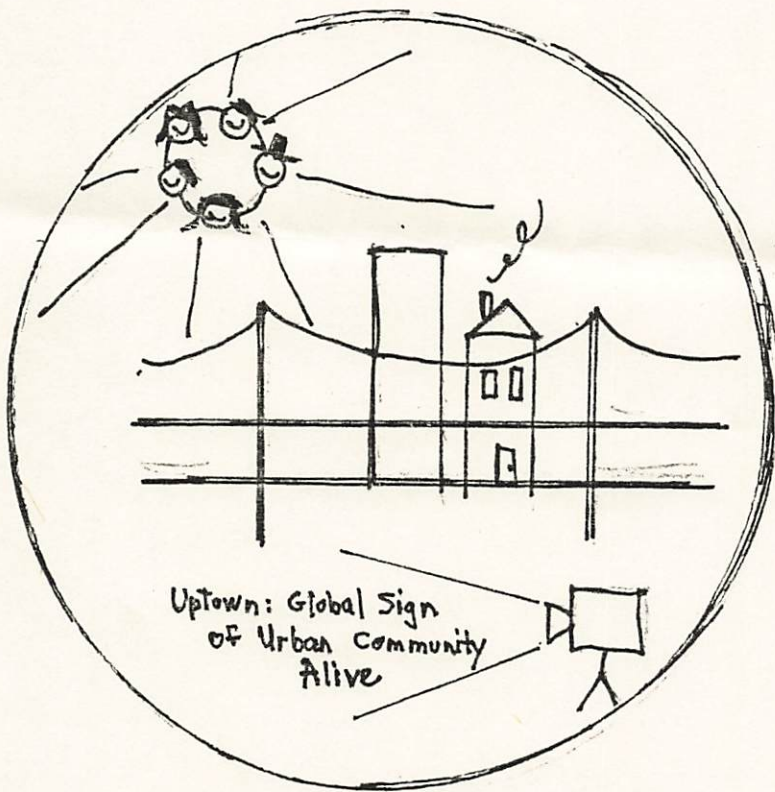


UPTOWN



Community Forum

November 18, 1981

THE NEW SONG

UPTOWN FOR ALL

Tune: Those were the days

Verse 1

There was born an Uptown
The urban at its peak,

With gifts of people
From around the globe,

The Uptown is a place
Where full enjoyment is,

Here we are, the
People of Uptown.

Verse 2

~~the~~
From ~~A~~ Green Mills Tavern
And Aragon Ballroom

The church, ~~ma~~osques,
Cathedral, temples, too.

We are a varied race
So diverse is our face,

We bring our gifts
And share them all with you.

THE CHALLENGES

CREATING INTEREST IN PRACTICAL, RELEVANT EDUCATION

In the arena of employable skills, these blocks exist: few training facilities in Uptown, little money available for people to pay for training, and few English as a Second Language courses. These indicate the challenge is that no community group or government body are addressing the development of work skills that are in demand. This is illustrated by the high local unemployment rate, alcoholism, drug abuse and gangs.

NO COMMON COMMUNITY STORY

In the arena of common story, these blocks exist: the transience of the residents, no common story or even language of the community, and little vehicle for leadership. These indicate the challenge is to motivate a sense of community through a neighborhood leadership structure. This challenge is illustrated by people unable to talk to one another, litter on the sidewalks, arson and vandalism.

ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY IDENTITY

In the arena of local community organization, these blocks exist: no common community identity, corruption in government, and no community organization. These indicate the challenge is the need for a community identity. This challenge is illustrated by intercultural violence, the election of a Republican local government, and few people turning up at important local meetings.

NEED FOR CORPORATE COMMON VISION

In the arena of corporateness, these blocks exist: no structure to release creativity, no effective methods for planning and organization, and no emerging leadership. These indicate the challenge is establishing in each person a great sense of community. This challenge is illustrated by poor workday participation, little concern for community landscape, and no help given to victims of violence.

