

2474 Black Forest Trail,
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

January 17, 1967

To Members of the Zoning Committee:
City Hall,
Atlanta, Georgia

Z-66-259-F

Re: Rezoning Petition, Jan. 19, 1967
Continental Development Corp.
Land Lots 228 and 229, Dist. 14.

My home at the above address is adjacent to the property up for rezoning. I wish to be heard, and find that I will be out of town. Hence this letter.

Since I feel very strongly about this recurring matter, this letter will be lengthy and in some detail. I beg your indulgence.

We moved here 5 years ago and built the house on this lot. We did so because of its convenient location and the high type middle class homes which form this community. Three Atlanta friends also cited certain advantages to having a city of Atlanta address. These advantages, I am sorry to say, have all proven fallacious.

As a matter of fact, these helpful friends now reside outside the city limits. The principle reason for moving: they became disenchanted by official acts of the city government which penalized, or threatened to penalize, them as home-owning citizens.

These people, like the ones now living in the Continental Colony area, are middle-to-upper-middle income group who form the source-well for community leaders - prime movers for better living conditions, better homes and churches and schools, who create and demand upgraded standards. They are the ones who are will to pay the price to help themselves have better things of life, such as a community that cares, a bit of privacy, minimum of noise and confusions, good neighbors, happy environment, etc. And they are the ones who are most willing to help the less fortunate toward the same goals.

Now this petition is aimed directly at these kind of people. To put it mildly, another disenchantment, another example of so-called planning - like the expressway ramps - I have been witness to before in your city hall, a kind of harassment encouraged and condoned by city officials.

This is the main reason why the people of Sandy Springs last year chose not to become citizens of Atlanta; and the same reason why a slum group did join up. You create conditions intolerable for the first group, while the second is hoping for a little better place than they have.

This is also the reason why, out of a group of 23 people transferred to Atlanta several years ago by one of our larger national concerns, only two still have a city of Atlanta address. And these were people in the 12,000 - \$14,000, and above, salary range. I know, I was one of them.

And it is the reason why you will drive more people out, and create more slums. If this rezoning is approved the Continental Colony area of homes will begin a slow deterioration that is inherent with the coming of a large apartment complex that blocks the orderly development of a residential section. People in the \$15,000 - \$18,000 income group, which will include close to 80% of those in this area, will not put up with the condition that will come and they will move out, even at a loss. The houses will either stand empty for awhile, or be occupied by a lower income group. Then repeated, downward steps each time.

This is simply the social history of municipal deterioration. Check with any Sociology PHD at Emory or Ga. State or Tech. When a small residential area of a city is isolated and blocked by an environment of lesser quality, the area simply is overwhelmed, stagnation sets in and decay is ultimate.

The alternative: put High Rise apartments west of Greenbriar fronting on Cambellton Road with 300-400 feet maximum depth.

Now for another point of contention. The claim that the addition of an apartment Complex will increase property values is bare-faced untrue and misleading. Value, of course, is somewhat of a relative term. What one holds dear, another will discard. But anyway you slice it, this land with apartments next door, will not be more valuable to the present homeowners or future homeowners. I have gone through this before, and so have others. In terms of money, which is not the only criteria for value, the amount ranges from \$4000.00 to \$6000.00 less.

I certainly will lose money. However the amount will be small to what the city of Atlanta will lose over a period of - say, 15 years.

I have seen nothing in the plans offered that will counteract the prospect of deterioration and loss of value to the homeowner. Despite the brightly colored brochures and persuasive words of the project promoters, these are essentially the same two-story box type building so well known in this area as

the cheapest of all construction. The gloss and floss of the trimmings is to fool the unwary. I lived in such an apartment group when we first moved here - air cond., wall-to-wall, quiet settled people, etc etc - my wife almost went crazy before we could get out. My hub caps were stolen twice, next-door neighbor's car broken into, and it was a rare week-end that the police were not around.

You are being misled by the claim that these apartments will attract the permanent type resident. This type is a rare bird in this area. I don't know of any more non-permanent. They include the young unmarrieds - mostly airline employees - , or young married people who will be moving on in another year, two at the most. People in their 30's, 40's and 50's with families don't live in apartments if they can possibly help it.

The argument that the present high occupancy rate is evidence of the need for more apartments will not hold water. It is evidence only of a locked-in market, people trapped - and I do mean trapped - in apartments by the shortage of homes, the scarcity and high cost of credit. This condition will not exist much longer, because help for the prospective home-owner is already on the way. Personally, I know of more than a dozen families who can hardly wait to escape the luxury of apartment living.

