

# HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY

APA  
American Planning Association  
Housing and Community  
Development Division  
Making Great Communities Happen

Spring 2007

## Annual Business Meeting & Reception

### Agenda

Monday, April 16, 2007

Pennsylvania Convention Center

Philadelphia, PA

Room 113C

5:45 – 7:30 p.m.

*(Immediately following Conference Session:  
Reading a Neighborhood, What a Block Walk  
Can Tell You)*

- 1) Welcome and Introductions
- 2) Updates from APA Staff on Federal Budget and Research/Communication Initiatives
- 3) Year in Review
  - a) Approval of Minutes from 2006 Annual Meeting
  - b) Financial Report FY 2005-2006
  - c) Division Performance Report
  - d) AICP Certification Maintenance Proposal
- 4) Proposed Work Plan and Budget for 2007-2008
- 5) Questions and Comments

## Race, Public Schools, and Smart Growth: An Interview with Howell Baum, Professor, University of Maryland

*(During March and April, 2007, the HCD Division Chair interviewed Division member Howell Baum by phone and by email correspondence.)*

### Can you tell us about your new book?

About six years ago I started a project to look at how race influences public policy. From 1994 to 2004 I worked with a Baltimore community group trying to improve neighborhood schools. At one point I heard a school official report that 88 per cent of city students were African American. Essentially, city schools were racially segregated within the metropolitan area. I decided to look at how this came about as a way of examining the role of race in public policy.

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**DEADLINE FOR HCD DIVISION  
STUDENT RESEARCH AWARDS:  
July 1, 2007**



American Planning Association

Housing and Community Development Quarterly is the newsletter of the Housing and Community Development Division of the American Planning Association. Please send news items, announcements, and conference dates to Chrissy Gruninger, Newsletter Editor, at [chrissy@forHarmony.net](mailto:chrissy@forHarmony.net).

**Deadline for Summer Issue:  
June 15<sup>th</sup>**

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**Chair's Message –**

According to APA, 66 Division members of the Housing and Community Development Division are registered for the 99<sup>th</sup> National Planning Conference in Philadelphia. This is an excellent turn out and I hope to see many of you at our **Annual Meeting and Reception**, which will take place on Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup> starting at 5:45 p.m. in Room 113C of the Convention Center. The Annual Meeting occurs right after our Division sponsored session, **Reading a Neighborhood, What a Block Walk Can Tell You.**

The first Division sponsored session is the full day training session on Saturday, **Neighborhood Analysis, Visioning, and Planning.** This training workshop is a condensed version of the NeighborWorks America Training Institute course, which is usually taught over a three day period.

For this pre-conference newsletter, the Housing and Community Development Division was pleased to interview Howell Baum, a Division member and Professor of Planning at the University of Maryland. In this interview, Howell Baum talks about Baltimore's response to school desegregation and the issues of Race, Public Schools, and Smart Growth. If you have any comments or perspectives that you would like to share after reading this interview, please email your thoughts to me at [Candace.Stowell@ci.raleigh.nc.us](mailto:Candace.Stowell@ci.raleigh.nc.us)

For our student members, please remember that the deadline for the **Student Research Award** is July 1, 2007. If you need a copy of the guidelines or have any questions, please contact Annemarie Maiorano, Secretary/Treasurer, at [amaiorano@co.wake.nc.us](mailto:amaiorano@co.wake.nc.us)

Thanks for your continued support and I look forward to seeing many of you in Philadelphia.

*Candace H. Stowell, AICP*

**Race, Public Schools, and Smart Growth:  
An Interview with Howell Baum (cont.)**

In Baltimore, the school board had moved to desegregate schools immediately after *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. I wanted to understand how good-faith efforts to integrate schools that were then 60 per cent white could lead to the present situation. I've been looking at school board records, decades of newspapers, local and Library of Congress archives, oral histories, and whatever I could find that has been written about Baltimore, its schools, and their desegregation. And I've been interviewing former school officials, students and teachers, local activists, public officials, and federal civil rights officials.

