the public in general can be aroused, the actual evolvment of the program now ready can be assured.

In that event, there will indeed have been established the beginning of the much discussed "New Era" for the City of Newport and Campbell County.

This is "Newport's Opportunity."

