

"Bossism? A good example of bossism is Buford Watson. Take the group of architecture students he had build models for the potential city hall that he wants built at the 600 Mass. site. That's his idea, not the people's. Political amateurism? With neighborhood organizations already, the very fact that they exist shows the people care."

These organizations are remarkable, she added, for their perseverance in the face of city commission indifference. "They only come around at election time," she said. "Under a council form of government, they'd have to listen to their constituents or they wouldn't be re-elected."

Addressing one of the J-W's headier charges-- that giving the people a representational form of government would result in "disaster," Ms. Mastin scoffed, "Disaster? I think a disaster has already occurred. 23rd Street is an example. When I moved here fifteen years ago, it was a nice street... Now it's ugly. And as long as the city manager keeps formulating all the policy, things will continue to go in that direction."

Ms. Mastin was asked for her impression of City Commission meetings. "Disorder. A lack of pre-planning, pre-thought. The City Commissioners are unprepared for issues. The City Manager dominates meetings. And the audience isn't well enough versed nor are they given enough time to ask valid questions. The agenda is published the night before in the paper without any references or background to the topics... A lot of

the time background information isn't available so you don't know what questions to ask. Over the years I've seen the City Commission meetings become very impersonal. They seem like railroad jobs. Buford Watson is the engineer of almost all the city planning I've ever seen."

She made it clear that she thinks the fault lies not in the individual City Commissioners, but in the form of government Lawrence is now using. "I really respect the City Commissioners," she said. "It's not that I downgrade them. It's just that they can't do an adequate job when they're not full-time, when they're not salaried, and when they don't live in their voting ward."

How does your vision of Lawrence differ from the city manager's? "I see some historical preservation and a culturally balanced city. One that has history, recreation, business, industry, education, and the arts. One that's environmentally protected with thinking and forethought about what the impact of industrial parks is going to be. How are those things going to effect Lawrence in 20-30 years? We pre-suppose the planners are considering the environment. But obviously, with the cases of 23rd St. and Iowa they haven't."

Ms. Mastin had some acute insights into the psychological effects of city planning. "In all those mass areas (23rd St., Iowa) the identity of the individual is lost. But the identity of the individual is preserved in downtown Lawrence. I personally

like what they've done to downtown Lawrence, in general. I like the way they've been able to preserve the different styles of architecture and periods of history. Part of the idea of a city is character, and you've got to have history to build character. The type of history that's instilled in the Malls Shopping Center is of a limited character. Not negative, necessarily, just limited. People feel isolated when they can't attach themselves to past periods of time. It's like someone who doesn't have any family to eat Thanksgiving dinner with. The same thing goes for someone who goes downtown to shop and doesn't have any old, familiar buildings they can relate to."

Ms. Maston termed the petition drive to change Lawrence's city government the action of an "unorganized group of people who are dissatisfied with the deaf ear the City Commission turns to the desires and needs of citizens time after time. Many of the petitioners have never been politically involved. But they're sick and tired with the way things are and think it's time the people have a voice in their government."

From what she's seen, the odds are good that the referendum will pass on the March ballot. After that, there will be an orderly change of government lasting six months. Then an election for mayor and council will be held.

Under the bright light of her dining room table, Ms. Maston smiled and said, "We'll have a better government for a better town to live in."

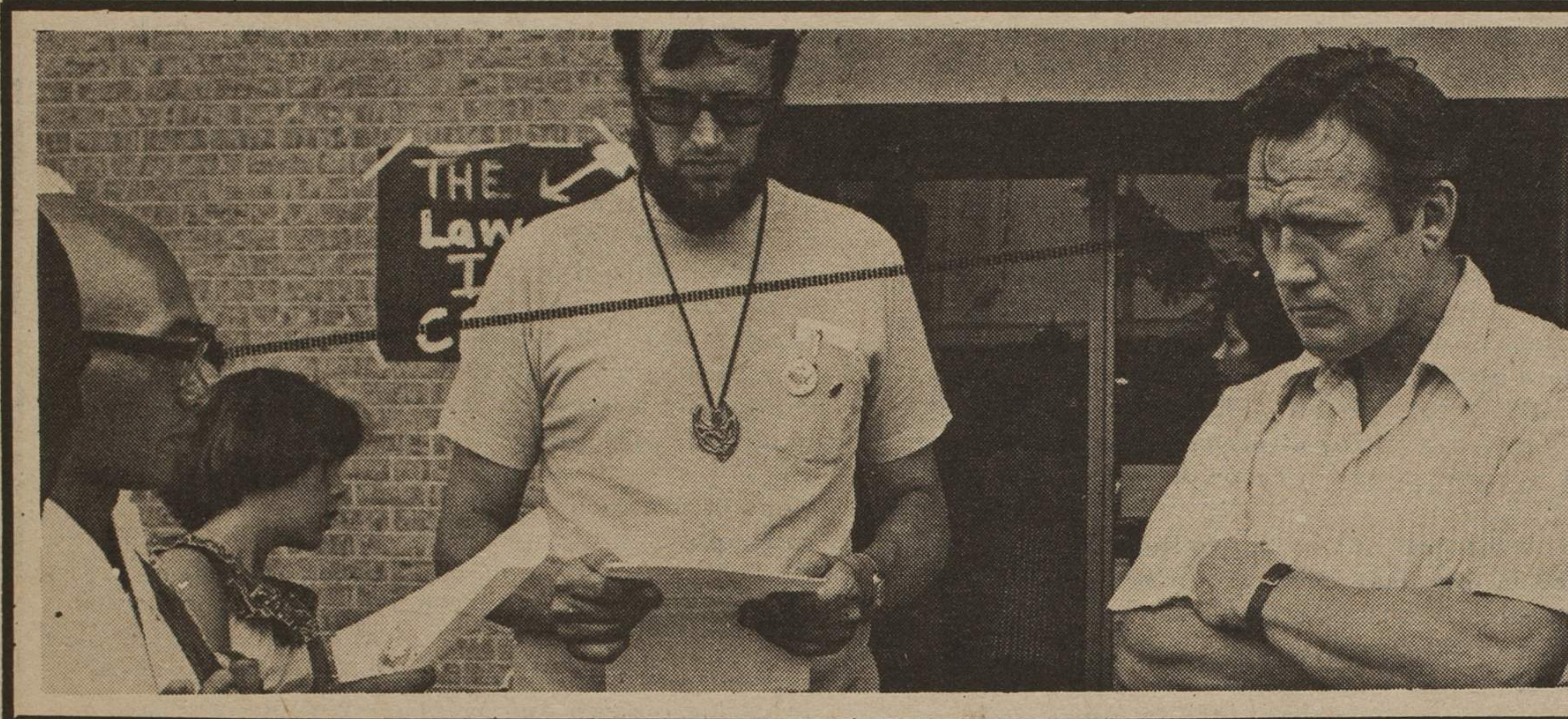


Photo Feature of the Month

EAST MEETS WEST

Lawrence Mayor Fred Pence studies a Buddhist member of the Continental Walk for Disarmament and Social Justice as he reads a letter from the Mayor of Hiroshima appealing for world-wide peace. Fred wrinkled his brow and chewed his jaw back and forth as he heard both the Japanese and English version. Said Fred, "I thank you, even thought you and I might differ on some of the things you read there in that letter..."



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