

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION  
1203 CITY HALL  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

VINE CITY-LIGHTNING AREAS MEETING, THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1967, 8-10 P. M.  
COSMOPOLITAN A.M.E. CHURCH, 170 VINE STREET, N. W.

Mr. T. M. Alexander, Sr., Team Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Commission Members present:

Mrs. Fred W. Patterson  
Archbishop Paul Hallinan  
(Mr Jack Sells, Team Member, was out of town)  
Mrs. Eliza Paschall, Executive Director

Commission Member, Mr. C. G. Ezzard and Alderman Q. V. Williamson were also in attendance. Visiting students from Agnes Scott College were there to observe.

Mr. Alexander explained the purposes of the Commission, he said, "We didn't come here to give direction, we came for you to tell us what has to be done. We all know this would not be a popularity committee."

1. Mrs. Dorothy Bolden Thompson, 643 Delbridge St., N. W., 688-2422  
Mrs. Thompson served on the Ad Hoc Committee which helped to establish the Commission, asked about the idea of Advisory Committees from the various neighborhoods for the Commission. Mrs. Paschall said that these would be appointed following the neighborhood hearings, that the Commission had in mind trying to use the existing organizations and groups, rather than forming a new and additional organization in the community.  
  
Mrs. Thompson: "Education, labor and housing are all important but the most important is education."
2. Mr. Ron Stirrup, c/o 141 Walnut St., N. W.: "People making \$40.00 a week, not a legal minimum wage, need adequate wages for hours worked. Will you speak for us? Don't tell us 'to do better'."
3. Mr. Otis Cochran, 227 Walnut St., N. W., 525-1792: "Group accross the country least represented on various community groups, boards, etc., is the 18-25 year range; the Atlanta Youth Council, for example, has no "youth" on the board; knows of no policy making board in the City with membership from the 18-25 year range; urges Commission to provide for participation for this group; necessary to stop working 'for' and start working 'with'; need to get rid of paternalistic point of view; everybody is 'somebody' -- whether they're working or not; the problem is not being heard when you come honestly and humbly."
4. Mr. George Sims, 161 Bankhead St., N. W.,: "Interested mainly in education."
5. Mr. Eddie Murphey, 141 Walnut St., N. W., 523-5136,: "Wasn't going to speak, but would say this for the boys from the Recreation Center present, that they need a larger building to have a recreation program; there is a vacant building in the area (Magnolia & Maple Sts.) a Baptist Center that would do well for a recreation center; present Center is 3 rooms about 7 x 7. or 8 x 8 ft."

6. Mr. Alonzo Caldwell, 263 Mangum St., N.W., 523-3815: "From Lightning, 100 families with about 1000 children playing in the streets; need to fix up houses, need hot and cold running water."

Mr. Alexander: "If addresses of those without water were given to the Better Housing Commission at the City Hall, owners would be required to fix them."

Mr. Caldwell: "Some of the area is zoned for business, but they want to keep it to live in; some people on welfare, getting \$45.00 a month, can't pay to have repairs required by code enforcement, made; can't get into Public Housing because of long waiting lists."

Mr. Alexander: "Some people in public housing need to move out so others can move in."

Mr. Cochran: "Some restricting policies, such as those about illegitimate children, keep some out; people in most need, can't get into public housing."

7. Mr. Clarence Ezzard, Commission Member: "Keep hearing that public housing is all filled up but don't think that is true. Could Commission ask for an inventory?"

8. : "Lightning has 1 playlot (with 1 basketball goal) closes at 7:00 p. m., children are not going to bed then, will play in the streets; need a shelter where they can dance, etc., and need to have it open past 7:00 p. m.

9. Brother Charlie Shepard, 400 Mayers St., N.W., Foundation Club, Lightning: "Many small children playing in the streets, trucks coming through Mangum Street."

10. Mrs. Sylvia Cochran, EOA, C. O. Aide: "They have talked to people who own businesses, and they have agreed for trucks not to use Mangum and Foundry Signs (No trucks allowed: Slow, Children) would help."

11. Mr. Gerry Chew, Vista Worker: "Largest problems are obvious ones; Wasn't Commission established just to ease the conscience of the City; What makes the Commission think they will be effective?"

Mr. Alexander: "In appointing Commission, the Mayor is trying to get at the bottom of problems."

12. Archbishop Hallinan, Commission Member: "This was in the back of everybody's minds - but at first sign that things are being 'swept under the rug', I would resign and know others who would."

Mr. Stirrup: "It's no accident we have a Vine City; We need new machinery; if Landlords won't fix plumbing, etc., the City should take the house and do it."

