

CITY OF ATLANTA
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS
800 CITY HALL
TEL. JA. 2-4463 EXT. 321
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Housing Code Enforcement
Report of Accomplishment and Needs
December 15, 1964

PROGRAM

(a) Court. A special Housing Court is held each Thursday and the number of cases heard depends on ability of available personnel to prepare and process cases. At the end of November, 1964, 335 Housing Code Cases have been tried in Municipal Court with total fines of \$7,979 imposed by the court.

(b) Planned Program. A planned systematic Housing Code enforcement program which provides for complete coverage and inspection of all substandard dwellings in the city by the end of 1969 has been developed in conjunction with the Planning Department. This program consists of an up-to-date Housing Conditions Map with priorities established for proposed areas of enforcement and a Policy and Procedure Guide. The maps and program have been approved by the Urban Renewal Committee of the Board of Aldermen and referred to the Finance Committee for consideration of additional personnel expenditure involved. A planned systematic program for Housing Code enforcement is essential if the City is to meet Federal requirements for re-certification of Atlanta's Workable Program for Urban Renewal in March, 1965.

(c) Compliance. Attached herewith is a report reflecting the number of buildings inspected, units involved, buildings repaired, etc., including the number of permits issued for alterations and repairs to residential buildings and the number of permits issued for the demolition of residential units. The report is complete through November, 1964. Projected totals are shown for the entire year of 1964.

In addition to the above report overcrowding has been eliminated in 72 units.

(d) General Results. Results of the Housing Code enforcement effort to date have proven the need for stronger Code provisions. Several amendments to the Housing Code have recently been adopted to clarify and strengthen the code. The most important of these are:

Section 14.12. No building, plumbing, electrical or gas or other permit for an addition, alteration or repair of existing substandard dwelling unit shall be issued until such time as an inspection of the property has been made to determine the feasibility of rehabilitation of such dwelling unit or units.

Section 14.13. Utility services shall not be provided to any existing vacant substandard dwelling unit or any substandard dwelling unit becoming vacant until such dwelling unit has been inspected and brought into compliance with this code and a valid certificate of occupancy has been issued.

From the adoption of these amendments on June 15, 1964, through November, 1964, the Chief Electrical Inspector has discontinued electrical service in 173 vacant, substandard dwelling units; such service will not be restored until the structures have been rehabilitated to meet the requirements of the Housing Code.

NEEDS.

(a) Inspectors. In order to inspect all substandard dwellings within the city by 1970, 5 additional housing inspectors will be required as provided for in the planned systematic program of Housing Code enforcement. The budget request for 1965 includes a request for the aforementioned additional inspectors and one clerical position. Additional technical inspectors as requested in the 1965 budget are urgently needed.

(b) Assistance from other Departments. If the improvement of living conditions and general environment throughout the blighted areas of the city is to be accomplished

through Housing Code enforcement, it is necessary that definite and continued assistance be obtained from other departments by prompt reporting of obvious violations to the Building Department and prompt action upon conditions referred to them as being within their jurisdiction. Particular assistance will be required from the Sanitary Department so far as clean-up of premises and removal of junk automobiles is concerned and from the Construction Department for street and sidewalk improvements including the paving of some unpaved streets in older areas of the city. The Planning Department can assist materially in recording accurately the number and general condition of housing in areas marked for concentrated Housing Code enforcement effort and by scheduling the worst of the areas for appropriate treatment as Urban Renewal projects.

(c) Legislation. Several conferences have been held with the City Attorney who is preparing legislation whereby the city can proceed "In Rem" against substandard property. This will permit the city to proceed against the premises or building and will eliminate difficulties with out-of-town owners, estates, incompetents, etc., which have caused concern.

We are hopeful that additional legislation can be enacted to require demolition of houses which have been boarded up and are vacant. Under existing laws the current practice of permitting houses to be boarded up and remain has not been a satisfactory solution.

(d) The Courts can assist the program by:

1. Promptly disposing of all cases without delays and postponements.
2. By continuing appropriate fines when convictions for violations have been attained.
3. By imposing reasonable fines when a violator is convicted of an offense even though a correction may have been made prior to court action.

(e) Public Understanding of the program is most important and is a field in which the Citizens Advisory Committee can be extremely helpful. Participation by all news media, civic groups and business organizations should be utilized to point up and emphasize the problem and to secure maximum cooperation from the public.

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