

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION  
1203 CITY HALL  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Minutes of Commission Meeting, October, 27, 1967

Members present: Butler, Hallinan, Sells, Alexander, Baker, Maxwell  
Patterson, Stephens, Attridge, Lee, Ezzard, Ryan,  
Pilcher, Paschall and Kaler.

Mr. Irving K. Kaler, Chairman presided. He presented Mr. Reginald Carter, Community Relations Assistant, and Mr. Jim Lindskoog, SIMS Intern, to the Commission and commended them on the job they are doing.

Mr. Kaler then introduced a delegation of Teacher Corps trainees from the University of Georgia under the leadership of Dr. Harry B. Williams. Archbishop Hallinan introduced his visitor, Father Joe Connolly, a member of the agency for Baltimore, Maryland, similar to the CRC. Mr. Bob Hughes, Atlanta representative for the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice, gave a brief explanation of his job.

Mr. John Evans, chairman of the Kirkwood Chapter of the Georgia Council on Human Relations, commended the Commission on its efforts to date, said the Commission is needed and hopes as years go by, it will become more forceful.

Mr. Edward Moody, Mechanicsville Civic League: "Concur wholeheartedly in part with what has been said. CRC will probably get criticism from Aldermanic Board, but if they're going to condone evil but give you power to fight it - makes no sense. Discriminatory practices basis of all problems. If you're (CRC) going to be the organization to bring problems to, we are going to expect you to do something about it." Mr. Alexander said he agreed, that when CRC started out, "Said not going to be a popularity contest, must be trouble-shooting. At every meeting there might be controversy, should have somebody from the staff or from the Commission there to see what happens." He moved that any time there is controversy or controversy expected, some member of staff or Commission be there to observe.

Discussion of this: Mr. Attridge stressed ---"Not participate, observe", Mrs. Patterson said she was asked not to come to Vine City; Mr. Butler said he "wouldn't want to go out and arbitrarily represent" the Commission. Rabbi Rothschild referred to the "Ad Hoc Committee that already exists". Mr. Kaler asked that the motion be deferred until a later meeting when job descriptions for the staff would be considered, in light of the first year's experience. He said staff participation should not be rigid, matter of judgement; no disparity between points of view expressed. Mr. Alexander agreed to table the motion. Archbishop Hallinan expressed need for clarification of role of staff and Commission and his concern for the Commission to act preventively in the interest of justice.

Mr. Kaler introduced Mr. Tom Oxnard, editor of the Weekly Star, and praised his courageous fight against the "flight of citizenry". Mr. Oxnard said he had been asked to serve on a temporary sub-committee to try to get education about neighborhood stabilization through the mass media, would like to say they have the support of the Commission and not "just Tom Oxnard and Jim Costen sticking our necks out".

Mr. Kaler asked that the question be delayed until next month. Mrs. Paschall explained that at the monthly informal meetings of persons working in the field of housing, it had been agreed that a great need is for education of the total community about the problems of neighborhood stabilization and Mr. Oxnard had agreed to serve as chairman of a temporary committee to suggest plans for that.

Mrs. Xerona Clayton gave a brief explanation of SWAP for the benefit of the Teachers Corps group.

Mr. Maxwell reported on progress in the establishment of advisory committees with persons from the business community, "We've 30 who have agreed to serve, trying to arrange a meeting with the Mayor; plan to form 3 committees - housing, education, and employment. There would be at least 1 member of the Commission on each committee".

Mr. Moody reported that in the Model Neighborhood area, houses are being torn down and before the federal programs get funded, the land will be bare. "What can the Commission do to help"? Mr. Ezzard confirmed these reports.

The Reverend Clyde Williams, Chairman of the Grass Roots Council, made remarks as follows: "He came to the meeting out of real concern, to get the Commission to look at some of the problems:

1. Whole matter of police-community relations, not saying police brutality but relationship between police and the citizens.
2. Housing - places both fire traps and health hazards, even though some property tied up in injunctions, could they be approached from fire and health standpoints?
3. What are the contractors doing business with the city? Need to know the companies so can determine if there is discrimination."

Senator Sells said, "The contractors doing business with the city are a matter of public record." Mr. Wyant said, "This is a function of the City Attorney, Commission not enforcing or investigation body." Rev. Williams said, "If it is a matter of concern to the Commission, then Commission should be concerned". Mr. Alexander said lots of things on the books not being implemented. This group (Grass Roots Council) is entitled to the list and if they have complaints which are not satisfied by appealing to the City Attorney, then they should come to the Commission.

Rabbi Rothschild asked whose concern it is to implement the ordinance. Mr. Pilcher said no means for implementation, it is anticipated that the aggrieved person will bring charges; only thing contractor required to do is to sign affidavit. Mr. Wyant said not the business of this body to check. Rabbi Rothschild said it is the business of the Commission to resolve problems before they become problems. Mr. Attridge said we don't want to assume discrimination. Rev. Williams said, "We've had a history of discrimination". Rabbi Rothschild moved that a resolution be sent to the Aldermen commending them for passing the ordinance but urging provision for it's implementation. Passed Mr. Kaler urged Rev. Williams to come back to the Commission if he had trouble with the City Attorney.