13. Alderman Q. V. Williamson: "Parks Committee is asking for a  $\frac{1}{2}$  mill or more tax for recreation; Finance Comm ttee is waiting to see what the Board of Education will ask for before setting it; The Administration has said that the City has to replace the EOA money spent on recreation last year." Mr. Williamson on Parks Committee last summer and insisted that Vine City get some of the program, he was raised in Vine City and in that Church.

Mrs. Patterson, Committee Member: "We have no illusion that we can solve all the problems; We are experimenting with liasion between the City and the people."

Mr. Williamson, City Alderman: "Authority to pave the streets comes from the Legislature; Policy has been that 51% of property owners had to sign for paving, etc.,; In some places in Vine City one person owned more than 51%, they could control. New law permits the City to advertise and if 51% don't object, street can be

paved; Once paving is done, the City can re-surface, etc."

Mr. Ezzard, Commission Member: "How does the City reconcile re-surfacing streets which are not paved?"

Mrs. Thompson: "Nobody pounds on the word Education. Ware School is in double session; board of education is a tight little group; Need to strengthen school attendance."

Mr. Alexander: "Commission members divide themselves up; Reverend Williams stays with board of education."

14. Mr. John Robinson, 645 Beckwith St., S. W., Atlanta University: "Need to work on education; I took a boy back to Washington Highschool, said he couldn't come back in day school." "If out 6 months, policy not to re-admit them."

15. Mr. Fowlkes, Director Nash-Washington EOA Center: "Glad to see the Commission in our neighborhood. Can any influence be used to update the plans for changes; At Atlanta Social Workers Club, heard that present schedule will mean Urban Renewal in Vine City in 10 to 11 years; no plans to improve Lightning because it is zoned for Commercial uses; Need to update plans so people can expect abolition of slums more quickly."

Mr. Williamson: "Unless some method is found for more City revenue, can't do that; City has to match Urban Renewal funds by 1/3 and only place to get it is bond issues."

Mr. Fowlkes: "City should include Vine City and Lightning in Model City funds."

Mr. Chew: "Should make education more relevant; Textbooks are outmoded; All are 'white' and Negro students can't identify with persons in them."

Archbishop Hallinan: Asked about election of School Board Members.

16. Mr. Otis White, Principal of Ware School and President of Gate City Teachers: "His organization concerned about textbooks, if children are to identify with the good in the U. S., they must be represented in the textbooks. Ware School has purchased some new 'intergrated' textbooks with Ford Foundation money; Negro teachers are 'concerned with somethings white teachers aren't concerned with; difference between intergration and assimilation of teacher's groups." Mr. White has been Principal 11 years in Vine City; Father and Son programs at Boys Club encouraged.

17. Mr. Charlie Lowe, 1894 Penelope Rd., N.W. 30314, EOA: Commended Commission for hearings, should all work together, "Need your help in getting to the people; can't make Truant Officers out of EOA workers."

Mr. Cochran: Reported on conversation with Dr. Boozer of School Staff that reports of truancy depend on Principal; "Have compulsory school attendance law, but it is up to Principal to excuse and report." There are 11 Social Workers and 35 Visiting teachers in the whole system.

Mr. Williamson: "Ware School has Social Worker through Ford Foundation Program; How many other schools have that?"

Mrs. Thompson: "Dropouts come because they have problems; there is a reason for everything; something wrong and the child is unhappy; children can be unhappy too; nobody knows what is wrong."

18. : Said he once dropped out, but went back in school; Not Principal's fault, not parents fault; it's the Community's fault; the way people are living; if had better places to stay, would stay in school.
19. Mr. Charles Hawk, Councelor, Ware School: "Dropouts goes back to finences; Need jobs with decent salaries; Should recruit for jobs and for NYC, etc., on streets in Vine City; Waive formal education requirements."

Mr. Murphey: "EOA recruits for NYC and Job Corps; Can do some through Recreation Center."

20. Mr. Charles Black, EOA Extension Manager: "In summer 'Impact' program Employers may not take people from Vine City Area because of education and distance from the jobs; Need to have localized training."

21. : Said that they asked neighbor who had returned from Juvenile Home if he was glad to get home; He replied "No - not glad to get home; at Juvenile Home had a clean bed, 3 good meals, clean clothes, better than at home."

Mr. Williamson: Recommended a Public Hearing on conditions in Public Housing; Had visited Eagan Homes; bad health conditions; Housing Authority forbids telephone extensions put in a 2-story apartment; no rodent control; Housing Projects should meet standards like private housing; Eagan Homes - no lights at front door; tenants forbidden to put lights; several robberies and rapes.

It was suggested that the Commission invite the Board of Housing Authority to join in a Public Hearing on Atlanta Public Housing.