

Mr. Connor vs. Staten Island

The most essential and immediate step to save Staten Island is passage of a bill requiring pre-mapping of land before a building permit is issued. This measure, already defeated twice by the City Council, has been consistently opposed by Borough President Connor for nearly a year.

Without pre-mapping, there can be no planning of any kind. Houses will continue to be built without streets, sewers and services; land development will continue at the present level of opportunistic exploitation; the results will continue to be instant blight.

In addition to this city measure, two others will be required from the State Legislature. One would guarantee to the city first development rights in a renewal area; the other would set up quasi-public land development corporations to do the job.

Of the critically needed pre-mapping law, Mr. Connor has said in the past, while voting against it, "I am not taking a heroic stand." The bill will come before the City Council again shortly. Possibly Mr. Connor, from whom we publish a letter on this page today, will be more heroic, and more helpful, the next time round. His attitude toward the city's Office of Staten Island Development has been summed up tersely by a staff member: "Local cooperation leaves something to be desired."

Certainly Mr. Connor has not put a welcome mat at the door. He is reluctant to provide a door at all, unless it leads to his office. He charges that an independent agency causes confusion and duplication and is a threat to the Borough President. The city counters that master-planning of Staten Island resources goes beyond the Borough President's powers, and that only a coordinating executive agency can provide productive liaison for the Mayor, city departments and services, private developers, local organizations and state and Federal programs.

Meanwhile, the development agency and the Borough President stand toe to toe. Politics and personal feelings promise a pointless vendetta. Staten Island and the city are the certain losers.