Rev. Williams commended the Commission as a good sounding board and said, "We need the Commission, the Commission needs us".

Mr. Kaler asked what he meant about police-community relations. Rev. Williams said, "There is a breakdown in communication between citizens and police". Mr. Attridge referred to the program of the Atlanta Bar Association. Rev. Williams said he was familiar with that and has attended their meetings.

Mr. Alexander asked that the Executive Director check on situation regarding civil defense employment. Mr. Kaler said that is being explored.

Mr. Ezzard said he wanted to report an incident in which a courteous police officer, at the Greyhound Bus Station, averted trouble. He called attention to the fact that about a year ago a meeting was called by the Chairman of the Grass Roots Council, Mr. Benny T. Smith, and the idea of this Commission was formed. Grass Roots organization should be given report of year's activity. Mr. Kaler said the November meeting will be an anniversary meeting and the Grass Roots Council will be recognized.

Mr. Ezzard raised a question about the Wren's Nest, but was asked to to withdraw it in the absence of Miss Helen Bullard, Chairman of that committee, until Miss Bullard's report.

Mr. Kaler reported several requests for public meeting on the school issues. He said that in the absence of Rev. Samuel Williams, who had been so active in those matters, would delay discussion, but that he wanted it "clearly understood that the policy position of the Chamber of Commerce is the position of the Chamber of Commerce, that the position of the Commission will be delineated after a meeting about schools".

Mr. Kaler announced appointments to three year terms to the Commission those who had been appointed last November for 1 year terms, namely, Mrs. Sara Baker, Miss Helen Bullard, Mr. R. J. Butler, Mr. Robert Dobbs, Mr. C. G. Ezzard and Mr. Joseph A. Wyant.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. Meeting was held with Legislators on October 11; November meeting of the Commission will be changed to November 17th due to Thanksgiving.
2. The OEO Multi-purpose Training Center at Atlanta University, headed by Dr. Tilmann Cothran, has contacted the Commission office with a proposal that a graduate sociology student be placed in our office as an intern later this year. Approved.
3. Mrs. Minnie Thomas has resigned to accept a secretarial position at Morris Brown College. The Director was authorized to write her a letter of thanks on behalf of the Commission. The Personnel Department is helping with personnel changes.
4. The new Information Desk in the lobby of City Hall is under Mr. Monroe, the Superintendent. The Commission has provided information and will continue to work cooperatively with this.
5. Mr. James Parham of EOA and General Sutherland, City Personnel Director, have expressed willingness to meet with the Commission and plans are being arranged with them.
6. The Commission was asked last summer by the Mayor's office to assist 2 families trying to find space in trailer parks, a family of a veteran and the other of a service man. Both families are Negro; neither has been able to find space; both feel they are being discriminated against on the grounds of race. The Commission staff has visited all trailer park managers association, suggested need for an additional park, which would be built "integrated".  
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7. In the area of housing/we have continued the monthly meetings of persons working with housing. Mrs. Mary Stephens, Commission member who works with housing at Pittsburgh EOA Center, said she had found the meetings most helpful; (2) Continued calls for emergency housing beyond limited facilities of Salvation Army; (3) Continued problems of evictions from private property code enforcement in Model Neighborhood area has resulted in demolishing homes, still uncertainty over plans, difficult to get loans to rehabilitate homes.
8. Schools - Total increase in enrollment in high schools in October School Board report - 186; 377 decrease in total enrollment at Archer, Price, West Fulton, Turner; Protests have been made against portables being built at these schools, some demonstrations against efforts to build them at Turner.

9. Vine City - Mr. Carter went to "riots" at request of Mr. Alexander Chairman of the Team for that area. (Written report attached).

10. Employment meeting, October 26th, had very good response. Persons working in programs of employment were invited, about 100 attended morning session and 50 in afternoon. Director requested report from Mr. R. J. Butler, who presided at the meeting.

Mr. Butler reported that those attending included the EOA Administrator the Atlanta Director of the Georgia State Employment, the President of Clark College, Staff members from EEOA Regional office. He said he felt the meeting was helpful, that the interest was so great the meeting continued until 5, instead of adjourning at 4. Mrs. Paschall said a detailed report of the meeting will be sent to Commission members and that the findings of the meeting will be used in making recommendations about a Commission program in employment.

Office Space - Mr. R. Earl Landers, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor, has said space is available in the old City Auditorium, at no expense to the Commission. Some remodeling would be done, and it would provide ample quarters for the proposed program for next year. It is suggested that the Youth Council and the Commission might share the space to advantage of both. Mrs. Paschall recommended that this be done. Mr. Kaler said he was to see the Mayor and would talk with him again about space in the City Hall before any final decision.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 P.M.