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The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Mark Braly:  
Oakland Army Base Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by  
Jess Rigelhaupt  
in 2007

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01-00:00:00

Rigelhaupt: It is November 13, 2007. I'm in Davis, California doing an oral history interview with Mark Braly and this is tape one. And to begin, if I could just ask you to say your full name and the year you were born.

01-00:00:23

Braly: Mark Braly. You've got it a little bit wrong.

01-00:00:27

Rigelhaupt: OK.

01-00:00:27

Braly: And I was born in 1935.

01-00:00:31

Rigelhaupt: And where did you grow up?

01-00:00:34

Braly: Houston, Texas.

01-00:00:35

Rigelhaupt: So were you born in Houston?

01-00:00:37

Braly: Waco, Texas.

01-00:00:41

Rigelhaupt: And did you live in Houston throughout your childhood?

01-00:00:47

Braly: I did. I graduated from high school in Houston and went to college in Illinois, at Northwestern.

01-00:00:59

Rigelhaupt: And your parents, where were they born?

01-00:01:06

Braly: My dad was born in Troop, Texas, and my mother was born in Bryant's Mill, Texas, East Texas. Little East Texas, now.

01-00:00:10:18

Rigelhaupt: Did you have a lot of extended family nearby?

01-00:01:22

Braly: Oh, yes. That was pretty much what our vacation would be, visiting family in East Texas.

01-00:01:34

Rigelhaupt: How big was Houston while you were a child?

01-00:01:41

**Braly:** Houston was kind of just on the verge of becoming a major city. It was about—I remember about 350,000, and by, I don't know, ten, 15 years later, it was over a million. It was considered a boom town mainly because of oil.

01-00:02:04

**Rigelhaupt:** What was it like growing up with that kind of expansion going on?

01-00:02:11

**Braly:** Well, there was a lot of boosterism, and people just loved to see—I mean, it was kind of a wide open town in terms of people loved to see the growth. No historical presence—no interest in preserving historical businesses at all or historical buildings. The environmental movement was yet to happen, and so that was the ethos. Very much a business ethos.

01-00:02:44

**Rigelhaupt:** Other than the oil business, what kind of peripheral businesses contributed to the growth in Houston?

01-00:02:54

**Braly:** The port of Houston had eclipsed Galveston, which historically had been a big port. And I think it was even by—perhaps bigger than New Orleans, then. I don't remember. So agricultural products and oil and news—we had quite a bit of manufacturing there, too. Cattle, of course.

01-00:03:20

**Rigelhaupt:** Well, what was a typical day like for your mother and father when you were, say, elementary school aged?

01-00:03:30

**Braly:** Well, I was in elementary school during World War II. I remember I was in the first grade at the time of Pearl Harbor. So my dad was in the Seabees. He's one of the few men who served in both World War I and II. As we always said, he was too young for World War I and too old for World War II, but he was in both. And my mother was a nurse, so she would go off to work as a nurse, so we, my sister and I, were kind of latchkey babies. My sister was older, so she wasn't a baby.

01-00:04:08

**Rigelhaupt:** When you say Seabees, I'm not familiar with that term.

01-00:04:11

**Braly:** Seabees is the engineering unit of the Navy. It would be somewhat like the Army Corps of Engineers. And Seabees is of course an acronym for something longer. But they're the Navy engineers, basically. He was not an engineer. He was an electrician.

01-00:04:36

**Rigelhaupt:** So he served overseas both in World War I and World War II?

01-00:04:38

Braly:

Yes. He was in the Signal Corps of the Army in World War I in France and he was building airstrips on islands in the Pacific in World War II.

01-00:04:52

Rigelhaupt:

Did he talk about things that he had seen overseas, both in World War I and World War II?

01-00:04:59

Braly:

To some extent. You've seen those recent movies and read those recent movies about World War II. They tended not to talk too much about it. But he did, to some extent, and of course, we all wish that we had recorded him like this before he died. I remember him telling about running into his younger brother on some island in the Pacific.

01-00:05:25

Rigelhaupt:

Did he mention which islands he was on in the Pacific?

01-00:05:29

Braly:

Saipan was one. That's the only one I can remember.

01-00:05:41

Rigelhaupt:

And what neighborhood did you live in, in Houston?

01-00:05:46

Braly:

Well, I lived in an area called Houston Gardens, which was the northeast part of Houston. I mean you could see a pattern of urban sprawl developing even then. You had to travel through a lot of open countryside to even get to Houston. We weren't in the city limits initially, and then later, Houston expanded hugely and we were. It was just World War II modest two bedroom, one bath homes, mostly, on big, big lots. And a lot of the people would come from the country and they liked to have chickens and cows, and raise a little something in the backyard. And we did, too.

01-00:06:34

Rigelhaupt:

So once you got out to Houston Gardens, it sounds like there was open space between the neighborhood and the city.

01-00:06:41

Braly:

Oh, there was. Oh, there was, yes.

01-00:06:42

Rigelhaupt:

But were the houses close together? Was it kind of a tight knit neighborhood once you were in that?

01-00:06:48

Braly:

Well, they—as I was saying, the lots were huge compared to today—to my little yard here. So that was what people wanted. But the houses were inexpensive. The land and the houses were inexpensive so we could—you know, my dad, a working man, could afford a house. Of course, my mother

worked, too, so that helped. Because they were so cheap, I think our house was only a few thousand dollars.

01-00:07:18

Rigelhaupt: Well, when your father came back from service in the Second World War, did he continue working as an electrician?

01-00:07:27

Braly: He did. He worked through the union, the Electrical Workers Union on various construction jobs. And at various times, he would be with the utilities, the Houston Electrical Utility, and he would be a lineman. He would go up and repair power lines.

01-00:07:52

Rigelhaupt: And then your mother, you said, worked as a nurse?

01-00:07:56

Braly: She was a nurse, yes.

01-00:07:56

Rigelhaupt: She work in hospitals or small—

01-00:07:58

Braly: She did, some of the time, and then later, I remember, she did private duty for individuals who wanted—needed private nurses.

01-00:08:10

Rigelhaupt: Did you have a favorite subject in school? During elementary school?

01-00:08:19

Braly: Did I, in elementary school? It was always English, so it must have been then, too. No, I can't remember particularly. My grandson is in the first grade, one of my grandsons, and he's already learned to read. And I said, I told my wife, "I can't remember whether I learned to read in the first grade or not."

01-00:08:55

Rigelhaupt: Could you describe who some of the other people were in your neighborhood?

01-00:09:04

Braly: They were working people. And one of the things I always remember about my childhood is that we weren't as closely supervised and programmed as kids are today. We found our own amusements, and you know, we would play elaborate games all over the—cops and robbers or whatever all over the neighborhood. We would play baseball and just roam around. Nobody thought anything about it. Your mother would come to the door and holler for you when it was time for dinner. Today they just don't do that. There are play dates and kids are hauled around kind of a thing.

01-00:09:51

Rigelhaupt: So did you have a favorite subject in high school—was it still English?

01-00:09:59

Braly: It was English and journalism, yes. I was editor of my high school newspaper, also in junior high school. That was my first career. That's what I studied at Northwestern: newspaper, journalism.

01-00:10:21

Rigelhaupt: Do you remember any of the stories that you wrote for the high school newspaper?

01-00:10:31

Braly: Well, I wrote a column, kind of a humorous column for every issue called, "Let's Face It." And it was just about things that happened around, observations about things that happened around high school. I also worked for the local community newspaper. I wrote a column for them and various stories.

01-00:10:53

Rigelhaupt: How big was the high school?

01-00:10:55

Braly: For those days, pretty big. It was over 2,000 students. There were only six high schools in Houston at that time. Now, there's many more than that.

01-00:11:11

Rigelhaupt: So did you graduate high school in about 1953?

01-00:11:15

Braly: Yes, exactly.

01-00:11:19

Rigelhaupt: Were there any important political issues that came up that made their way into the high school paper?

01-00:11:28

Braly: No, we really didn't, in those days, concern ourselves with anything like that. It was all activities at the school and there was nothing controversial. I'm sure it wouldn't have been allowed. But we didn't even have the urge to do it.

01-00:12:00

Rigelhaupt: Looking backward, you can see the early '50s as a time in which the Cold War became a bigger part of the American climate.

01-00:12:12

Braly: Oh, yes, oh, yes. I was just saying we didn't cover it in the school newspaper. Yes, I remember the 1950s as a period that was very formative. Not until later in college when I understood it better, because it was the era of McCarthy and it was the era where you could simply make an innuendo about somebody, that they were Pink or 'fellow travelers,' to use the term of the day, and they would be—they could lose their jobs as controversial. I remember there was a lot of tension between more conservative—politically conservative people in my Dad's union. It went to great pains, I remember, to be anti-Communist.



Labor unions were considered Marxist, or at least Leftist in those days, and of course, they were much stronger in those days than they are now. So yes, I remember that. I remember when we lost China in 1949, and I remember the Eisenhower administration very well. I didn't think of myself as a Democrat or a Republican until I was in college, but you remember in, you should know that in those days Texas was a one party state. We certainly had conservatives and liberals, but the conservatives were dominant almost always. There was no hope of ever winning political office if you were anything but a Democrat. And all that was from Reconstruction. And that was very much the mentality then. But I laugh about this, and I've told this story many times, how I came out of history—American history class in high school thinking that Ku Klux Klan were good guys because that was taught with a straight face, and I didn't realize that they—You know, because they were the guys who protected us against the scallywags and the carpetbaggers and all the bad government we got when whites couldn't vote in the Reconstruction era. Reconstruction was still a work in progress when I was in high school.

01-00:14:47

Rigelhaupt: Well, how would you describe the impact that political climate has had?

01-00:14:54

Braly: On me?

01-00:14:55

Rigelhaupt: Yes.

01-00:14:52

Braly: Well, it made me very Leftist, kind of liberal. I deeply resent that era. I came to resent it when I understood it better, and what it represented, and when I see manifestations of it today, I react to it very negatively, and I do see them all the time. That anybody who criticizes the administration's policy about Iraq is considered unpatriotic. It's all the same kind of politics, it's just the terminology has changed a little bit.