The Baltimore story goes back to the late 1930s, when black leaders started pushing school officials to make segregated black schools equal to white schools. By the end of the World War, the local NAACP, influenced by Baltimorean Thurgood Marshall's efforts to move school segregation into the federal courts, began arguing for integration. In 1952, the Baltimore Urban League requested admission for 16 black boys into an elite white boys high school on the ground that there was no comparable separate program. They persuaded the school board, which opened the school to blacks, two years before the Supreme Court decision.

When *Brown* came in 1954, the school board voted unanimously to desegregate the schools but adopted free choice, or open enrollment, as its policy. All students were free to go wherever they wanted. In other words, integration was voluntary. What happened is that a small, though growing, number of black students requested transfers to historically white schools, but almost no white students chose historically or preponderantly black schools. After moderate desegregation, the schools began resegregating in the early 1960s. Nevertheless, school officials maintained free choice as its desegregation policy.

What was highly unusual about Baltimore is that black leaders took credit for persuading the board to adopt this policy and repeatedly endorsed it. In other words, neither the school board nor civil rights activists wanted to require black and white children to attend school together. What was also distinct about Baltimore is that no civil rights group ever sued the school board to integrate the schools. White and black leaders agreed that free individual choice was the best policy for desegregating schools. .

But the policy had paradoxical effects. Both school officials and middle-class blacks supported it in part because it was not coercive and it seemed the policy least likely to provoke white resistance. However, after a decade the schools were still largely segregated, and many whites had left the city. In other words, the policy neither integrated schools nor stemmed white flight. Strikingly, white families left the city even when few white children had many black classmates. Part of the explanation is that whites left for many reasons, some related to the pull of the suburbs, some the pushes of the city. School desegregation was just one part of a larger racial change in the city that unsettled some whites. Another part of the explanation, I think, is that free choice created great uncertainty—no one regulated enrollment, no family could be sure what the racial makeup of a child's school would be when a semester started—and the difficulty of making a rational individual choice encouraged people to exit the system.

In the mid-1960s, as black students made up a growing majority of city enrollment, Baltimore officials talked about metropolitan desegregation, mixing mostly black city students with mostly white suburban students. Suburban officials were never interested, and in 1974 the Supreme Court ruled in *Milliken v. Bradley* that metropolitan desegregation could not be required unless there was very strong evidence that suburban government actions had caused a city's school segregation. Suburban governments had

done this in many places—for example, by refusing to build public housing, thus limiting low-income blacks’ residential options to the city—but the Court’s standards of evidence were so high, the decision effectively foreclosed metropolitan desegregation.

The end of Baltimore desegregation came in the mid-1970s. A 1971 federal court decision forced the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, to require Baltimore and 84 other school districts to develop integration plans. In 1974, OCR told Baltimore to develop a plan. The city produced modest plans, OCR asked for more, and negotiations went on for 18 months. At last, in early 1976 the city went to court to get an injunction to stop HEW. The case moved through the federal courts until a 1978 appellate court decision went in Baltimore’s favor. Desegregation efforts in Baltimore effectively stopped, though OCR tried for nine more years to find ways to get Baltimore to integrate before finally certifying that it had removed all vestiges of legal segregation.

### **Has the book been published yet?**

I’m finishing the manuscript now. The title is *Liberalism, Ignorance of Race, and the American Dilemma: School Desegregation in Baltimore*.

### **Why is the first part of the title “Liberalism?”**

Those who made the decision to desegregate through free choice were classic liberals. What mattered for them was that students had the right of choice, without being required to attend any particular school or have any particular classmates. The government would avoid imposing anything on individuals. The 1954 superintendent said the system did not require any specific mix of students as an outcome of individual choices. The next superintendent said that even an all-black school was considered desegregated, because students had the formal

right to choose a school. This is a classic liberal position.

Crucially, liberals think of society as made up of individuals who develop their identities and preferences on their own. In this view, groups, including races, do not influence how people see themselves or what they want from others. So, on the one hand, liberalism is emancipatory, in emphasizing individual rights. On the other hand, its individualistic prism makes it hard to see races. Baltimore school officials explicitly thought of themselves as liberals and adopted free choice because it was consistent with liberal values. The school board thought of themselves as creating something like a free market in school enrollments, letting individual students express their preferences. The problematic result of this way of thinking is that policy makers could hardly see or think about race relations and historic and continuing institutional discrimination. In any case, they believed that government should play a limited role in people’s lives.

