

TUFF

The Emmaus House
1017 Capitol Avenue, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30315
December 3rd, 1968

Honorable Ivan Allen, Jr.
Mayor, City of Atlanta
City Hall
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Mayor Allen:

Tenants United For Fairness (TUFF) is an organization dedicated to obtaining fair treatment for the residents of public housing in Atlanta. Its members include public housing tenants, other members of the low-income community who have been or may be in the future tenants in public housing, and other individuals who are sympathetic to the goals of the organization.

As you will recall, TUFF selected the November 8th meeting of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) at the Marriott Motel to bring to the attention of the public the deplorable conditions of life in the AHA projects. When a group of TUFF members appeared before you at that meeting to seek your assistance in their dealings with the Atlanta Housing Authority, you generously offered your help and sympathy.

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your offer, and to ask you to meet with us and to use the power and prestige of your office to bring about a resolution of our conflicts with the Atlanta Housing Authority.

As you know, our individual grievances are numerous, and, to us, deeply distressing. They involve hundreds of incidents including the AHA's arbitrary decisions to dig up all of the gardens at Capitol Homes; they involve the fines and rules imposed by the housing authority in a manner that seems to us unfair; and they involve a general atmosphere of bullying and intimidation.

We would not, however, seek to burden you with our individual problems. We turn to you because the entire system of public housing in Atlanta is operated in an arbitrary manner, without any concern whatsoever for the rights, desires or legitimate aspirations of the tenants. We turn to you for assistance in making basic structural changes in the operation of the Atlanta Housing Authority.

In brief, we would like to discuss the necessity for tenant participation in the management of public housing, and the necessity for a tenant review board or hearing panel empowered to hear all tenant complaints and to review all decisions of the local housing managers.

We are not alone in realizing the necessity for greater tenant involvement in the operation of public housing, nor in recognition of the necessity for housing authorities to realize that public housing residents have rights that must be protected. As one example of the nationwide concern with these questions, we have attached to this letter a copy of the questions posed by NAHRO to its November 8 Workshop, asking:

1. How are The HAA Social Goals Being Implemented in Public Housing? and;
2. What Does Tenant Participation Mean?

Many of the questions asked by NAHRO point directly to the abusive practices we seek to change. We have also attached a copy of the proposed Bill of Rights For Public Housing Tenants. This Bill of Rights was drafted by and has been presented by The Housing Law Center of the Earl Warren Institute to HUD for adoption. We believe that Atlanta can and should lead the nation by being the first city to adopt it as a guideline for the AHA.

In light of the foregoing, we the undersigned tenants of public housing and members of TUFF request that you meet with our representatives to discuss our problems. We also request that you assist us by arranging for our representatives to meet with representatives of the AHA so that our grievances and our requests may be presented to them.

We sincerely believe that many of our differences with the Atlanta Housing Authority can be resolved through frank and sincere negotiations. We seek the opportunity for such negotiations at the earliest possible date, and implore you to assist us in our endeavors.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Mandy M. Griggs
TENANTS UNITED FOR FAIRNESS
Mrs. Mandy M. Griggs
Chairman

Mrs. Clottee Roberts
Mrs. Clottee Roberts
Co-Chairman

Mrs. Louise Watley
Mrs. Louise Watley
Co-Chairman

Mrs. Ethel Matthews
Mrs. Ethel Matthews
Secretary

Mr. John Daniels
Mr. John Daniels
Treasurer

Mr. Gene Ferguson
Mr. Gene Ferguson
News Reporter

Rudolph Hines
Mr. Rudolph Hines
Special Consultant