01-00:15:40

Rigelhaupt: How did you decide where you were going to go to college?

01-00:15:45

Braly: Well, I was so interested in journalism, so I just kind of looked around for what the best journalism schools were and decided that it was Northwestern. I don't know. I didn't even think about Columbia, but—maybe because it's a graduate school of journalism. And I got a scholarship. I had applied to Harvard and I was admitted, but I didn't get a scholarship, so I didn't think I could afford it. And because also I was not confident enough to think I could even do it.

01-00:16:22

Rigelhaupt: What were some experiences as you first moved to Evanston and how was the lifestyle different at Northwestern?

01-00:16:28

Braly:

Oh, it was just like being in a totally alien world. I'd never been in a dense, old city like that before. I'd barely been out of Texas, just over the border to Oklahoma. So it was a very, very strange world. And Texans were considered very exotic, too. It was probably not a good place for me to go to school because I was so out of place there, and it was full of—the children of wealthy businessmen—Midwest businessmen. As I recall, our commencement address was given by the president of General Motors, and I think he might have been the one that said famously, "Whatever's good for General Motors is good for America."

01-00:17:26

Rigelhaupt:

And did you continue studying journalism at Northwestern?

01-00:17:29

Braly:

I did. I left for my junior year and came back to Texas—one year at Texas and got very active in the newspaper at Texas at that time. The Daily Texan. Willie Morris, the author, was the editor at that time. And I just had a wonderful, wonderful time. But I—in the end, I decided, "Well, Northwestern would be a better degree," so I went back. I don't know if I'm right or not. The University of Texas at Austin is considered a very fine school today.

01-00:18:11

Rigelhaupt:

What did you do after you graduated college?

01-00:18:15

Braly:

I came back to Houston with a couple buddies, one of whom had lived in Houston, but his parents had moved to Chicago, and another one was from Pennsylvania, had never been there. And we got jobs. I had interned on one of the Houston papers, the Houston Press, so I got a job there as a reporter, and they got jobs, and so we just roomed together for a couple of years. That was during the time of the universal military training, so I knew I'd have to be going into service. We knew it was temporary, you know, before we went in and did our military duty, which I eventually did, and I was—went into the Air Force. Basic training was in San Antonio.

01-00:19:00

Rigelhaupt:

After you did basic training and you were in the Air Force, how long were you in the service?

01-00:19:07

Braly:

Not long because it was a reserve thing. Like the President, and so I did the six months basic training, and then I had to do umpety-ump years of weekend and two weeks a year. I absolutely hated it. And I moved to California, but that was doable because you could—there were reserve units all over the country, so I just joined up with one in Los Angeles.

01-00:19:39

Rigelhaupt:

So that was the late '50s?

01-00:19:40

Braly: Well, I graduated in '57, so that would have been about '59, '60 when I moved to California, and then earlier, I had done the six months.

01-00:19:55

Rigelhaupt: And what brought you to California?

01-00:20:00

Braly: Just always wanted to see California. I'll never know why I didn't think about it when I was considering schools because, I mean, I got here and I said, "This is me. You know, this is the place for me." And I never looked back. I have family in Texas and I still go back and visit, but I really didn't belong there.

01-00:20:29

Rigelhaupt: Did you begin working as a reporter in Los Angeles?

01-00:20:34

Braly: Tried to, and found that I couldn't get on. I thought I might have a job with the L.A. Times, but it didn't materialize, so actually I went and did public relations for Capital Records for a while.

01-00:20:47

Rigelhaupt: What were some of the big records they were releasing in that time?

01-00:20:53

Braly: Oh, they were very formative, for me. Paly, Frank Sinatra, the Kingston trio. I mean, Capital Records was big then. So many others. Well, the King sisters, but nobody remembers them. Bobby Darin, Nelson Riddle—that'd be Frank Sinatra. I don't know. So many.

01-00:21:22

Rigelhaupt: And how long did you stay on at Capital Records.?

01-00:21:26

Braly: Just a couple of years. What happened was we were called up—my reserve unit was called up for the Berlin Crisis. Remember that? And it was around the time of the Cuban Blockade. People were very tense. We were called up for a year. We didn't do a damn thing. It was a transport unit in the Air Force. So there might have been somebody flying to Berlin, but it certainly wasn't me. So I had left my job at Capital, and then when I finished that year, I went back—briefly. I had applied for a branch of the Foreign Service, the U.S. Information Agency. It's not around anymore. It's been folded into the State Department. So I got that job, and then I went to Washington right at the beginning of the Kennedy Administration for a year of training to go overseas. Then a year of training at the Foreign Service Institute and then I got my post. It was Thailand. I went to Thailand. I was there for four years. My first daughter was born there, at Thailand. In the meantime, I had married to a woman I met at Los Angeles, now deceased—not Pat. And Pat's also from Houston. We went to high school together. And that was—in the buildup—that was—'63 was when I started that job. Kennedy was assassinated when I

was there in Washington. In '64 I went to Bangkok, initially. That was right at the buildup for the Vietnam War. There was a huge buildup in Thailand. Thailand was a staging area and it was a close ally of the United States. And then after I was there in Bangkok for a year, my daughter was born. We moved to South Thailand because USIA had opened a number of posts around the country. They were all about public relations for the United States. They did movies, and they had libraries, and they had cultural exchange, and English language training. Anyway, because we were interested in knowing what was going on in the countryside, I was sent to South Thailand. There were other branches in the Northeast and the north, and so forth. So we lived down there for three years and my daughter was a toddler down there.

01-00:24:21

Rigelhaupt:

How many co-workers did you have in South Thailand?

01-00:24:24

Braly:

USIA had a pretty big mission, and—but not all of them would have been Americans. Probably more of them would have been Thai than Americans. How many foreign service officers did we have? Thirty, maybe? Yes, about that, and then a lot of Thai nationals. I had maybe half a dozen Thai nationals who worked for me.

01-00:24:57

Rigelhaupt:

Well, what —

01-00:24:58

Braly:

Edward R. Murrow was the director, then. The famous newsman. Yes, Kennedy appointed him.

01-00:25:06

Rigelhaupt:

Was the director of the U.S. Infor—

01-00:25:07

Braly:

U.S. Information Agency, yes.

01-00:25:09

Rigelhaupt:

So not just in Thailand?

01-00:25:10

Braly:

Yes, yes. It was considered a very important agency, then, because Americans were very concerned—that was when Kennedy started the Peace Corps. I knew a lot of Peace Corps volunteers down there. Among the first to go abroad. And the U.S. was very concerned with their image abroad. I mean, we still are, but we thought that, you know, we could use media and use our presence to make people like us, be allied with us, and so forth.

01-00:25:40

Rigelhaupt:

What was it like being in Southeast Asia as the Vietnam War escalated?

01-00:25:45

Braly:

Well, it was very formative for me, because when I went there, I didn't have an opinion about the Vietnam War. Or I had an opinion, and I think it was kind of the default opinion that all Americans had at that time, because our experience with war had been mainly with World War II, and then, of course, the Korean War. "Hey, if we're in the war, we're in the right. We're the good guys. It's a just war and you owe, you know, your country your patriotism, and your support, and it would be unpatriotic to disagree with the policy." That's where I was. That's where most people were in those days. And if your experience was in World War II, it was unthinkable to be anything else. I began to have doubts about it while I was there, thinking, "Well, you know, even if Ho Chi Minh is a Communist, maybe he's also a Nationalist, and maybe he's better able to—or more legitimate ruling that country than Ngo Dinh Diem. And after all, aren't we pretty much like the French trying to occupy that country as a colonial power."

01-00:27:41

Rigelhaupt:

In your description there is a point of reference to the Vietnam War and juxtaposing it against a lens of World War II, how do you remember the Korean War?

01-00:27:57

Braly:

Well, I would have been in high school, and I remember it. It's hard to think what you remembered at the time as opposed to what you remember now because you've read about it. But I knew that it was a very closely contested war and I knew that everybody was in a bit of a shock because we weren't winning it. It never occurred to me to think that we shouldn't be there, or that it wasn't a just war. And, in fact, I still think that's pretty much the case. I think North Korea was the aggressor, pretty clearly.

01-00:28:44

Rigelhaupt:

My question was more a question of how the experience the U.S. had with the Vietnam War became influenced by memories of the Korean War as much as World War II?

01-00:29:12

Braly:

I don't think that was the case, although what gave me pause was that we had World War II, which you kind of thought as, you know, everything is settled now, we won, and then in quick succession we had two other wars. And that raises the question of whether or not we need to be fighting that many wars. And it was more of what I learned in Thailand and what I read. Also, the American press was beginning to question the Vietnam War, and undoubtedly that influenced me. It's interesting the way they questioned it. They never questioned it in the beginning as "It's a wrong war and we shouldn't be fighting it." They questioned it in terms of are we doing the right things to win it. But gradually I began to think about it, read about it. And another thing that influenced was that the Thais weren't nearly as afraid of the Communists as we were. I noted that. They were happy to take all the aid, money that was

pouring into their country, but they weren't nearly as worried about them. They thought we were a little silly. I picked that up pretty quickly.

01-00:30:38

Rigelhaupt:

What was the coverage like, I mean, in the sense of being overseas during the Vietnam War and questioning it. Did you get a lot of coverage of the protests and the expansion of an anti-Vietnam War movement?

