

PRESS RELEASE

March 31, 1967
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We are presently faced with the need to publicly express our problems to the vast populus of Atlanta. We have tried previously to iron out our difficulties with letters and other approaches, but to no avail. We refer specifically to the urgent pressing problems relative to public housing location and our efforts to settle some of these problems with the Mayor, the Atlanta Housing Authority and the Housing Resources Committee.

Atlanta now has 9,394 public housing units (Completed and under construction). Of this number, the geographic location is as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Northwest - ^{4,392} 4,902 | (43.56%) |
| Southwest - 3,681 | (39.18%) |
| Southeast - 1,621 | (17.26%) |
| Northeast - | ---- |
| <hr/> | |
| 9,394 | 100% |

This reveals that nearly 83 percent of all of the public housing is located on the westside of Atlanta while there are none in existence in the Northeast section. This example of racial segregation is indeed appalling!

This, of course, is not as demoralizing (as bad as it is) as the new information we have received. There is a new project under consideration in the Skipper Drive, Harwell Road-Bankhead Avenue area which will further saturate the already saturated area.

In addition to this, there are other project sites under consideration which will include the same geographic area.

The NAACP has sponsored 2 Housing conferences trying very eagerly to aid in the disposition of numerous problems relative to the housing program. At the first conference we invited the Mayor, Cecil Alexander of the Housing Resources Committee and representatives from the Atlanta Housing Authority as well as members of the Federal Housing Administration. The FHA representatives responded as called. Malcolm Jones, representing the Housing Resources Committee came and helped where he could but was unable to really answer for the Mayor or the Housing Authority.

Our second conference repeated our attempt to get answers to our questions as well as interpret the attitudes and thinking of the Negro population. Again, we were unsuccessful in getting "in-person" representation.

We, in a "last resort attempt", wrote the Mayor a letter (Sent copies to Housing Authority and other associated agencies) informing him of our position and made a desperate plea for a conference with him so we could better interpret these attitudes. We wrote the letter on March 21st and as of this date, March 31st, we have not been provided the courtesy of a reply.

The Negro citizens are impatient to this "slow-to-respond" action and when turbulence transpires every one wonders why.

Atlanta cannot continue perpetuating the existence of ghettos. Congestion prevents revitalization. The housing market must be fully open; with an ample supply of low-cost housing available throughout the city. Millions of Americans have been trapped in the "seamless web" of past and present discrimination.

We all must recognize, Mayor and all other officials, that the ghetto system itself is the root evil which inevitably denies basic freedom and results in physical, social and psychological damage to the entire society. Dispersing is essential if eradication of the ghetto is to be a reality.

The "racial strife" of last summer has been attributed to the influence of Stokely Carmichael. If any disturbances occur as a result of disproportionate location of these public housing units then we'll have to attribute this to the impervious attitude of Mayor Allen.

The NAACP will probably be branded as "irresponsible" now just as all other Groups are "branded" when they dramatize the serious problems prevailing in our community. We can accept the branding if need be for we feel our obligation is to the ^{Negro} Neger people.

Our purpose and aim states:

- 1) To improve the political, educational, social and economic status of minority groups.
- 2) To eliminate racial prejudice and
- 3) To keep the public aware of the adverse effects of racial discrimination.

We must and will insist that the Federal government assume its responsibility in insuring that the local housing authority and all urban renewal agencies stop using public funds to entrench and extend segregation.

Rev. Amos O. Holmes

As a result of our concern over these serious problems, we are requesting Mr. Weaver, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, to withhold all funds to public housing and Urban Renewal Programs until all discriminatory practices are eliminated and a balanced dispersion of public housing units are accomplished. Further, we are requesting the Secretary to withhold funds of the Model Cities Program until Atlanta officially adopts an "open occupancy" ordinance.

We consider city-wide planning important in the dissolution of many problems in housing, school sites and the prevention of "sophisticated ghettos.": Adequate planning must include citizens participation by law, and voter approval of any proposed plans.

Therefore, we are demanding ordinances which will structure the kind of planning that will meet the approval of the majority of citizens in this city.