Ten years before *Brown*, in 1944, Gunnar Myrdal wrote *An American Dilemma* about American race relations and made some insightful observations that help make sense of school officials’ actions. Myrdal called attention to a contradiction between white Americans’ espousal of equality and their discrimination against blacks. In trying to understand this, he was struck by how little whites knew about blacks—and how they seemed to want to remain ignorant. He ended up explaining this psychologically. Historically, white Americans had developed fantasies that whites were all-good and blacks were all-bad. Whites got emotional benefits from thinking this way but could hold onto the fantasies only by keeping ignorant of what black people were really like. In other words, they had interests in not knowing about blacks. What Myrdal said suggests that liberalism, by making it hard to see and think about race, provided security for people who feared conflict over desegregating schools or

who just felt guilty about race relations and discrimination.

I think policy makers adopted free choice because it satisfied many criteria. To begin with, school officials, who thought of themselves as liberals, thought of free choice as a “common sense” procedure. As the same time, it served their political interests in avoiding public conflict over desegregation by pushing enrollment decisions onto individual families. In addition, it helped people avoid bad conscience by keeping race out of public discussion. It is important to note that middle-class blacks were also liberals, for some of the same reasons.

The end result was that school officials made policy on desegregation in a way that minimized public talk of race, even though desegregation had everything in the world to do with race. Liberalism saved people from conflict over race, but at the cost of not addressing racial inequalities.

**Has segregation increased or decreased in Baltimore Schools over the last 10 years?**

Racial segregation has increased for the simple reason that enrollment has become increasingly black. In 2000, a black student in Baltimore had less chance of encountering a white student than did a black student in any other large American school district.

**Have you done any research on whether the City itself is becoming more or less segregated?**

I haven't done any research on this besides living in the city for 33 years. Baltimore was once one of the most segregated cities in America, comparable to any in the Deep South. The city didn't require blacks to ride at the back of buses, but department store Santa Clauses let only white children sit on their laps. Whites and blacks were arrested for playing tennis together

in a public park. School segregation was one piece of an extensively segregated local society.

The formalities of segregation are long gone. Baltimore has had black mayors, city council presidents, superintendents, and school board presidents. But it is striking how separately whites and blacks still live. There are few public places that significant numbers of whites and blacks commonly share. Blacks and whites socialize separately. Race is a great deal on people's minds, and racial considerations influence public decision making. And almost no one says anything about this in public.

In these ways, Baltimore, which is on the nation's North-South border, is quintessentially American. These are American challenges. I started my study of school desegregation as a way of understanding what goes into this, what makes it hard for white and black Americans to talk about something as important as race, and why we generally prefer to avoid the subject, even if we all pay continuing costs.

**In the Winter 2004 issue of JAPA, you wrote a commentary article titled *Smart Growth and School Reform* and you stated that the Smart Growth movement was ignoring urban problems and urban schools specifically. Can you point to any recent initiatives that address this disconnect? What about the Smart Growth Smart Schools Initiative?**

I want to emphasize something I said in that commentary. Urban problems are a primary cause of sprawl. People with resources leave the city when they find conditions unacceptable. Two complaints dominate explanations for moving. One is that city schools are weak. The other is that the city is unsafe. The first concern is straightforward: until city schools work for large numbers of children, families with choices will stay away, and sprawl will increase. The second concern is more complex. Some people have bad experiences and realistic concerns about safety. Others use the language of safety

to express their anxieties about living with large numbers of low-income African Americans. While policing will address some concerns about safety, the larger issue is to provide employment, child care, housing, and health care for city residents, so that fewer have low incomes, and more are connected to the labor market, the housing market, and mainstream institutions. Then the cities will be vital, attractive places.

This is what should be on the smart growth agenda, if it is serious about managing sprawl. More to the point, this is what should be on all planners' agenda, if they are concerned about our fellow citizens who have few opportunities to get what they need. Anything that contributes to this is worth while. But working in the suburbs on the results of sprawl will do nothing to improve conditions in the cities that cause sprawl. I am not saying that suburban residents do not have legitimate concerns about their conditions. But I believe that in a society where money and attention for public policy are scarce, we have to give priority to those with fewest choices.