01-00:30:53

Braly:

We did, we did. And I can tell you a couple of formative moments. I was in South Thailand at Songkla. We had opened a branch in this city in South Thailand and I had a group of Americans in my house for dinner, and we were talking about the march on the Pentagon. And there might have been more than one, but as I recall, this was the one where the father had immolated himself and had thrown his daughter out at the last minute. You remember reading about that? And we were all in shock about this. So it was this—you know, shades of my upbringing in Texas. We had this, I think it was a Marine colonel, maybe in the Army. A Marine major, maybe an Army major, and he whips out his wallet and takes out his credit card. He said, "I'll give him my government credit card." He was from the South. Meaning, that's—"I'm not sad about it. The guy, you know, ought to burn up for that lack of patriotism in that protest." And looking back on it, you know, that was kind of the dawn of, the big protest of the late '60s. The Democratic Convention was yet to come up. That was kind of a first inkling that there was this deep division among the American people about the question of nationalism and patriotism. And about protesting in the street. Because we were coming off a period of great consensus in this country. Everyone pretty much agreed on the fundamental thing, and that kind of a challenge to the very basic American ideas was unknown. So, I mean, that was yet to come, but this major in my house saying that shocking thing was, I think, a preview of things to come as I look back on it. The other thing that happened was I went down to visit my colleague—I was very naïve in those days. My colleague in northern Malaysia in a place called Panang. We had a USIA post down there. Overseas it was called U.S. Information Service, so USIS is what it was called. And we were sitting around talking and I said to him, "You know, it just may be that Ho Chi Minh is the legitimate ruler of Vietnam." And he absolutely went bananas and I heard, I got word later that he reported me to the embassy. So you couldn't even talk about it. We were at war. You couldn't express any dissension. For some people, it was just not allowed. Nothing ever came of it because the people I worked with were more reasonable than that.

01-00:34:04

Rigelhaupt:

This description of social change that you're talking about, I'm also thinking of the Civil Rights Movement and the changes in the American South.

01-00:34:12

Braly:

Well, that was very much a part of the protest, the active protest in the street, on the ground, that disrupted that consensus that we had.

01-00:34:25

Rigelhaupt:

What was it like being overseas and seeing how the Civil Rights Movement was covered? How did you hear about things happening in Birmingham in '63?

01-00:34:39

Braly:

Oh. Well, a lot of that happened when I was in Washington, and I even marched in the March on Washington. I heard the "I Have A Dream" speech. But I can remember, as I was marching in it— Why wasn't I at work? Maybe it was on the weekend, I don't know. But I marched in the March and I can remember being nervous about it, that no one should see me because it might affect my career. It was probably silly, but that was the atmosphere that I grew up in. There were certain ideas you couldn't associate yourself with, otherwise there could be repercussions.

01-00:35:26

Rigelhaupt:

Were there Jim Crow laws in Houston?

01-00:35:30

Braly:

Yes.

01-00:35:30

Rigelhaupt:

And so those were being dismantled as well?

01-00:35:34

Braly:

The schools were segregated in Houston when I was in school there.

01-00:35:43

Rigelhaupt:

And did they become desegregated relatively soon after?

01-00:35:49

Braly:

You know, I was gone, and I couldn't tell you in relation to Little Rock or those other places that were so famous. I couldn't tell you when they desegregated, but it was during that time.

01-00:36:03

Rigelhaupt:

And as the movement continued to expand, such as the famous march at Selma in 1965, what was the coverage like overseas? Were you reading about and did you get the same newspapers?

01-00:36:20

Braly:

Didn't get as much coverage on that overseas. Much more on Vietnam. We got the Voice of America. That was part of USIA. We listened to that, we listened to BBC. So yes, we got coverage, but not, I think, as much as if we'd been in this country. And I didn't know about the Civil Rights workers who were murdered in Philadelphia, Mississippi. That must have happened when I was gone, because I didn't know about it until I got back.

01-00:36:55

Rigelhaupt:

What year did you return from Thailand to the States?

01-00:37:02

Braly: '68. And I left USIA to go back to graduate school at Madison.

01-00:37:11

Rigelhaupt: What did you study at Madison?

01-00:37:12

Braly: Economic development. I had the thought that I would—I got much more interested in economic development and the work that USIA was doing than I was in the work USIA was doing. So I was interested in it and I thought I might pursue a career in it. As it turned out, I didn't. My wife and I were kind of agreeing—she particularly didn't want to live in a Third World country again, so I ended up coming back to L.A., which was her home. And that's when I got interested in the environmental movement. I got a job at CalTech working on what was then a new environmental studies laboratory.

01-00:38:05

Rigelhaupt: Could you say more about what you were doing at CalTech?

01-00:38:08

Braly: Yes. That was 1970. That was the year I got out of graduate school, and the Clean Air Act passed, the original Clean Air Act passed. It was just during the beginning of the Environmental Movement—the modern Environment Movement. So CalTech started this laboratory which tried to combine public policy with technical analysis. Their first project, I remember, was how do you implement the Clean Air Act in Los Angeles. What's involved? What measures could you adopt? What would they yield in terms of results getting you towards the Clean Air goals in the Clean Air Act? So that was fascinating. I loved it and got very interested in the environmental movement as a result of that, and have remained so.

01-00:39:04

Rigelhaupt: How many years did you work as a research—were you a researcher?

01-00:39:07

Braly: I wasn't a researcher, really. I was an administrator and I was editor of lab publications. But we had a very democratic director. He was a very distinguished engineer and he got everybody involved.

01-00:39:22

Rigelhaupt: And how many years did you work at CalTech?

01-00:39:25

Braly: About three years.

01-00:39:27

Rigelhaupt: And then what was next?

01-00:39:29

Braly: I went to work for the mayor of Los Angeles. I had acquired a certain amount of expertise on energy and that was becoming a big issue then, leading up to



the energy crisis of the '70s. I was hired as the energy advisor—we called it Energy Coordinator of the city. There had been a big shot in the job from UCLA, the head of the business school in the job before. It was just kind of a dollar a year job kind of thing that he did, and then they decided to make it a regular staff position, so I took that job.

01-00:40:11

Rigelhaupt:

Well, what were some of the things that you did within the Bradley administration?

01-00:40:18

Braly:

Well, it was three things. Initially, it was working with the city's own operations in terms of reducing energy use and responding to the energy crisis. One of the city's operations was a municipal electric and water utility and it was working with them on their programs of energy efficiency and renewable energy that were just getting underway. In fact, there was a lot of resistance from them on it later. They got involved in it. And finally, we did an energy plan for Los Angeles. We got a grant from the {inaudible?} and did an energy plan for Los Angeles. I was kind of inspired by my work at CalTech, so we wanted to see quantitatively, how to reduce energy use in Los Angeles, which is a good thing to do because of the energy shocks that we experienced and because we were looking at nothing but high energy costs, which turned out to be wrong for a couple of decades, and because of our air pollution problem. We asked, "What could we do and what kind of benefit would it have in terms of jobs and reduced pollution?" A very quantitative study about energy flows and policy study about energy flows in Los Angeles. We ended up winning a big planning association award.

01-00:41:49

Rigelhaupt:

What were some of the things that were implemented from the plan?

01-00:41:53

Braly:

Well, I think the major thing that came out of it was that the Department of Water and Power, which is the biggest municipal utility in the country, got really serious. It adopted it as their plan and got really serious about bringing renewable energy sources into their portfolio and offering energy conservation incentives and support to their customers. Just being much more progressive in that way. The city enacted some laws, too, to encourage solar energy use and to protect solar rights. We had some programs where we recovered gas from our landfills and used them to offset energy use and we revamping of our streetlights, because there was a huge energy source to more efficient lighting. And it's very interesting to see this coming up today, because the technology available in those days was so much less than it is today. It was so much earlier. Much of the technology was there, but it's so much earlier a stage than it is today. Of course, it should be farther along. Then I left to come up to start a program with the state. The legislation had created a nonprofit corporation owned and funded by the state to lend money to entrepreneurs in the energy field. And I did that for six years. It was frustrating because energy was

becoming less and less of an issue and it was becoming cheaper and cheaper. It was an uphill battle.

01-00:43:50

Rigelhaupt: Were there any projects that got underway while you were giving grants that have continued to develop?

01-00:43:58

Braly: They were loans. They were small business loans.

01-00:43:59

Rigelhaupt: For small business.

01-00:44:02

Braly: Well, that's an interesting question. I'll have to think back. There could be. Businesses that we funded that are still in business. There could be, and I just can't think of any of them. Although there might not also be, because that industry just completely collapsed because of the cheap energy during that era. It was compared to the need, it was a very modest effort.

01-00:44:46

Rigelhaupt: When did you begin working for the Office of Economic Adjustment?

01-00:44:56

Braly: In about the early '90s. The name of the outfit that I started and was the CEO of was SAFFECBID was the initials. State Assistance Fund for Energy California and Industrial Development Corporation. So I left there at the administration change. My board changed and so it was time for me to leave. And so I was a private consultant working with local governments, mainly. With renewable energy association in one case, and did various things. That proved to be an unreliable source of an adequate income, so eventually I went to work with the federal government.

01-00:45:53

Rigelhaupt: What were some of the things you first worked on when you joined OEA?

01-00:45:58

Braly: Well, they immediately assigned me to a portfolio of projects. OEA is a small unit in the Secretary's [of defense] office that works with local governments. They might work with local governments who are impacted by a base expanding. But when I started, it was all about bases closing because that BRAC process was just getting started. And, of course, it was a huge political issue and so I was immediately assigned to a portfolio of bases that were closing, usually had already been designated for closure. And we had two or three rounds of BRAC} while I was there. I had bases in the Bay Area. I had Alameda, Oak Knoll, Oakland Army Base. I had Castle Air Force base. I had Barber's Point Naval Air Station in Hawaii, and then I had one in Guam, another Navy base, and a few other small ones. We did other things as well. Later, we got involved in trying to help local governments plan to avoid the urban encroachments on bases. That was very interesting work. There are a

number of things you can do with base. First of all, it was interesting, just the process watching BRAC because if you ever doubted how important economically government expenditures, particularly defense expenditures are, for the economy of this country, just observe the BRAC process for a while. Because congressmen and the senators and the elected officials were very nervous about the impact of what the loss of those jobs would have on their political careers and their political agendas. But it was also interesting from the standpoint of an interesting kind of policy innovation. Faced with a difficult political decision to make—how do you do it because there's so many losers and so much is at stake. But you have to do it. It's recognized that you have to do it, it's just that you're paralyzed and you can't, so you try to bring in these commissions of elder statesmen and people who had reputations of being wise and fair, and then you support them with all kinds of staff. And you have your hearings going around the country. It was a lot of, a lot of process to deal with that impasse. And I've heard it mentioned since then as a way to deal with other areas where we have these special interests that are locked in battle and nothing moves forward. Impartial commissions. I don't know that they've used it again, but there was a lot of talk about it was a model that could be used.

