

*Thank him
for suggestions*

(Signature)

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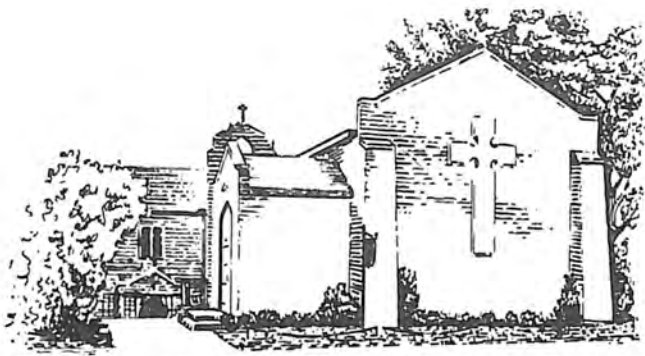
Dear Mayor Allen:

I honor and commend you for restoring law and order after the rioting last week. One of the needs, which the riot demonstrated, was better communication from depressed citizens to governmental authorities. What means does an ordinary slum negro have for expressing his needs? Who is there for him to talk to, who has time to talk with him, and who has sufficient influence to do something about his needs? If he riots, then people become aware of his needs, and -- at least -- talk about doing something about it. If he does not riot, his needs tend to be accepted as just part of the scheme of things.

Perhaps there is need for a grievance officer, or a group of them, who will be resident in each of the neighborhoods of the city, available to hear the grievances of people, and able to talk with the alderman representing that neighborhood, or with the mayor. These men, or women, would be available both during the day and during evening hours, and would be compensated for their service as contact people between the depressed citizens and the government.

I grew up on Central Avenue, near the scene of the riots. It was a good neighborhood then, one or two families per house. It is unfortunate that the houses have not been maintained, and that they have become overcrowded. I wish to suggest the following matters:

- (1) Zoning laws should limit the number of families or individuals who can be resident in any house or building. A house with 12 families in it might serve quite acceptably for 2 or 3 families.
- (2) The city government should have a Department of Housing, which would see that the above was enforced. When a house becomes unfit for human habitation, this department should forbid occupation of the house, declare the house to be junk, and demand that the owner remove the junk from the lot. If he does not, the Fire Department should move in and under controlled conditions burn the house down.
- (3) Urban renewal should concentrate on housing, rather than on commercial, industrial, and high-rise apartments. This could be done on a house-by-house basis. A six-to-twelve unit apartment, two or three storys high, can be ~~built~~ built on an ordinary city lot (there are many of these in the Ponce de Leon-Highland Avenue section). One house in a block can be demolished (if there is no vacant lot in the block) and such an apartment erected. People from other houses in the same block can be moved into the new apartment, and another sub-standard house demolished, and another apartment erected. In this method, good housing can be provided, and neighborhoods stabilized.



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(4) It should be made easier for people to buy good houses inside the city. Many of our members have bought houses outside the city because they can get financing, and even though they preferred to remain inside the city, they had to move out, for they couldn't get financing as easily for an older house inside the city as they could for a newer house outside the city.

(5) The neighborhoods of the city should be preserved, both by zoning laws, and by the action of the government. The city did not seem to be influenced very much by the desire of residents of Morningside to preserve this good neighborhood. Even one who is not an engineer can plan a better route than the engineers have planned through Morningside. One wonders if more attention would have been given to Morningside if the people had staged a riot.

Yours truly,

Roy Pettway +