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# NEWS

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## CHPC QUESTIONS MAYORAL CANDIDATES

With just one week remaining in the mayoral primary campaign, there are at least four major housing and planning issues dividing the candidates -- what to do about Westway, the construction of a new convention center, the use of zoning to curb pornography, and the future of rent controls.

These are the findings of a survey released today by the Citizens Housing and Planning Council. The survey, based on a questionnaire mailed to the candidates on August 1, 1977, reveals substantial differences and compares the candidates' positions on ten major housing and planning issues. With the exception of Bella Abzug, all the candidates filled in and returned the questionnaire. Where possible, CHPC has included Mrs. Abzug's positions when they could be ascertained from the public record.

### Westway

The divisions on Westway are suggested by the fact that only three of the nine candidates -- Mayor Beame, Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton and State Senator Roy Goodman -- support Westway, the billion dollar interstate replacement proposed for the defunct Miller Highway. Congressmen Herman Badillo and Edward Koch are against Westway, as is former Congresswoman Abzug. They would favor a "scaled down" Westway with the bulk of the interstate money to be "traded in" for mass transit improvements. Joel Harnett, former President of the City Club, also favors a more modest replacement to the old highway.

Secretary of State Mario Cuomo says he would re-examine the various funding alternatives before taking a stand on Westway. Barry Farber would use federal road money to upgrade existing streets and bridges in the city.

### Convention Center

While all the candidates would like to see a new convention and exhibition center in New York, they disagree on how and where it should be financed and built.

Mr. Goodman, Mr. Beame and Mr. Cuomo are ready to support a public subsidy (estimated by some to run as high as \$20 million annually) to realize a new convention center. They would look to the state and federal government for support. Mr. Koch is also prepared to subsidize it, but would not say how deep a subsidy he would support.

Mr. Harnett is against public subsidy. He believes the benefiting industries should pay the costs. Mr. Sutton supports the expansion of the Coliseum because, he feels, it will require no subsidy from city taxpayers. Mrs. Abzug's public statements indicate that she wants a new convention center but she has been silent on how or whether it should be subsidized. Mr. Badillo is against a city subsidy for a convention center. So, too, is Barry Farber.

(More)

### Pornography

Two of the candidates -- Barry Farber and Mario Cuomo -- are strongly opposed to the idea that the city might use zoning powers to curb or control pornography. They are against any steps which would tend to "legitimize" pornography, as Mr. Cuomo puts it, and would rely instead on stricter enforcement of existing laws.

Mr. Badillo, Mr. Beame, Mr. Harnett and Mr. Sutton favor the use of zoning to reduce the concentration of pornographic uses. Mr. Goodman says he is undecided on the question.

Only one candidate, Mr. Koch, would use the city's zoning power to concentrate pornographic uses in one zone or district. Mr. Koch says he would concentrate these uses in an area of the city "where there are no residential or commercial uses such as the deserted Manhattan waterfront."

### Rent Control

The issue of rent control, not surprisingly, produces some major differences in outlook among the candidates. Two of them, Mr. Farber and Mr. Harnett, would phase out all controls and re-establish vacancy decontrol. They would, however, continue controls where tenants demonstrate economic need. Mr. Goodman also favors continuing rent control where tenants demonstrate economic need. At the same time, however, he would move toward a simplified state-administered program patterned after rent stabilization covering all units. The remainder of the candidates who answered the questionnaire did not suggest what CHPC regards as major rent regulation changes.

### Other Issues

The candidates tend to agree on priorities in the administration and expenditure of the city's Community Development annual block grant from the federal government. Mr. Goodman was the only candidate who expressed support for an autonomous community development agency to plan and execute the program, as is done in some other cities. Such an idea has been advanced in New York as a means of overcoming the divisive politics that have plagued the Community Development program to date. The other candidates felt that a specially-designated CD agency was not a good idea.

With the exception of Mr. Badillo and Mr. Sutton, all the candidates lean toward channeling CD funds into neighborhoods where the expenditures are liable to reinforce improvement efforts already underway. CHPC ascertained this preference by giving the candidates two hypothetical CD requests (see the attached questionnaire) -- one for emergency repairs in widely scattered, tax delinquent buildings in a badly deteriorated South Bronx neighborhood, the other for park and street repairs in a Brooklyn neighborhood where self-help efforts as well as city rehabilitation loans were already underway. Most of the candidates supported the second request. Mr. Badillo opted for the South Bronx example, saying "I prefer people to parks." Mr. Sutton felt the question was unrealistic "because the range of alternatives is much wider."

Judging from the questionnaire responses, the next Mayor of New York will favor a continuation of the J-51 tax abatement and exemption program as

a spur to rehabilitation as well as some form of state mortgage insurance as a means of overcoming private bank disinvestment in city neighborhoods. The candidates responding were generally agreed on the importance of both.

Less certain is the future of regulations concerning the cooperative conversion of rental apartments. Mr. Badillo and Mr. Sutton are joined in opposing liberalization of regulations for conversions. The other candidates support it provided that tenants who do not purchase apartments are protected. Mr. Cuomo says he is undecided on the liberalization question due to the expiration this past June of the Goodman-Dearie cooperative conversion bill.

Finally, on the issue of Mitchell-Lama deficits, CHPC asked the candidates what they would do to meet the estimated annual gap of \$40 million between costs and revenues in the state and city subsidized projects. Mr. Cuomo, Mr. Koch and Mr. Sutton would meet this deficit through public subsidy alone. Mr. Badillo, Mr. Beame, Mr. Farber and Mr. Goodman would meet the gap through a combination of rent increases and subsidy. Mr. Badillo would support rent increases based on a rent stabilization formula. Mr. Farber also talks of rent guidelines for Mitchell-Lamas, which projects would have to follow if they were to be subsidized. Mr. Harnett says he wants an evaluation of the entire tax picture, including single-family home taxes, before moving ahead with a specific solution for the Mitchell-Lamas.

A tabulation of the candidates' responses is attached.

Founded in 1937, the Citizens Housing and Planning Council is an independent, non-profit organization drawing its membership from professionals and civic-minded laymen involved in planning, architecture, housing production, public administration, social welfare and real estate.

The Council works toward better housing and a well-planned city through programs of education, participation in public activities and counseling with citizen groups and official bodies. It tries to strike a balance between the legitimate aspirations of local groups and the needs of the city as a whole.