01-00:49:43

Rigelhaupt:

When you started, what had you heard about the 1988 base closure process that was done in secret?

01-00:49:54

Braly:

I don't think I'd heard that. You mean, it was done without the BRAC commission?

01-00:49:58

Rigelhaupt:

There was a BRAC commission, but they didn't have as many open meetings and planning. They came with a list predetermined.

01-00:50:11

Braly:

The Defense Department came with a list predetermined?

01-00:50:15

Rigelhaupt:

Well, the way it was explained to me recently was up until then, basically, Congress had outlawed any base closings without their approval, and then the 1988—

01-00:50:29

Braly:

Right.

01-00:50:29

Rigelhaupt:

— base closing commission was to try to end that impasse as far as closing no bases.

01-00:50:40

Braly:

That sounds right, and it must have led to the shape and the organization of the subsequent base BRAC commissions. But I don't remember a lot about it.

01-00:50:53

Rigelhaupt:

I was just curious if you had heard about it, because it sounds like it predates—

01-00:50:57

Braly:

Well, there were—yes, I did hear. I do recall some of the criticism. That would have been before I was paying a lot of attention because I didn't work for OEA at that time.

01-00:51:07

Rigelhaupt:

Mostly that they [1988 commission] did their research in secret. The way they pulled numbers [statistical research] to decide which base to close and which to add to the list—

01-00:51:16

Braly:

Right.

01-00:51:16

Rigelhaupt:

—was not a very public process.

01-00:51:20

Braly:

There was a lot of criticism along those lines and there continued to be. There continued to be in the public hearings, every time there was a BRAC round, a lot of criticism of the numbers. I can't say that I ever reached any conclusion about who was right, but they certainly were aired, those grievances. And it was clear that the Defense Department did have an opinion about what bases should be closed, and it wasn't probably solely based on professional military objective considerations. I've heard it said—You know, we go through this process of budgeting every year for the Defense Department, and it's funny about how it always comes out just about equally. One third for the Navy, one third for the Army, one third for the Air Force. There's a lot of—just like in Congress— there's a lot of jockeying among the different interests within the Defense Department to see who's going to get money and there must have been with regard to what bases were going to get closed. But there always was a feeling that—and not only feeling. But I think a general agreement that at least on paper, that the impact on the community was not the key, was not the primary consideration. It was a consideration, but that it was all about making national defense better by eliminating these bases that weren't needed and transferring those resources to where they were needed. That was the public posture.

01-00:53:14

Rigelhaupt:

Thinking of the first bases you were assigned when you joined OEA, which one do you recall as most likely going to have the biggest impact on the local community?

01-00:53:26

Braly:

McClellan, which wasn't my base. Neither was my base. Because it was basically an industry and we had more industrial jobs at McClellan than any other concentration in town, particularly since our local aerospace industry,

Aerojet, was scaling down. So there was a lot of local politics involved in that. Unions were very much involved in that. Local government was very involved in the strategy for preventing it. And the Clinton Administration came up with this idea of having an actual competition between the base in Utah that they wanted to keep, which did the same kind of thing, aircraft maintenance, and operations and maintenance kind of thing and McClellan, maybe as a privatized facility. That was kind of a fallback when it looked like it was going to be closed. So that was a big community issue.

01-00:54:42

Rigelhaupt:

Well, what were the major things going on at Mather Air Force base, which you were working with?

01-00:54:49

Braly:

Mather was kind of scaling down. There were a certain amount of civilian jobs there and any base is a collection of, usually, a major tenant and then there'll be a lot of minor tenants, maybe of that service or another service. Mather had been an aviation training center and that closure wasn't fought very much because the base was clearly past the time when it had an important function. Reserves were out there and still are. But McClellan was jobs, good paying jobs for blue collar types. And that was a blow. The Clinton Administration tried to soften it with that competition, but the fact that they intervened at all got a lot of criticism from various people, particularly people who were anti-Clinton because it was a kind of violation of the agreement that that BRAC process was to be nonpolitical. So he got a lot of criticism for that.

01-00:56:17

Rigelhaupt:

But McClellan did eventually close?

01-00:56:18

Braly:

It did close and was converted to civilian uses and I think there are very few Defense Department jobs out there. There's a lot of activity. I would assume they haven't replaced all the jobs lost. But there are a lot of new jobs out there.

01-00:56:39

Rigelhaupt:

I'm going to pause and change tapes.

[End Audio File 1]

Begin Audio File 2 11-13-2007.wav

02-00:00:00

Rigelhaupt: OK, we are starting tape number two. Mather Air Force Base is one of your major projects with OEA, when you began working there?

02-00:00:20

Braly: Yes.

02-00:00:22

Rigelhaupt: What were the goals of OEA in closing Mather Air Force Base? What were the goals you were trying to—?

02-00:00:32

Braly: That we had as an agency?

02-00:00:33

Rigelhaupt: Yes.

02-00:00:33

Braly: Well, I always consider that very muddled. You know, my time with OEA was—I interested myself in its workings as an agency and as a kind of student of public administration. I thought we were very muddled about what our goals were. And it was to help, in the case of base closures, it was to help the communities make plans for the conversion of the base. We gave grants for that, and the grants could be used to hire staff, for a planning agency within the city or maybe a separate one, whatever the community wanted to do, to make a plan for the conversion of the base. I say muddled because we would define planning in a very narrow, kind of mechanistic way, so that we didn't allow the communities to benefit from our funding of what was really happening on the ground, what they really needed. If something strayed too much into the actual building or remodeling of something, we wouldn't go there because it wasn't planning, and we would work with the Economic Development Administration, which wasn't in the Defense Department, it's in the Commerce Department for actual construction projects or infrastructure of any kind. And a lot of that money was Defense Department money, but the decision was made to let the EDA administer that. Well, when that happened, EDA would impose its own requirements. It's just really interesting to me to see how old story bureaucracies keep getting into each other's way. And by the time I left OEA, I felt—and I said this—that what our real job should have been was, yes, giving money to the local governments for conversion. Not necessarily for planning. Not for what they could show was really needed, but also to oversee the actual transfer process, because that whole process bogged down and it was taking forever to actually transfer the bases to new owners, particularly the local governments. There was a lot of internal resistance in the services. The services are considered the owners of the bases. They're the ones who actually physically close them down, move all of the assets that are

going to be moved, or decide which will be moved and which won't be, and personnel out, and actually turn over the base, the key to the base to the subsequent owners. There was a lot of resistance to turning it over to the local governments. The services really wanted to just sell the bases to the highest bidder. And the thought was that we could defray some of our cost with cleanup and our other cost from closing these bases and moving the operations to other bases with this money because some of these— I mean, how valuable is Treasure Island? How valuable is the Oakland Army base? But the Clinton Administration had the policy that this is a huge blow to the communities, so if we can give them this land, then it'll help defray the blow and replace the jobs. Was that a good idea? I don't know. The local government's added more muddle to the process and there's a lot of resistance from the services, and they didn't really have the resources to come in and do what was necessary. And most of them ended up bringing in developers. But they—the local governments very much wanted that because they wanted to be in control and they wanted to make this an asset to their—a revenue enhancing asset to the local government, as well as a job creator. But it— I think that happened—it happened rather rarely. I think generally the conversion of the bases was pretty disappointing. And may be—I wouldn't rule it out—it may be that the services were right; they should have been sold to begin with. And our services particularly wanted to sell them as is, so that the cleanup would be the responsibility of the people who bought it. And that's what happened at Oak Knoll. Eventually the GSA was brought in to sell it to the highest bidder. It looked like it was going to be a muddle forever, because there were problems about qualified bidders, there were problems about land that had already been given away that was interfering with what the developers wanted to do. I don't know. I just followed it all. But I guess my point would be, and what was interesting and kind of shocking to me, was how the Defense Department was its own worse enemy in terms of trying to get this job done. It just was—it would go and on and on forever. And a lot of it was foot dragging because the services wanted to sell the properties, and the argument would never go away. “Should we sell this? Should we get money from the local government, which would then sell it? Or should we give it to them?” Endless negotiations about what the proper price was. To the point where eventually—one of the last projects I was involved in at OEA was kind of a debate on whether or not the whole process should be privatized. I know privatizing doesn't have a very good name now, but I still think it might have been the best thing to turn it over to real estate agents, in effect, who would put it on the market and sell it, and arrange however for the cleanup.

02-00:07:51

Rigelhaupt:

When you say, perhaps it would have been best to have been privatized, is that partially because there would have been one goal in mind and then that would have been maximizing profit?

02-00:08:02

Braly:

Yes, if the goal was to convert the property to a productive use, which requires investment, it might have been best if it had simply been placed on the market and sold to the highest bidder. I think the services who were in favor of that policy had stars in their eyes, because the private bidders were as leery as taking on contaminated property where it wasn't at all clear what it would cost them to clean it up as the local governments were. And there was a lot of attitude in the services about "What's this worth?" A lot of people who weren't professional developers had no idea what property was worth would say things like, "This should be—this is worth its highest and best use as if—the local government didn't have zoning and land use control. And I guess what really surprised me was how little control the Executive Branch had in terms of what the Defense Department was doing. My attitude was I don't care whether we give it to the local governments or we sell it on the market. But the policy is to give it to the local governments. We don't make policy. Very few people in the Defense Department seemed to understand that, which is amazing to me. We just went round and round, and it took way too long, and people were ringing their hands. What is holding this up? A lot of things were holding it up, but they all kind of boiled down to there wasn't a clear goal. From the Defense Department's perspective, our goal is to get rid of this property and convert it to other uses as quickly and as cheaply as we can, however you do that. There should be some way to hold people accountable to that goal and to measure it, which is all the talk in public administration. How to measure performance and how to make people accountable for reaching goals. And instead, it was a big muddle in terms of, "Well, you can't do this because there's a rule against it," or you got to— We've got the— "The cleanup has got to be taken care of and the environmental impact statements have got to be—" All of that was, a lot of that was true. But in practice what happened was that there wasn't a prioritization of here's a dispute, which way do we go? Well, there wasn't a sense of we go in the direction which gets us closer to our goal, which is to get rid of the property and transfer the resources and get as much as we can of the resources net of what it costs us to other uses. There wasn't a cohesive view, not in our agency and not anywhere else about what our goal was and how we would get there.

