

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

MINUTES

APRIL 28, 1967

The Community Relations Commission met on Friday, April 28, 1967 in Committee Room #2 of City Hall. The following members were present:

Mr. Irving K. Kaler, Chairman
Miss Helen Bullard, Second Vice Chairman
Mrs. Eliza K. Paschall, Executive Director

Mr. T. M. Alexander
Mr. Byron Attridge
Mrs. Sara Baker
Mr. R. J. Butler
Mr. Robert Dobbs
Mr. C. G. Ezzard
Mr. Joseph Haas
Mr. Al Kuettner
Dr. Robert E. Lee
Rabbi Jacob Rothschild
Mr. M. O. Ryan
Mr. Jack Sells
Mrs. Mary Stevens

Visitors, Mr. Paul Anthony, Executive Director of the Southern Regional Council, Mr. Ed Shukraft of West End.

Mr. Irving Kaler, chairman presiding. Minutes of the March 24, meeting were adopted as circulated. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Mr. Joseph Haas, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee reported that the committee feels the most effective work of the Commission will be in preventive efforts. Once any disturbance actually breaks out, it is a police function. If the committee is asked to come in and help, it would respond. In the event of any disturbance the Committee would be convened and would be expanded to include the Team from the area in question. Other members of the Committee are Rabbi Jacob Rothschild, Archbishop Paul Hallinan, Rev. Samuel Williams and Mr. Robert Dobbs.

Mr. Kaler called on chairmen of the Neighborhood Teams for reports as follows:

Mrs. Stephens, Edgewood-Kirkwood: Report attached.

Mr. C. G. Ezzard, SummerHill Peoplestown: Reported that majority of problems brought up at meeting on March 28 concerned street, etc. and housing, including code enforcement, stadium parking and model neighborhood program. He then called on Mr. Haas, a member of the Team, to report on the meeting on Housing on April 25.

Mr. Haas reported that at the meeting several serious problems were brought out - lending agencies are reluctant to lend in this area because of uncertainties; insurance companies will not insure a house under \$8,000; individuals are told by the Inspection Department to make

repairs when they are uncertain about future plans. Recommendations were:

1. Newspapers print platt of Model Neighborhood areas.
2. City consider neighborhood offices where citizens can make complaints about inspection notices, etc. It is hard to get off from work in time to get to City Hall, etc. Having someone in the neighborhood would make it easier and show that the city cared about making it easier.
3. Board of Aldermen should be asked to review policies to make sure that there is the least difficulty for people in this area. There must be assurance that if the planning grant is given for the Model Neighborhood Program, before the final program is adopted there will be public hearings and those in the areas will be allowed to participate.

At the April 25 meeting, Mr. Richardson of the Stadium Authority said that they must add 3,800 parking spaces by 1979, but that they have no power of condemnation. There is a difference of opinion about whether more parking should go up or out.

City services should be kept at absolute optimum in this area.

Miss Helen Bullard, Mechancisville -Pittsburgh: 16 page report on the meeting; most anxiety about Model Neighborhood and policies about public housing, particularly the one month lease and ability of manager to evict without giving reason. Miss Bullard noted that this is now being litigated.

Mr. T. M. Alexander, Vine City-Lightning: It had been important at Hearing to establish fact that the Committee had not come to cover up for the city. There is a feeling that there is a policy of "protective custody" given to slumlords. In the Vine City area, where there are many tenant occupied houses, complaints are about lack of code enforcement, whereas in areas of home ownerships there are complaints about too stringent code enforcement. It should be determined if there are two standards of inspection and enforcement. Complaints about public housing, of not being up to standard and the power and manner of the manager. The action of the Board of Education in the school site selection gives validity to the contention of protective treatment of slumlords. Need more job opportunities. This is fertile ground for those who would create tension.

