

Code Enforcement

"Georgia's Station of the Year"

P.O. Box 4207 Atlanta, Ga. 30302



Channel 5 EDITORIAL

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ROUTE TO: _____

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A Committee of conscientious citizens is pointing an accusing finger at two groups they say are hurting Atlanta's fight against the spread of slums.

That fight is important, and Channel 5 thinks the Committee story needs airing.

We're talking about the Citizens Advisory Committee for Urban Renewal. In blunt language it says property owners in low-income areas of Atlanta are being swindled by contractors and repairmen, many of them "the out of town or 'fly-by-night' variety."

City inspectors tell a resident he must make repairs to bring his house into compliance with the Housing Code. These unscrupulous repair men move in then and take advantage of the situation.

In a letter to the Fulton County Grand Jury, the Committee says "contracts are not being fulfilled and substantial sums of money (are being) extracted by tactics little, if any, short of swindling."

Since the authority of the City is involved--with the invoking of the City Housing Code--the Committee thinks there is a duty to provide these property owners some protection. Channel 5 agrees.

The Committee suggests licensing or registration of all repair contractors, a form of bonding, or some type of required inspection before the home-owner pays.

The other group hurting our battle against slums are irresponsible tenants. Those who break windows, damage walls and put coal in the bath tub!

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When a property owner brings a house into compliance with code standards, the Citizens Committee thinks tenants should be required to keep it in good condition. If they are guilty of wanton destruction, some think the tenant--not the owner--ought to be required to pay.

The Citizens Committee is asking the Fulton County Grand Jury to go into both of these situations and recommend action.

Channel 5 endorses that. But without waiting for lengthy investigations we think the City Aldermen could blow the whistle on swindlers and back up responsible property owners.

We hope they will do that and keep the pressure on Atlanta's effort to clean up the slums we have and prevent the growth of new ones.

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