02-00:11:59

Rigelhaupt:

Did your office give grants directly to local reuse authorities?

02-00:12:04

Braly:

Yes, we did.

02-00:12:07

Rigelhaupt:

Now, how clear were they on, typically, on what they wanted to see done with the bases and their reuse?

02-00:12:16

Braly:

Well, not clear at all. In fact, initially, a lot of the local governments were even reluctant to take the bases or to get involved in planning them. That was



the attitude of Sacramento County with regard to Mather. But that was one of the earliest closures, and it might have been that 88 round you're talking about where there was a lot of dissatisfaction with the process. But gradually there would be conferences of cities about BRAC closures, and gradually they warmed to the idea that this is an asset and we can do something with it. So sometimes we had to talk them even into the idea of having a reuse authority. But then what we kind of encouraged and expected was a very elaborate process involving all the stakeholders, which usually boiled down to the local governments in planning what would happen there. I don't know how useful that was, any of that was. Because I think if you go back and look at the plans, the plans weren't driving the reuse, the opportunities were driving the reuse. Someone would come in with a proposal. Maybe they had money, maybe they had a good idea, maybe they had political influence, but that was what was driving the reuse of the bases. So, I mean, I wouldn't say that definitively. It may be that the plans did some good, but I don't think they really told you, with any kind of precision, what the reuse should be or was going to be.

02-00:14:02

Rigelhaupt:

Did the OEA office's tend to have an opinion on what was good or most viable in different local settings, or did you really just try and make sure that there were opportunities for the local reuse authorities to come up with those plans?

02-00:14:24

Braly:

The latter. In reality, I think what OEA was for was to soften the blow to the communities, and that's why we got a lot of conventional support for what we did. In fact, our budget was protected in some fashion because we could work—the Congressman could say that there was local money going to the local government for taking this blow and so forth. Now, our grants were fairly modest. I mean, a grant over a million dollars would be large. But it was all for planning, and that's basically what it was, which was the other things, which I thought— “Well, look, if we're really here to soften the blows to the community, and to make them feel a little bit better about the base closing, why are we arguing with them all the time about what they're going to use the money for?” Was a very accounting type mentality about, “Well, we spend money for this, but not for that,” instead of, “Well, this is what they want.” It was actually very useful for them to have the money for whatever it was, you know. But we—I remember one time we had— We'd decided that we were having too many arguments about whether or not it was proper for us to fund a certain line item in a budget that was proposed by local government. And so we decided that—or at least our director decided that what we needed was a memo about what planning is. So we got this memo: it was full of arbitrary definitions, which we discussed, of what planning is. This is planning, that's not planning. And my thought was—which I articulated—was, “It really doesn't matter. I mean, these are self-imposed restrictions. There's nothing in the law. This is not in the law. We could define planning as broadly as we want to, and we should do so with an idea to—with an eye to our goal, which

is to facilitate the transfer and the reuse, but particularly, facilitate the transfer. Get the Defense Department out.” So just another example of the kind of muddle you deal with.

02-00:16:59

Rigelhaupt:

I’ve read that Mather was considered a very successful transfer and reuse.

02-00:17:04

Braly:

It was. And you know why? We brought in a very—the county, which was reluctant at first, brought in, after some sort of a competition, a very experienced developer. And I’m sorry, I can’t recall his name right now. He has subsequently died. His development operation is still here and probably involved in Mather. And he was a guy who was smart enough in not only new development, but he was smart enough to see that Mather had a good location, and we don’t have much money to doll the place up and make it look more like a real business park, but we got to spend some. Got some money from EDA to do that, and from other sources to do that. And he made the place look just good enough to get some key tenants in there, and he was good at marketing. That was the key. And the county supported him. If the county had tried to do it himself, they wouldn’t have. But also, he was a developer who was smart enough to know that it’s not easy to work with governments, and so he was very patient. But he would argue for what he needed, he would argue for his point of view, and he was trusted. That was the reason Mather was successful—that and the fact that it had a good location. It was in the path of growth, Sacramento growth.

02-00:18:55

Rigelhaupt:

Were there any big environmental issues at Mather that came up that would have affected its reuse?

02-00:19:01

Braly:

They had a cleanup problem, but it was not a terrific cleanup problem. So no. But just to give you an example on Mather. One of his staff members who would take people around to see the buildings. They made a decision early on, these are buildings that could be adapted for reuse and these are buildings that have got to go, and the sooner the better. So one of the buildings they decided to keep was a building which had been—and all of the assets that were considered worth keeping were taken out. And the Air Force had turned off whatever agency was responsible for the base until it actually transferred, the lights. And the building—so she had to show it with a flashlight and I made—I got my daughter. We made a video to send back to Washington as a field report about, you know, there’s got to be more cooperation with these people who actually know what they’re doing and are trying to sell this base to people.

02-00:20:21

Rigelhaupt:

What were some of the development that came in—the developer? What’s—

02-00:20:27

Braly: At Mather?

02-00:20:30

Rigelhaupt: Yes.

02-00:20:31

Braly: It's an airport, so that was a big in. You had a couple of the big air freight companies move in there. Burlington, which is a kind of third or fourth ranking, UPS had their regional facility there. FedEx had something, but it wasn't a complete operation. Their complete operation was out at International Airport. That was a biggie. And then you had private aviation companies coming in for private jets and so forth because EDA money redid that and actually built a civil terminal there. There were some state agencies that came in there. There was a big company that came in there affiliated with a publisher. It was their branch that did testing, like college board type testing. So all of their test facility was there. It was a big grading operation. They had all these people who were grading papers. But there were a lot of jobs involved in that. There were interesting companies. In our little video we did, there was one company that was making a submarine, a tiny mini submarine that would be used for tourists and research. Interesting companies like that and also some big tenants. VA decided they wanted to put a regional hospital there. They stitched—this company was very good at stitching it together. This development company at stitching it to all those different interests with different requirements together and putting them in a setting that was attractive and was improving all the time. They got EDA money, I remember, to do an entrance. Because there weren't good facilities out there, they would even solicit people like La Beu to come in and put a restaurant—not in the base, but near it so there'd be places for people to go for lunch and so forth. It was a little bit isolated. So yes, it was a pleasure to work on that and see how it's done.

02-00:23:06

Rigelhaupt: If we shift to the Bay Area a little bit, what was it like working at Oak Knoll Naval Hospital? And then did you also work at the Alameda Naval Base?

02-00:23:16

Braly: Alameda and the Oakland Army Base. All three of those.

02-00:23:21

Rigelhaupt: OK. Well— Now, was Oak Knoll and Alameda Naval before?

02-00:23:26

Braly: Yes.

02-00:23:36

Rigelhaupt: What were some of the experiences you had working on Oakland and Alameda in the OEA before having started your work with the Oakland Army Base.

02-00:23:40

Braly:

Well, Alameda was a little bit different from Oakland. It was a different opportunity for them and they saw it differently. Alameda is a gentrifying community that has a lot of substandard housing, but property prices are going up and they're kind of isolated from Oakland and like to keep it that way. So they saw an opportunity to bring in nice housing in the community and increase their tax base and community amenities. They also wanted to preserve the heart of the base for the buildings there and use them in adaptive reuses, which indeed they did. For a while, it looked like it was going to be—I don't know if this is continued at all. It was going to be—those big hangers out there would be used for studios, for filming TV and movies, because they were there, and because it was inexpensive to rent them. Big special effects, a computer special effects company went in there and was doing good business, and then they fell on lean times. That's the private sector for you. You had a mix of usage. You had public usage. You had a lot of the old housing was redone as affordable housing for homeless, I think. Anyway, affordable housing. The old base had Art Deco architecture and it was worth preserving. The old base theatre was made into an auction house for antiques. Very nicely redone, and that's a very successful business, last time I heard. And unfortunately, the thing progressed so slowly that I think by the time they got anything on the market, the market was pretty much gone. There were a lot of arguments about the cleanup, which was a very serious one there. A lot of arguments about who was going to pay and how, and who would take the risk. They actually brought in a special assistant city manager because it added, I think it tripled the size of the city, if I'm not mistaken. Taking that base into the city, Alameda Naval Air Force Station was a big deal for Alameda. And it was funny, because the notion—the Congressman there had the notion that—and it was— The congressman is currently the mayor of Oakland.

02-00:26:36

Rigelhaupt:

Ronald Dellums.

02-00:26:38

Braly:

Ron Dellums. Ron Dellums had the idea that it was going to be everybody was going to get together and sing Kumbaya over what would happen in this base. So we had the county and all of the cities around there involved in a reuse planning authority. Well, of course, that didn't go anywhere. This is Alameda's territory and they saw to it that they were going to make the decisions about it. So then Oakland Army Base opened—or got on the BRAC list and was to be closed and Oakland then turned their attention to that base, which was a completely different situation. Because there was a Navy base there, as well. Certainly all of the Navy base would go to the Port of Oakland, and initially, the port assumed that all the Army base would, as well. So immediately there was conflict about how much the city would get and how much the Port of Oakland would get. And that caused endless back and forth. I remember at one time the port got the Maritime Administration in their corner. Just as we thought we had things worked out, they came in and said, "Oh, no, the whole thing should go to the Port of Oakland." And of course, it

was very sensitive because that's West Oakland, and that's a very depressed area. And they're already upset about the impact of, just in terms of the environment, the port operations on them. So the feeling was that this should be done in a way that would be an asset to West Oakland and would create jobs for West Oakland and so forth. In contrast to Mather, they kind of went the bureaucratic route, Oakland did, and hired a big staff to come in there and work on reuse. And it was the typical back and forth between the city and the Army. Various processes delaying the transfer and whether it was cleanup or special agreements for interim use having to be negotiated. And Jerry Brown being elected mayor and having his own bright ideas about what should go in there, which became controversial. He wanted to put a military school into the headquarters there. So there were a lot of interests involved and a lot of agendas involved. There just should be a simpler way to do it.

