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"Lane Answers Expressway Protests"

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THE COMMERCIAL

Lane Answers Expressway ¹Protests

Commissioner Hunter Lane Jr. declared yesterday that members of the Committee to Preserve Overton Park have shown a lack of objectivity in their protest of the east-west leg of the expressway running through the park.

"I respect their views, but they haven't shown much respect for others," Commissioner Lane said. "They have continually said Overton Park will be 'destroyed' if the expressway runs through there, but that simply isn't true. I hope the expressway can be re-routed to avoid the park, but if it can't be done, the park still won't be destroyed."

He said alternate routes might create problems just as difficult as the present one.

"What if the engineers

came up with an alternate route to run through Southwestern? Or one that would require tearing down First Baptist Church at Poplar and East Parkway. No matter where the expressway runs, it would create problems, but a decision has to be made.

"Are we going to meet the needs of future Memphis or not? Is it worth it to sacrifice a bit of the park to have a vitally needed movement for traffic and a link to the new bridge or not? We are not talking about Memphis 1965, we are talking about future Memphis and plans have to be made now for times to come, otherwise we will be backward in future years."

Commissioner Lane said the resolution adopted Tuesday by the City Commission by a 4-1 vote supporting the expressway system "was very important to the future of this city."

He said the City Commission needed to express forcefully to state Highway Commissioner David Pack "that we weren't going to let him climb out on a limb and then allow somebody to saw it off."

"State and Federal authorities needed to know that Memphis is vitally concerned with construction of the expressway, that we want it and we want it as fast as we can have it."

He said Mayor William B. Ingram's reason for voting against the resolution—that it was premature until the route is definitely fixed—ignores the immediacy of the problem.

"We went on record saying we supported completion of the expressway system," he said. "Engineers who have studied and re-studied proposed routes are completely objective and we on the City Commission are only laymen. They are to come up with the best possible plans and we can't let present prejudice and passion stand in the way of it."

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