Mr. Robert Dobbs, Northwest Area: This meeting was arranged by the EOA committees for that area and Mr. Dobbs said they should be commended for the fine way in which they planned the meeting. There were two (2) basic issues - the extended day in the schools and public housing policies. The extended school day will be hard not only for the children but on working parents. Those present stated that they would much prefer portable units at the schools with a full day than double session with present facilities.

The monthly lease, the annual income review, and the disparity between charges at the various projects are primary concerns of public housing tenants. Rabbi Rothschild, a member of the Team said there were complaints about the school transfer method, that by the time notice that transfer request cannot be approved is received, it is too late to make another request. He was impressed with the reasonableness of the people in regard to schools, they made the request that if the school conditions require double session, supervised recreation should be available; used to be able to tell when children were seen walking the streets that they

should be in school. Now they might be on the way to or from school."

Mr. Kaler then asked for action on the following recommendations, each of which was adopted:

1. It should be suggested to Mr. Wofford, Director of the Inspection Department, that there be established either neighborhood offices or a schedule (similar to voting registration schedule) whereby questions can be brought after the regular office hours. Mr. Wofford and others attending the April meeting should receive expressions of appreciation for their willingness to attend.
2. In scheduling Commission meetings with department and agency heads, the first one should be on management-tenant relations in public housing. (Mrs. Stephens emphasized the difference between the cooperation of the two tenant selection offices. Need to find out if there are different standards of inspection for different areas was noted).
3. Second meeting to be with Board of Education representative; third Inspection and Code Enforcement.
4. Board of Education to be called on to see that provisions are made for recreation at extended session schools, communication to be carried to Superintendent's office by a committee from Commission.
5. Residents of the area be included in policy making body for Model Neighborhood program.
6. Commission should point out any discrepancies in services in the several areas.

Mr. Ezzard pointed out that there are complaints about things other than inspection. Mr. Kaler suggested that the Community Relations Commission and the Mayor's office might work out a joint program. The matter of duplicating EOA services was brought up. Mr. Dobbs, a member of the EOA Board, said it may or may not; it would depend on how it was worked out.

Miss Bullard moved that a night meeting of the full Commission be called to assemble the Commission's recommendations to the Board of Aldermen. Passed.

Mr. Kaler called on Mr. Ed Shukraft, who had requested time to speak about conditions in West End. He said they need new housing, new development in the area, which provides an opportunity to set a fine example of people living together.

Mr. Kaler called on Mr. Paul Anthony, Executive Director of the Southern Regional Council, whom he had invited to speak on the role of the Commission, etc.. Mr. Anthony emphasized the communication function of the Commission; the need for coordination of the Commission's activities through the staff; the importance of keeping an attitude of

agreement among the members of the Commission. He complimented the Commission on having gotten off to a vigorous start; cited as the most important duties as follows - help the poor and disadvantaged, encourage sense of self-help; interpret for and educate white middle class about problems. When asked about "summer trouble", he said there is a small group of people in almost every city who would welcome violence, but we must all work on preventive measures.

There was additional discussion about West End. Mr. Tom Onnard, editor of The Weekly Star, said people are getting discouraged, signs of interest from the larger community would help, also information about what is going on out there in the metro press would help. Mrs. Paschall reported on several meetings with West End residents and real estate representatives. Mr. Butler said would help to "get the Urban Renewal program off the ground." Mr. Kaler pointed out the Commission cannot deal with the economic factors of new business, etc. Mr. Onnard said there is "nothing special the Commission can do. Several months ago he went to metropolitan papers and urged report but they would not do it. News media must report it.. up to residents to work out individual relationships."

Mr. Kuettner moved that a committee be appointed to work with residents. Passed.

The Chairman appointed the following:

Mr. R. J. Butler, Chairman
Mr. Al Kuettner
Dr. Robert E. Lee
Mr. Clarence G. Ezzard
Miss Helen Bullard

Mr. Haas noted that one solution to the problems of this area is to open up other areas.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

(Mrs.) Fred W. Patterson

(In the absence of Mrs. Patterson
the minutes were taken by the
Executive Director.)