02-00:29:46

Rigelhaupt:

Well, how is it different closing the Alameda Naval Air Base—or Air Station, I think it was, versus the Oakland Army Base in the sense that— From my understanding, there were a lot more people staffing the Alameda Naval Air Station.

02-00:30:05

Braly:

That's—

02-00:30:07

Rigelhaupt:

And I think a lot more people living in the community—

02-00:30:12

Braly:

Oh.

02-00:30:13

Rigelhaupt:

— as a percentage of Alameda than people who worked at the Oakland Army Base as a percentage of the city of Oakland.

02-00:30:19

Braly:

Oh, that would be true. .

02-00:30:22

Rigelhaupt:

And I'm setting it up as a comparison to ask how OEA approached those two differently considering that closing the Alameda Naval Air Station seemed to have a greater economic impact on Alameda than closing the Oakland Army Base had on Oakland.

02-00:30:42

Braly:

Well, what you say is true, but I don't think our approach was much different. It was to approach the local government and ask them if they were interested in setting up a reuse authority to plan for the conversion, and then giving them grants to do that if they wanted to. And it got to the point where they all did, which you would expect. It's not like they had to pay for staff to do it, although Alameda did pay for some staff to supplement what we paid because we phased out our support over a period of time. But Alameda completely

jumped on it, because this was going to completely remake their town. But they didn't have a clear idea about how closely they wanted to work with outside developers and how much of it they wanted to continue to control and do themselves, so that delayed things somewhat. And I always felt that the expertise—OEA liked to say that it gave technical support or expertise, advice, and money. Well, I don't know what the technical expertise was that we gave, but, we should have been able to go in and say, very definitely, "Here's what worked someplace else. This is what we recommend." This is a procedure for bringing private sector investment into it. We recommend you do this but you don't do that." OEA didn't do any of that. It just kind of had big committee meetings about is this a proper thing to fund or if that is—is this planning or is this not? So I really thought that OEA wasn't doing the job and maybe wasn't doing the job because the job wasn't that well-defined—that well-defined. My answer to that was, "Let's define it ourselves, then, if it's not well-defined." There's really a problem of leadership, I think, in the Defense Department.

02-00:33:04

Rigelhaupt:

How would working on closing the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital, which was completely in the city of Oakland— Had you learned what it was going to be like working with the City of Oakland before closing the Oakland Army Base?

02-00:33:20

Braly:

No, because the politics are so different. Alameda is much more like a small town and Oakland's not only a city but it's a particular kind of city. It's a city that has a lot of socioeconomic problems and a large minority population, and maybe even a majority, I'm not sure. So very mixed in terms of its socioeconomic status.

02-00:33:49

Rigelhaupt:

But t Oak Knoll was in Oakland.

02-00:33:53

Braly:

It was, and Oak Knoll was kind of a step-sister to Oakland Army Base. I think it might have been designated for closure sooner, and it was a victim of that hidden agenda on the part of the Navy, which was that we want to put this on the market because it's a desirable property, and that, the last time I heard, ended in disaster and more deadlock. You know, I remember we had {Churette's?} out there, and Oakland was very slow to get their—staff up their reuse authority, and the people that they brought in frankly weren't that terrific. And the {Churette's?} had absolutely nothing—had a lot of neighbor involvement, middle class neighbor involvement. NIMBY involvement, you know that one. So you had neighbors either with influence at City Hall or trying to exercise influence to get the thing not developed in—either not developed, which is what they preferred, or developed in a way that they preferred. Didn't want to see a lot of homes there. And the property is in a nice part, with nice views of the bays, in a nice part of Oakland, but it's very

steep. Development would be limited there. It also had historic buildings. Another example in the Bay Area that was a good example of the way to do it is Novato. Very sharp city manager and knew what he wanted to do. He knew how to apply pressure to get the Navy to—what was that?

02-00:35:53

Rigelhaupt: Is it Hamilton?

02-00:35:54

Braly: Hamilton. It ended up as an Air Force base, but it still had a big Navy housing there, historic housing, which the Coast Guard got. That's another thing. You know, you always have—first you have a hierarchy of people who get things, and that delays the process, it's much too complicated. But my point was that's the kind of example that needs to be analyzed and mastered and offered to other cities, how they did it. Sorry. I can't say the Defense Department worked very well with Novato because they didn't like being pushed the way they were. That was another thing I noticed. One of the problems is that the Navy has an attitude about local governments, which is that we're not only the federal government, we're the Defense Department. This is about national security, so this is what you're going to do. Local governments don't respond to that, so that created a lot of the problems.

02-00:37:09

Rigelhaupt: So you first come onto Oakland and you begin working there. What did you hear about what the Oakland Army Base's core functions were?

02-00:37:19

Braly: It was a material center for transshipping materials. Like so many of the bases, it had a variety of tenants, reserve units and it was winding down. But it was about shipping material—material, I guess you would say, in the military sense.

02-00:37:51

Rigelhaupt: What did you learn about the Oakland Army Base's history as you began working on its base closure?

02-00:37:59

Braly: Oh, just bits and pieces here and there, and then a lot of times, we would be involved in the closing ceremonies when the Navy did finally move out, or the service did finally move out, which would happen before transfer. You'd have a ceremony and the personnel would be gone, but there still would be a lot to do to actually transfer the property to the new owners. So you'd pick them, and a lot of times there would be historical publications prepared. There was a big celebration in Alameda, and there was one not so big, but still they had one at Oakland Army Base, too. You'd pick it up, and you'd hear it from the service people you work with, too. When we would first go into these bases, there would be a base commander there that we'd work with until he left—or she.

02-00:38:53

Rigelhaupt:

Well, what did you hear about the growth and the contraction of Oakland Army Base, I'm certainly assuming that it shipped a lot more across the Pacific during the Vietnam War or during the Korean War. Did you hear about how it's functions changed?—

02-00:39:15

Braly:

Yes. I heard—I can't say I retained it particularly, but yes, that was talked about. The importance of it and at certain times. All of these places had peaks when they were terribly important to national events and then not so important.

02-00:39:34

Rigelhaupt:

Did you get the impression, when you first started working on the Oakland Army Base, that it made sense to close it down?

02-00:39:46

Braly:

Yes. And I would—I did—I would have an opinion about that, often. My base in Guam, I thought, clearly should not have been shut down, because I felt that we'd be run out of Okinawa before too long, and we'd need it, which turned out to be the case. We haven't been run out entirely, but we're having a very hard time staying there. And Oakland Army Base, yes, it should have been closed. I guess the Port's assumption, was that the entire Army Base, as well as the Navy Base, would go to the Port of Oakland, because the Port of Oakland is the regional port for Northern California. And that would have been a perfectly, in my mind, a perfectly sensible use for that base, and an economic one. One that would also be job creative. And that's certainly what the port was hoping for. But city government had another thought, which was—I don't know this for sure—the City government is always looking to the port, which is technically part of the city government, for support, financial support, and I think they would have liked to have acquired the land and then sold it to the port. That might have been the initial thought. But then they started getting a lot of involvement from West Oakland, which is a very politically active area and very depressed area. This idea emerged that we ought to also take a portion—particularly that portion which is not next to the water of the base and try to make that into a job creating asset for the community.

02-00:42:02

Rigelhaupt:

From my understanding, the Navy Supply Center, FISCO—

02-00:42:00

Braly:

Yes.

02-00:42:05

Rigelhaupt:

— the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center had closed down before the Oakland Army Base?

02-00:42:12

Braly:

Yes.



02-00:42:12

Rigelhaupt: And that all went to the port?

02-00:42:13

Braly: Absolutely, yes. They were busy converting it to port uses all the time I was around there.

02-00:42:20

Rigelhaupt: And so that influenced the Port's understanding that it was going to get nearly all of the Oakland Army Base?

02-00:42:27

Braly: I have no idea where that originated. It might have been just their desire, but they certainly tried to make the case. And as I say, one point way deep into the process when it—you know, had all been settled, we thought, they tried to get the Maritime Administration to come in and use—and even Cal Trans to come in on their side of the issue. I mean it was a long time before they gave up.

02-00:42:55

Rigelhaupt: So you start working on the reuse for the Oakland Army Base. What were some of the initial challenges that you could see were going to be coming down the pipe?

02-00:43:06

Braly: I could see the quality of the personnel was going to be a problem. The City of Oakland was very cautious about hiring anybody that they would have to fund and we only make annual commitments. We wanted them to go ahead and hire a director that the reuse agency authority without our committing to—which we just don't do—to multiyear support, and they weren't willing to do that. So they brought somebody in on a temporary basis who, frankly, was unqualified, and that caused an awful lot of problems at the beginning. And when Jerry Brown came in with a new city manager, he was fired. The Oakland Army Base was very unusual because of the involvement of the congressman's office there. The Congressman was much more involved in that base than any other one that I worked on. It's actually a member of the Congressman's staff who was on—later Barbara Lee, and then it was Dellums, at first, who was actually on the Reuse Authority Board, which is very unusual.

02-00:44:26

Rigelhaupt: How did having a congressional staff member on the board shape the reuse process?

02-00:44:32

Braly: Well, I think it delayed it, because the person who was hired who was unqualified and delayed things. That person was politically connected, and at one point, they were looking for me to—this was the whole interesting thing for me. I had just got the base and they were looking for me—I mean, he was politically connected, and yet they didn't have any confidence in him, and they were looking for me to veto his selection as the head of the director of the

Reuse Authority. And I said, “No, I don’t think that’s my job.” Looking back on it and what happened, that’s exactly what I should have done. The rest of the story is not having any confidence in the guy, but having a political connection to him, they then took on the role of overseeing him, to prevent, terrible things from happening. OEA was excluded from that process. There would be weekly meetings and so forth, and when the whole thing fell apart, it was kind of dumped in my lap. But I don’t blame them, because I could have handled things differently, too. I could have just put my foot down and said, you know, “This is not the guy.”