CROSS-CULTURAL YOUTH STRUCTURES

In the arena of youth disengagement, these blocks exist: the Boy's Club is the only youth structure available, adults are not involved with youth structures, and cultural diversity blocks the forming of effective structures. These indicate the challenge is to break loose the image of no need for youth structure. This challenge is illustrated by kids roaming the streets with nothing to do, gang violence, graffiti, and high drug use.

MOBILIZATION OF PEOPLE FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

In the arena of local political power, these blocks exist: little local power or unifying force, unemployment, and under-representative government. These indicate the challenge is the mobilization of people from within the community. This challenge is illustrated by police brutality, unsafe neighborhood, drugs sold on the streets and an inhuman environment.

THE PROPOSALS

INSTILLING COMMUNITY IDENTITY

We, the citizens of Uptown in order to initiate participation and awareness of community possibilities, propose an Uptown celebration. Through finding a space, raising funds, publicity and a thinktank for ideas.

EMPOWERING INFORMATION SYSTEMS

We, the citizens of Uptown in order to inform community of job opportunities and services available to them, propose the creation of an information bureau, through; creation of volunteer community task force, raising funds, locating a space, staff information bureau and a celebration.

CREATE CENTER FOR SPORT AND COMMUNITY STORY

WE, the citizens of Uptown in order to provide sports and corporative facilities, propose a Recreation and Information Complex, through; holding a public forum, election of committee, raising funds, and building a complex after acquiring land.

CREATING A COMMON STORY

We, the citizens of Uptown in order to create a common story and awareness, propose to produce a film on Uptown (past, present & future), through; establishing a committee, researching the history of Uptown (past, present, future), raising money and producing the film.

ACTIVELY ENGAGING THE LOCAL

We, the citizens of Uptown in order to awake, train & engage the local people to improve their community, propose to have a 4-Sector Community Forum, through; intentional publicity, having key people address the Forum, have interpreters on hand at all times, hold the forum in a centralized place and have the necessary materials and equipment required.

STRUCTURES OF AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT

We, the citizens of Uptown, located on Planet Earth, in order to actively participate in the development of our community, propose to create an organization of concerned people, through; following new social vehicles, detailed canvassing of local population, and purchasing and licencing of a local radio station "The Voice of the People."

THE NEW STORY

FROM GLAMOUR TO GLAMOUR

When I muttered the name Uptown Chicago the old man sitting next to me on the same park bench said: "What do you mean when you say the word Uptown Chicago?"

"Look around, I remarked, look at the buildings the people, the cars, and the trash."

"You only see Uptown Chicago from an objective point of view." He exclaimed. "There is much more to this place than meets the eye. I see Chicago from a past, a present and a future perspective. I bet you know nothing of Chicago's glamorous past. Did you know Uptown was the entertainment capitol of Chicago, back in the thirties?"

"No," I replied.

"One example of this, He went on, was the Aragon Ballroom. Big, I mean BIG Jazz Bands played there. The concerts they played were broadcast all over the nation for all to hear. After the concerts the bands would go to the Green Mill Bar and have hellacious jam sessions there.

Then He continued by saying:

"See those old worn out houses? They used to have wealthy owners. Yes, Uptown was the Wealthy section of town. Other classes and ethnic groups lived in their section of town. Now things have changed. The old houses, the ballroom and the Green Mill Bar still stand but are not the story they used to be.

"Today, Uptown is the center of a different kind of activity. It has been called the United Nations of Chicago, with people from all over the world living here and bringing their foods, languages and customs with them. Uptown also has great diversity in terms of backgrounds, we have elders who have lived here for years, Kampuchean refugees, mental out-patients, and social workers, to name just a few of the types of people here. However, Uptown also has a high crime rate and people don't feel safe after dark. In the future we would like to see people of Uptown working together to exchange ideas from their cultures, and take more responsibility in the future of the neighborhood. We would like to see more local ownership of buildings and businesses and local interest cleaning Uptown and making it a safer place for everyone to live. We feel that if people can participate in making decisions about our future the future is bright."

After this the old man got up from his bench and disappeared into the city.