

shame to go on... celebration which has meant so much to

Bill Morton, art and executive director

the Santa Claus troupe

Press Samitan Nov. 17, 1976

# Delay on X-Way Decision Applauded

Memphis officials said today they were pleased with action by the State Department of Transportation to avoid a decision on the expressway through Overton Park by John Barnum, deputy U.S. secretary of transportation.

Deputy state DOT Commissioner William Goodwin advised U.S. Secretary of Transportation William Coleman yesterday by telegram of the decision to withdraw the state's request for project approval.

The move cancels a hearing on the expressway matter which Barnum had scheduled in Memphis Nov. 23.

Mayor Wyeth Chandler said: "As long as the matter was to be heard by a man (Barnum) who, we are informed, was strongly inclined to turn it down, we're glad to see the hearing put off."

Chandler said the state's action does not guarantee a favorable decision by the incoming administration of President-elect Jimmy Carter, but he said with the matter in Barnum's hands the chances for the expressway approval appeared to be zero.

"Anything more than zero is a plus," the mayor said.

Goodwin said in Nashville the decision to withdraw temporarily the request for the 3.7 mile segment of Interstate 40 "was influenced in part by a recent turn of events involving possible legal problems brought about by Secretary Coleman disqualifying himself from making a final decision on the project.

"We have proposed an environmentally sound solution at the expense of many man hours, and we do not wish to risk a decision (by Coleman's deputy) which may require clarification in the courts and perhaps more unnecessary delay," said Goodwin.

Coleman and Norbert Tiemann, federal highway administrator, were not available for comment and Barnum, who was

placed in charge of the 20-year-old Overton Park issue only a month ago, declined to talk to reporters.

However, when questioned recently about his reputation as a longtime environmentalist, Barnum said: "I believe that is a fair statement . . . I just think that we can have a good transportation system that is successful without trampling the environment."

Bob Beasley, a spokesman for the U.S. Department of Transportation, said he was not particularly surprised at the Tennessee DOT request to halt processing of the environmental impact statement. He said Coleman had received numerous letters from both public officials and private citizens in Memphis who were "very heartsick" that Coleman had disqualified himself from the case.

Coleman's action came after he said he learned his daughter had become employed by a Washington firm that has handled suits against completion of the route through Overton Park. Earlier, he had promised Gov. Ray Blanton he would rule one way or another on the route before Dec. 31.

The state in mid-October presented Coleman its final proposal, calling for a sunken plaza-design road with a "slurry

wall" construction method. Roughly 40 per cent of the highway segment through the midtown park would be covered by grassy areas.

Beasley said most of the letters on the matter were addressed to President Ford, who forwarded them to Coleman. He said several of the writers expressed dissatisfaction with Barnum because of his record of siding with environmentalists in disputes similar to this one.

"Yes, I would say he leans that way possibly," said Beasley when asked if Barnum considers himself a friend of environmentalists.

He said the request by Tennessee DOT "means that everything is in their ballpark as far as we are concerned" and the U.S. Department of Transportation will take no further action this year unless specifically requested by state officials.

C. Ramon Greenwood, assistant to the secretary and director of public affairs for the department, said the cancellation of the Nov. 23 hearing in Memphis was based on the withdrawal of the environmental impact statement.

When he announced the public hearing, Barnum said he wanted to determine whether the state's plan "provides suffi-

Turn to Page 12 — CITY OFFICIALS

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Capt. Warner s  
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YESTERDAY

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11 p.m.	.....
Midnight	.....

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# City Officials Are Pleased With Action to Delay Decision on Overton Park X-Way

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cient protection to the park and if not, should more cover be provided.

"Also," he said, "what would be the impact of constructing a fully-covered single-level or two-level tunnel through the park." Such a proposal was offered by Coleman more than a year ago but rejected by Blanton on the grounds the cost was too high.

Barnum said he also wanted to hear how seriously the construc-

fect noise and air quality, and whether any actions can be taken to reduce any adverse impact, such as the construction of noise abatement barriers." Further, he said, he wanted to determine if the proposal met requirements of the Department of Transportation Act on the use of public parkland.

Chandler said his best information was that Barnum would have been "very strongly" inclined to turn down a route through the park.

Before joining DOT as general counsel in 1971, Barnum was an anti-trust lawyer

Swaine and Moore. In 1973, he was named Undersecretary of Transportation and the following year assumed the job of deputy secretary.

Earlier this year, he was picked by President Ford to become chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, but turned-down the appointment, saying he preferred to stay on at DOT.

Reaction to the state's request in Memphis was not entirely favorable.

County Court Chairman Charles Perkins said he had not been consulted about the expressway request and thought it was

"As far as I know, the county is not involved," said Perkins. "I have not been contacted. I fail to see the reason behind it unless they (state and city officials) thought they would get an adverse ruling. I'm sorry to hear it."

Charles F. Newman, attorney for Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Inc., and Mrs. Anona Stoner, secretary for the group, said they had no immediate comment on the action and were awaiting more information.

The I-40 segment in Memphis is the

only incomplete portion of the roadway between Asheville, N.C., and Amarillo, Tex.

A \$3.5 million contract for the segment was awarded in 1956 to C.E. Michael Con-

struction Co. of Chattanooga, but a lawsuit has prevented work from started. Since then, inflation and factors have swollen the project's ed price tag to at least \$33 million.

## \$531.7 Million Set For Unemployment

WASHINGTON. — (AP) — The federal government will pump \$531.7 million into the economy today to try to cut down on unemployment.

The money will go to 17,000 local and state governments.

It was authorized by Congress as part of the \$3.7 billion Public Employment Act.

Memphis' share of the federal money is \$738,367 for the period from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. The funds will be used to maintain basic city services and manpower