02-00:46:03

Rigelhaupt: When you say the whole thing fell apart, what do you mean?

02-00:46:07

Braly: We just never got anything started. There were all kinds of negotiations to go on, there were all kinds of deadlines to meet, process of various kinds. In the BRAC process, there was a kind of timeline. You do this by that date, you do the—the Reuse Authority does that by another date and so forth, and he wasn’t meeting any of those deadlines. He just wasn’t doing it. Plus, then there was— The City of Oakland’s accounting was so messed up that we had to stop and bring in and do an audit, a Defense Department audit to find out where the money was. None of it was misappropriated, it was just kind of lost. And I mean, it wasn’t lost to the purpose, but you couldn’t— But the bookkeeping system was so messed up, you couldn’t tell if the money had been spent on what you had—what the budget had—the authorized budget had said it would be spent on. It was that bad, so we had to bring in the auditors at one point.

02-00:47:13

Rigelhaupt: When you say the City of Oakland—meaning that when you gave grants, they went from OEA to the City of Oakland as an intermediary to the local Reuse Authority rather than directly to the local Reuse Authority?

02-00:47:26

Braly: Oh, the Reuse Authority would almost always be a part of the local government, unless it was a joint Reuse Authority, which involved several local government, which we had at Castle Air Force Base. Didn't work at all. Eventually the county stepped into that role. So yes, the money went to the City of Oakland to be used by one of its agencies.

02-00:48:01

Rigelhaupt: How would you characterize that working relationship between OEA and the local Reuse Authority over the course of the years from '95 when the Oakland Army Base hit the BRAC list to, I think the transfer was in 2002, 2003? But there may have been other transfers along that way.

02-00:48:25

Braly: Yes.

02-00:48:26

Rigelhaupt: How did that relationship progress?

02-00:48:30

Braly: Well, it was amicable. It got very touchy when I brought in the auditors, and Dellums office was very—or maybe by that time, Barbara Lee's office, was very upset about that. But we had to do it. You know, they have to be able to account for the money we gave them. But the point is—I guess I was trying to make is I don't think OEA had that much to offer them. We did support what they were doing, but in terms of being able to solve some of the problems they were encountering with the Port and with the Army, we weren't in a position, or didn't even think of ourselves as having to do—as being in that position of helping them resolve all that. We were just there to give out money for planning and define what planning was, and make sure the money was spent as agreed.

02-00:49:46

Rigelhaupt: What were some of the problems with the Army?

02-00:49:49

Braly: This was the Navy in the case of Oak Knoll. This business about their own processes and their own ideas about what should be done. I think the Army might have been— Really, in the case of Oakland— I'm not sure about this. Might have preferred—and I'm not saying they were wrong, that the whole base should go to the Port of Oakland. A case could be made. But the problems, I mean, they were endless because of this process. A lot of it had to do with cleanup. A lot of it had to do with just the details of transferring the operations out of there. I traipsed over there to their meetings and to visit the staff for years. If you really wanted to get into the nuts and bolts of Oakland Army Base and the transfer, we had a woman there who was the— I think her title was Base Transition Coordinator—she was a civil servant, and she was excellent. And she was the one who dealt with all of these problems. I helped her as much as I could, between the Army and the Reuse Authority, and the city. But she did an excellent job. But the problem is in a hierarchy, the people on the ground that know what they're doing don't get listened to. So she had a lot of ideas about how to expedite these things and solve problems which often didn't get listened to. But she was very good at her job and I can't think of her name.

02-00:51:53

Rigelhaupt: Is it Lynn Kriegbaum?

02-00:51:55

Braly: Yes. Did you talk to her?

02-00:51:56

Rigelhaupt: I haven't yet, but we've been in contact. But I haven't done an interview with her.

02-00:52:00

Braly:

Yes. Well, she's terrific. She's very smart, very hardworking, and she knew what she was doing.

02-00:52:07

Rigelhaupt:

So what kind of support could OEA offer someone who was effectively managing the different interests? It sounds like from the way you're describing her role, she effectively dealt with the Army's agenda, the Port's agenda, the City of Oakland's agenda, and got them all together, allowing for progress in the transfer. Was OEA able to offer her, and transition coordinators like her, support in speeding up or making the transfer more effective?

02-00:52:42

Braly:

Not often, and I think it was because of the way OEA conceptualized this job—our director conceptualized the job. You know, for example, I mentioned the Maritime Administration coming in at a very late date. We should have shut that down immediately, but our director was just—anybody could roll over him, so that created problems. We should have been running a lot of interference for the local Reuse Authority—always keeping in mind what our objective was, which was to expedite transfer. And we didn't do that. We just minded our little pot of money. I'm sure Lynn would agree.

02-00:53:27

Rigelhaupt:

What were some of the issues, the environmental issues with cleanup or contamination that came up at the Oakland Army Base?

02-00:53:39

Braly:

I can't think of a single one right now. Ah. We had a big flap about hydrocarbon fumes seeping into the walls of the old headquarters building, which I believe was a historical building. And it was because they had disposed of something—I don't know whether it was petroleum or something—perhaps petroleum based chemical of some kind in the ground near the building had been buried—and it looked like, for a while that the building might have to be torn down—I guess it got resolved. The services hadn't done a real good job of even knowing what their pollution problem was. And to be fair, it was because a lot of the things they were doing weren't illegal or even thought to be environmentally wrong because those bases were there for a long time, and the database in the sense of what was dangerous and hazardous was developed over a period of time.

02-00:55:09

Rigelhaupt:

My understanding is that the military had always had different environmental regulations they were in charge of following. And so how did that play out in the transfer process, because in the transfer process, the bases have to be brought up to, say, California code. Can those problems over a course of years—the military's environmental policies—can they accumulate and then make a transfer difficult?

02-00:55:44

Braly:

Well, yes, we did try things to expedite the transfer despite the pollution. Maybe tried to sell Alameda on the idea of them taking title and an agreement in advance about what the cleanup was going to be, and they would do it and the Navy would oversee. But the city didn't like that risk. There was blame on both sides for— I mean, it wasn't that the services didn't have a sense of wanting to expedite the transfer. And they did come up with creative solutions to try to work around the problems that we had, because there was also a federal requirement that there wouldn't be a transfer until the base was cleaned up. So somehow or other we got that amended so you could transfer it if the cleanup had been provided for. Then you had to argue about what that means. So it was just that there wasn't enough of that and it wasn't there wasn't enough flexibility on the part of the services when dealing with the local governments. Other stakeholders were trying to understand what their objectives and responsibilities were.

02-00:57:20

Rigelhaupt:

I'm going to pause to change tapes.

02-00:57:23

Braly:

OK.

[End Audio File 2]

Begin Audio File 3 11-13-2007.wav

03-00:00:00

Rigelhaupt:

OK, we're on tape number three. Could you talk a little bit about if OEA played a role in issues of historical preservation at the Oakland Army Base?

03-00:00:23

Braly:

Well, it was one of the ticks on the list that you had to include in your planning in terms of doing the inventory of the historical properties. It was an item, of course, on the environmental impact statement that had to be done. We would fund that and it seems to me we had somebody on our staff who was a bit of an expert in that, too, that we'd make available.

03-00:00:59

Rigelhaupt:

Did the OEA office fund the consultants that came in and did the economic impact report?

03-00:01:06

Braly:

We would. We did, yes, sometimes.

03-00:01:07

Rigelhaupt:

Do you remember anything that—

03-00:01:08

Braly:

The environmental impact report—no, that was done by the service. But we did fund some historical preservation studies was what I meant.

03-00:01:20

Rigelhaupt:

Do you have any memories of anything that was surprising or had come in—was unexpected in some of the environmental impact reports on the Oakland Army base?

03-00:01:35

Braly:

Well, that flap about the Air Force building. I don't even recall what the EIS said about that. Another big flap we had was about whether or not the IES—whether or not the EIR, which is required by California law, could be the EIS, maybe with some minor modifications. I know it was an issue at Oakland Army Base and Alameda and what it came down to was that it couldn't. They both had to be done separately and the city had to fund the EIR. Because the city's idea was, "Gee, it'd be nice if we didn't have to duplicate this work, and spend all this money on the EIR when the EIS is covering most of the same territory." And at first the services were very receptive to the idea, and then I think some lawyer got a hold of it and said, "No, got to be totally separate."

03-00:02:38

Rigelhaupt:

Do you remember any of the initial ideas that came from the city about the development of the Oakland Army Base? What they wanted to do with the portion that was going to be theirs?

03-00:02:55

Braly:

I don't recall ever a cohesive plan. I just remember somebody getting a bright idea, and then trying to impose that on what we were doing. Like Jerry Brown's Army Academy in the headquarters there, and the city needed to come up with a homeless shelter. The Oakland Army Base would be a logical choice because there was a building there and it was free. They were very much into adaptive reuse, because there they had all these buildings in a high rent area that they could make available to people right away for houses in various kinds of operation and start bringing them around there. So my concern—I think this did happen to some extent, was that they get very involved in perpetuating the bureaucracy and not exercising a vision of what the Army base could be. What was that vision? I'm not real clear on it. We did a plan. I'm sure it would have had some housing in it. It would have been job creating, but it would have—as I said before—it would all have boiled down to what the opportunities were, and smart marketing like Mather had. And probably McClellan, too. It's just that I wasn't involved with McClellan as much. Very complicated process, because you have all of these, in a marketing sense, you have all of these facilities and this equipment that you have to find somebody who might be able to use this, or somebody who might want it, and you have to know what the competition is in terms of what you can get for it. And it requires some expertise, which most of the Reuse Authorities didn't have. Some of them were smart enough to hire and some weren't.