**The New APA Development Plan for 2008-2009, which is still in draft form, calls for communities with “social, economic, and racial equity and integration” as well as a “quality education available to all students.” What should planners do to create racial equity and quality education in their communities?**

This is the right question. There are no easy answers. For one thing, planners should be prepared to look for racial aspects to any issue they work on. Not every issue is racial, and the racial elements of issues may not be the most important. But, unless planners are willing to recognize that land use, housing, transportation, economic development, environmental, or any other issues they work on have racial aspects, such as unequal impacts on different racial groups, they will never start thinking about racial equity. That is a central lesson of the Baltimore school desegregation story.

The smart growth movement is right that city problems require metropolitan remedies. Educational research shows that African American students benefit academically from racially and economically integrated schools and that white and black students both can benefit socially from interactions in racially mixed schools. One way to improve city children's education is to develop arrangements between cities and suburbs for voluntary movement of city students to some suburban schools and movement of suburban students to city schools with distinctive programs.

Planners should talk with school system planners and managers. Planners aren't education experts, but they can work with school systems in thinking about which existing schools to keep open, rehabilitate, or close and where new schools should be built. School locations affect not just residential growth, but schools' racial makeup, which, in turn, influences students' education. Beyond this, planners need to learn about schools, develop relations with school officials, and figure out with them how planners can contribute to educational improvement.

The lesson of the Baltimore school desegregation story is that, while there are no easy answers to the question about how to integrate, we have to take the question seriously, be willing to struggle with it, accept the reality that thinking and talking about race will be emotionally difficult, and have the courage to make our way through. This isn't an abstract or optional question. Whether individual human beings develop and whether our society and economy flourish depend on finding answers.

**DIVISION BUSINESS**

APA Housing and Community Development  
Division  
**Proposed Work Plan  
2007-2008**

**Communications**

- Improve Newsletter distribution to insure all members are receiving publication
- Recruit a Web Manager and revise Division web page with new resources information during 2007
- Integrate new branding designs into Division Newsletter and Brochure

**Education/Advocacy & Research**

- Propose Two Sessions, including at least one technical training workshop, for 2008 APA Conference in Las Vegas
- Continue Efforts to implement initiatives in APA Housing Policy Guide and set up Committees to implement high priority initiatives
- Publicize the research papers of the HCD Division student award program
- Modify student award program, if necessary, and announce a second round during 2007

**Membership**

- Carry our Membership Survey during Summer 2007 to determine membership interests and training needs
- Recruit for a Membership Chair for Division to increase outreach to new members
- Increase use of Division training assistance program for Division members which subsidizes the cost of workshops and webcasts that provides increased skills and knowledge in housing and community development
- Organize a networking event for HCD Division members during the APA Federal Policy Meeting in Washington D.C., September, 2007

**Second Quarter Financial Report  
Submitted by Annemarie Maiorano,  
Secretary/Treasurer**

This financial report covers the period beginning January 1, 2007 through March 28, 2007.

Beginning Balance January 1, 2007	\$ 16,693.11
Deposits	\$ 00.00
Expenditures	\$ (984.15)
Fees	\$ 0
Net service credit	\$ 0
Balance March 28, 2007	\$ 15,708.96

The expenditures are distributed as follows:

Newsletter:	\$600.00
Catering for 2007 APA Conference:	\$384.15
Total:	\$1,284.15

*This report was prepared without receipt of the March bank statement. I will post transactions contained in that statement in the next quarterly report.*

**Division Training Subsidy Available for Inclusionary Housing Conference in San Francisco.**

The second national conference on Inclusionary Housing will take place in San Francisco October 30-November 1. Division members will be eligible to apply for the Division's 50% training subsidy. For more information about the Inclusionary Housing Conference go to: [www.inhousing.org/conf](http://www.inhousing.org/conf) For more information about the Division training subsidy, contact Candace H. Stowell, AICP at [Candace.Stowell@ci.raleigh.nc.us](mailto:Candace.Stowell@ci.raleigh.nc.us)