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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

9-16-76

*Rid - I sent this to Fred in Lowell -  
thought you should see too*  
To: ~~Fred Faust~~

From: Loretta Neumann

Re: "Additional views" on Lowell

Life is so hectic these days, I thought I'd better bang out my thoughts as fast as possible or they'll get lost in the shuffle of things. I do have some unanswered questions, and some suggestions, about Lowell.

First, though, I want to say how very impressed I was with the people from the Commission, planning team, Lowell, etc. Nice not to see the usual arrogance and stiff formality such people often have. They seemed eager & receptive--and quite professional and competent. I actually enjoyed the meeting!

Some thoughts, in no particular order:

- 1) It's a little premature to talk about the legislative package, without having a firm idea of what is wanted. The physical portions of the plan are good--the "what" of it, but not the "how." I reread the printed materials you gave us, and am still wondering what the Federal commission would be, how the Federal efforts would be coordinated, who would provide the real leadership. My own bias is for a more direct approach, of NPS involvement as a catalyst for greater Federal participation. Some specific language could be written in the bill directing other Federal agencies to participate and spelling out some of the ways they could. It doesn't have to be too rigid, but it definitely shouldn't be left up in the air. Lots of things are "authorized" and "encouraged" that never happen.
- 2) I'm frankly amazed that Lowell has not been designated as an historic district, whether on the state or Federal registers. It's useful, of course, for getting Federal funds and protection, but even more so for the recognition of its significance when you make your case to Congress. Getting on the national register is not so difficult if it qualifies (and I see no reason why it wouldn't). The locals can go to the state historic preservation officer who makes application to the National Park Service's Office of Historic Preservation. NPS almost never turns down an application if it is certified by the state and it meets all the professional requirements. (The person who handles the program in NPS is Jerry Rogers, 523-5275).

3) You can anticipate that if the current Administration inadvertently manages to be around next year that they'll oppose it. Doesn't matter, since they hardly support anything anymore, despite Ford's hot air at Yellowstone. (Carter, on the other hand, is very much pro-parks). I certainly wouldn't tailor it to any particular Administration. It's a political game and it all boils down to votes. What you'll need is some national visibility and support, from conservation/preservation groups, professional organizations such as the American Institute of Architects etc., urban coalitions, maybe even labor unions--backed up by lots of publicity in newspapers, magazines, etc. You might even be able to get a favorable recommendation from a quasi-Administration source such as the Interior Secretary's Advisory Board on Parks (they came out with a glowing recommendation for the Chattahoochee River in Atlanta which was used to great effect). Also the Advisory Board on Historic Preservation which conveniently has the duty of advising both the Congress and the President--they don't even have to have their testimony cleared by OMB! (On the Land and Water Conservation Fund bill, for instance, they testified in support and the Administration against).

4) Although NPS is still under the thumb of the OMB, there are, as you discovered, some good people there that could be tapped for "professional advice, technical assistance" etc. To protect them, you should do it through regular channels, which isn't difficult. Gary Everhardt, the director of NPS, has been eager to please Congress, particularly members of the Interior Committees. He's skittish about controversies, is naturally concerned about keeping his job, but is a friendly sort who does mean well. Stay away from Nat Reed's people--they smile a lot but speak with forked tongues.

5) Yes, yes, yes, I think the idea of having staff visit the area is a splendid one. The grunts of the world do, after all, have some influence. October would be nice.

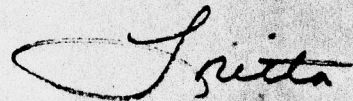
6) The slide show was well done, but I did have some problems with it. You need some more dramatic slides (like the last one, with the sun glinting off the smokestack). I'm a photographer myself & have done such shows, helped do the one for the Cuyahoga. This one was okay for a working group, but there wasn't enough excitement in it for the type of person who needs convincing (I was predisposed to be convinced before I walked in the door). It should start with a short explanation of what Lowell is and was all about, the significance of the area, why it is still so special. I loved the sense of the boat ride and the walking tour, although some of the pictures could have been more exciting. Some street scenes would be good, as most of the pictures lacked people. I liked the drawings--beautifully done and very effective. Would suggest, for a formal presentation, taping the show and limiting it to 10 minutes or so. Congressmen get itchy feet in dark rooms.



7) As to how the plan should be presented, I do think an executive summary would be great, with a less showy but more detailed report for staff use. A way to do it is to send around the summary with a cover letter stating that the complete report is available on request (perhaps through the subcommittee office, for convenience of Members). I'm sending you, under separate cover, a copy of the master plan prepared by the State of Ohio and the draft plan prepared by the NPS for the Cuyahoga. Very different, but each effective in its own way. The State one is fancier (they had a budget of \$250,000!) but it doesn't come across as too elaborate and it is easy to read. The NPS one is more "official" looking and while lacking the PR approach it also lacks pictures and visual excitement. Both, of course, are much longer than you'll need, as the area is bigger, the problems more complex. Something in between the two would be best for Lowell. Your executive summary could even be in the format of "The Canal Packet", perhaps on better stock--it's a way to get a lot of information in something that's portable and readable. You could print up several thousand and use for PR purposes too.

8) If your final package looks as good as the preliminary stuff you've done, I don't see how you can lose. It all gets back to politics, and at this point we don't even know who'll have the power next year. Obviously Tip O'Neill is your ace in the hole, as well as the fact that Mr. Tsongas is on the Interior Committee and will have more seniority next year. Burton is good on these things, so, amazingly, is Biz Johnson. I can't speak for my boss until I talk to him about it, but if the NPS role is defined (or the Federal role in general) I don't think he'll have any problems with it and most likely will be very supportive.

Enough...I've rambled on more than I meant to. Hope all this helps!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lizetta".