- 03-00:05:04  
Rigelhaupt: Was there a sense of how much of the Oakland Army Base could really be razed? I mean, really flattened out and redeveloped, either by the Port or by the city?
- 03-00:05:20  
Braly: Well, I wouldn't be surprised, I just don't remember. I think the understanding was that all of that adaptive reuse was temporary, and that eventually it would be redeveloped into something else. And I think I left before that ever really gelled.
- 03-00:05:40  
Rigelhaupt: How did the military's bureaucratic behavior shape the process of transferring the Oakland Army Base and its potential reuse?
- 03-00:05:55  
Braly: What was the first part of the question? The Army's what?
- 03-00:05:57  
Rigelhaupt: Bureaucratic—I mean, bureaucracy.
- 03-00:05:59  
Braly: Yes. Absolutely. It wouldn't be fair to totally blame the Army for the regulations and the laws they had to deal with. I mean, they certainly are not responsible for their being an environmental impact statement required and then another one—report—required at the state level. What they were not good at was problem solving. You have to— And OEA wasn't either. I don't exempt us. You have to say "Here's the problem. Here's where we want to get. How do we work around it?" And some people are very good. I mean, Lynn Kriegbaum is that type. She can figure out how to work around, and she'll take a risk to do it. The more typical attitude was, "Hey, you know, this is the barrier and until somebody else does something else, it's there," you know, but you have to be much more proactive than that. You didn't usually find that in the services. Sometimes, but not always.
- 03-00:07:12  
Rigelhaupt: That's interesting you say that about the Army and planning because I always—I don't always—but partially picture the military as constantly planning and planning for the unexpected. And so your sense was that the mil—
- 03-00:07:28  
Braly: You mean even after Iraq you had that impression?
- 03-00:07:32  
Rigelhaupt: Well, up until. They're certainly not planning as effectively for the unexpected.
- 03-00:07:43  
Braly: The planning—oh, yes, a lot of planning.

03-00:07:45

Rigelhaupt:

What was your impression as you began working on base closures to the OEA that—Did the Department of Defense, and the branches of the military, were they really planning much for base transfers and reuses?

03-00:08:05

Braly:

Probably not, because they certainly put a lot of resources into preparing their case for choosing the bases that would be closed and where the operations would be transferred, maybe to the exclusion that they didn't have enough— But, I mean, it's kind of understandable in the early days, but what I was also seeing is they weren't learning from their experiences. Because they never had a clear idea of how to solve the problems that were, after all, repetitive. You would encounter all of the bases. Never figured out how to work with local governments. What was funny was that before the bases closed, the base commander evidently had gotten all kinds of directors to work with the local community in a very positive way, but the civilian worker bees that came along and actually implemented all this process didn't at all have that attitude. The base commanders were terrific. They could put on a happy face and go down and, "What can I do for you?" and then they'd be gone. It was all up to the civilians.

03-00:09:25

Rigelhaupt:

Did you have a sense that there were significant base closings in the East Bay?

03-00:09:32

Braly:

That they should have been closed?

03-00:09:33

Rigelhaupt:

From my notes, California's 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional district, which was Dellums at the time, now Barbara Lee represents the district, had more base closings in '93 and '95 than any other Congressional district. Why do you think that was?

03-00:09:55

Braly:

My guess would be—and I wasn't in a position to have any inside information—would be that those bases really weren't needed. It also could have been that, you know, the dollar signs that you were talking about earlier, that they were in one of the high cost real estate areas in the country and these would be good bases to get rid of, not only because it's expensive to operate them there, but we can get a lot of money for them on the market without thinking that, you know, this—that wasn't going to happen. I really don't think it—anybody who would say they could have just continued as they were, I couldn't agree with that, because they really needed, you know, for many reasons. To have, you know, a jet fighter base in the middle of an urban area like that, that made no sense. And the Army base was really hard. And the Presidio was a showpiece but not very useful. Yes, I think that generally it made all the sense in the world for the Defense Department to get out of those bases in the Bay Area.



03-00:11:14

Rigelhaupt: But you didn't hear any discussions that politics played a role in that?

03-00:11:25

Braly: No. No. I guess that you could—that would lend itself to conspiracy theories, wouldn't it, because, you know, Dellums was a critic of the Defense Department, and then he became chairman of the Armed Forces Committee kind of thing. I would doubt it. I would doubt it. And I don't know enough about it. The only one you might question was that Oak Knoll Naval Hospital was a going concern. It was a good hospital and what did they replace it with? I don't even know the answer to that. Maybe it didn't need to go. They had a relatively new hospital building there.

03-00:12:19

Rigelhaupt: Well, part of my asking that is that, the base closing commissions, the idea that they were supposed to be above political interests, that the congressional representatives or anyone else from where the bases were to be closed were not going to interfere. And I'm just curious—

03-00:12:41

Braly: Yes.

03-00:12:43

Rigelhaupt: But it sounds—

03-00:12:43

Braly: Well, my answer, I guess, was premised on the idea that the Defense Department would have a lot of influence because they controlled the flow of information to the Commission members. There were a lot of political figures on those commissions and to say that they're not influenced by the contacts that they have and want to use in the future, and ambitions that they might have for themselves in the future, that that didn't influence them, that's kind of farfetched to think it wouldn't influence. But I really didn't see any blatant examples of it.

03-00:13:36

Rigelhaupt: Well, the final reuse plan for the Oakland Army base centers on one, local hiring and contracting, two, job training and workforce development, and three, developing a kind of community trust fund. And I'm wondering if you can think of any particular ways in which OEA tried to facilitate those three goals.

03-00:14:00

Braly: OK, let's go over them again. A trust fund?

03-00:14:02

Rigelhaupt: Well, one was local hiring and contracting.

03-00:14:04

Braly: Right.

03-00:14:05

Rigelhaupt:

Two was job training and workforce development, and then three is a community trust fund, meaning that the space itself would serve the community. And I don't think that one's as clearly defined as the other two.

03-00:14:18

Braly:

Yes. The only way we would have encouraged them would have been if there was something in their budget and proposal to us for funding that would facilitate that. We'd probably approve it. But mind you, we were just in the planning business and it was kind of biased toward land use planning, so a lot of that stuff would be more likely proposed to EDA. We did try to work closely with EDA. Although I remember we had a hard time getting EDA to look at our base plans and require that they fund things that were in the base plan. Maybe it's a good thing, but they just kind of did their own thing as far as evaluating proposals that came into them.

03-00:15:20

Rigelhaupt:

One of the other things I've read about is that there is a kind of base closure industry out there, in the sense that there are private contractors and consultants to contracting companies that work on this. And I'm wondering if you worked with any companies where you had a sense that there was an industry ready to support base closure and transfers?

03-00:15:48

Braly:

Well, yes, I did have that sense. In fact, for a brief while before I went to OEA, I was part of one. A consulting outfit. You know, I was just one of the consultants who was working with a group of consultants who were trying to get that business, and that's kind of how I got interested in the OEA and applied for a job opening in their West Coast office, which they were setting up. There was a huge rush on the part of consultants and developers to try to make deals with the Defense Department or the local government, which mostly didn't bear any fruit for a long time, because they were going through the complications of deciding what they wanted to use, setting up a Reuse Authority, deciding and doing their plan, dealing with the process of transferring ownership. And then when they were ready, they would go out, maybe put a solicitation out to bring in proposals from private developers. As I mentioned about Alameda, the timing was bad and they had a hard time deciding even how or whether they wanted to work with local developers. Your idea about a trust fund, I never heard that brought up before. It's a great idea and there was a lot of talk, a lot of rhetoric about Oakland Army Base yielding some benefit to the community. I don't know how it came out. I don't remember anybody talking about a trust fund for the community. It does sound familiar, though. Was it a proposal that was floated around, maybe. First, they'd have to be successful, though.

03-00:17:52

Rigelhaupt:

And I don't think the final redevelopment plans are in for the City of Oakland's part.

03-00:18:00

Braly: For the City of Oakland? The—

03-00:18:02

Rigelhaupt: I heard last year there was a potential deal to put a theme park, hotel, and movie studio, and I think the deal fell through, so they're still trying to decide what to do with that piece.

03-00:18:22

Braly: Well, it's kind of a contrast, isn't it, to see Emeryville, which right there went out for all that stuff and facilitated in and then Oakland, which didn't. Now, if they were Davis, you could say, "Well, it's because they don't like those kinds of mega developments." But I think Oakland would welcome them, and it would probably benefit the community. But that is a community there, where there's a strain of thought that says it should be improved and upgraded as a community, not razed and replaced.

03-00:19:04

Rigelhaupt: Those were largely my questions. And the way I like to end is to ask, one, is there anything I should have asked that I didn't, and two, is there anything you'd like to add?

03-00:19:21

Braly: No. I think I've said mainly what I wanted to say. To me, one of the things that kept me going was working for an agency that I didn't think was all that well-focused in terms of what it was doing, was just to observe what was going on in terms of the complications the government can make for itself, and its inability to untie this Gordian knots that it makes for itself and trying to figure out, how you would do it. They made the mistake of sending me to a seminar at one point by a Harvard professor. Actually, I asked for it. And the Harvard professor was the guy who did the book on Balanced Scorecard: Business School. And so I went to his seminar and I tried to apply it to OEA. What he was trying to do was—he had started it for businesses, recognizing how complicated businesses are and how they can balance all of these different competing demands that they have. Well, if private companies have that, you can imagine competing demands of government. So I came back and I wrote a memo about the seminar and how we could apply that to OEA. And basically what I said is : you need to go to our top most goals, statement of our mission and goals and see how we fit into that, and devise our process and our decisions based on how we further those goals. The goals were simple. It was, you know, it was summarized in the phrase, "Tail to—" How was that phrased? "Tail to Hook." "Tail to Claw," or something like that. What it meant was all of this logistical and non-warrior functions need to be curtailed and made efficient so that we can put money into where it counts, into actually supporting the warriors, as they like to call them. And so I said, "But this is what it says, this is how we ought to adapt all of our processes to that." And what it came down to is we're doing everything wrong. I was giving this presentation over the phone because we're in the West Coast and I heard

someone, I think it was a director, say in the background, “Who authorized this?” So needless to say, I got nowhere. You had to kind of take that attitude. I’m a student of public administration and I’m learning a lot. So that’s all I have to say.

03-00:22:38

Rigelhaupt: OK. Thank you.

03-00:22:40

Braly: You’re welcome.

[End of Interview]