Incidentally, the 150 foot "buffer" zone offered the owners on Black Forest will be nothing more than a playground for the children from the first row of apartments. And so far as the proposed "Country Club" is concerned, it means nothing to me. I doubt if it will mean much to any resident. The ones I have seen elsewhere were either soon deserted or turned into warehouses, or rather storage houses.

Consider other economic possibilities. If after this project gets underway, the occupancy rate drops off, what happens? The prices are cut. A less desirable type renter moves in. And if the forecasters are wrong, and the rate fails to hold up, then maybe there there will be some partially completed buildings to compete with the red mud and rag weeds for the benefit of "planned" landscaping. Such things have happened before.

There is quite a drainage problem here, you know.

Yet, in spite of all this, the city seems bent of penalizing the type of citizen you would think it would want to the most to keep. Not only to keep, but to bring in more of the same kind - the ones with the time, the little extra money, the educated background, the self-motivated inclination to support the churches, schools, civic projects of art,

theater and humanities. But no, we are the unwanted people. Sold down the river, so to speak. (One Greenbriar business man was heard to say, about the first week in December: "these apartments are in the bag. Haven't you heard?")

There is something of a moral question here. Maybe more than one. Time after time I have heard you gentlemen say: "I am going to do what is best for Atlanta." What is best? after 5 years observation I would say your main objective is to make Atlanta "big". Big commercially, big in sports, high in plane landings, up in construction. All good, I believe. But there are some other bigs: High murder rate, high lesser crimes, High welfare costs, High traffic deaths, High traffic accidents without death. The slums and the bums. Big.

"Forward Atlanta" is a fine thing. More industrialization, more trade. In doing this, you and the Chamber of Commerce did what was expedient at the moment, what would bring in the most tax revenue, what would get the job done in a hurry. And mostly you forgot to provide for the middle, or upper middle class home owner. There are few, very few places within Atlanta for him to live, desirable places. He is crowded out by the big hodge-podge of little commercialization. He is the forgotten man, the neglected man, the abused man.

This is particularly true in the S. W. section of Atlanta where people who want to live within easy traveling distance of Fulton County Airport or Municipal Airport or the Industrial Park, have little choice in desirable home location. So more and more, the engineers, the foreman, the plant managers, the district supervisors, the sales managers, and young professional people, and pilots - these people are leaving Atlanta to find a desirable place to live. They are going across the river or to communities south of here, or buying 10 acres in the country and building there.

To them, desirable citizens all, Atlanta is an "unfriendly" city. It cares nothing about them. OFFERS NO PROTECTION.

Gentlemen, you may not be particularly interested, but my state and local taxes is about \$1240.00 a year. Personal taxes, not business taxes. The approximate breakdown as follows: \$220.00 Sales; 310.00 Income; \$710.00 Property, Intang property, auto and gasoline. And my place of residence is the only real property I own.

And for this you want to put apartments in my back yard. For this price I know when I am being had, and it is coming to an end.

For your information, and the informations of others I hope to send copies of this, we spent close to \$1100.00 at one one store in Greenbriar for clothing from the first of September thru Christmas ~~far~~ (Not Rich's) Add my wife's clothes

clothes, food, drugs, household supplies etc, and you come ~~up~~ up with \$340.00 monthly expenditures - yearly average. If that is not enough, I am sorry Mr. Storekeeper. It is ending. It ended right after Christmas. Since then we have spent 10¢ at Greenbriar - for a newspaper. We even returned \$48.00 worth of Christmas presents, not to be exchanged, but for credit.

We traded elsewhere before Greenbriar and we can do it again. Convenience ... I am getting tired and my spelling ... convenience does not mean much to me. I am enclosing half of Rich's credit card. The other half goes to him. My wife has a couple of more that will be halved when she gets back. I do not own a Gulf card, but I know of some that are not around anymore.

And I know who I am not going to vote for in the next city election.... if I am a resident then.

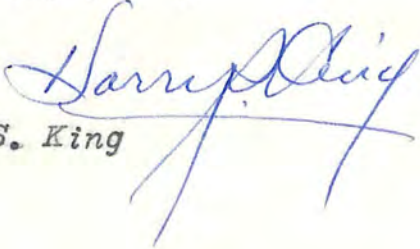
I don't especially like to be rough, but when someone puts corncobs in my bathroom don't expect me to reciprocate with Scott tissue.

Further, I intend to transfer out of Atlanta all of my assets I can legally do so without penalty or loss, in anticipation of the time when I can leave this unfriendly city. Big. I don't like little intrigues.

I have a friend in Houston who says: "A New Yorker bets his money on triple mortgages and fine print. A Texan bets his money on first mortgages and a political friend."

I don't like the job, but you forced it on me: so in the meantime, yours as the ambassador of ill-will.

Very truly yours,


Harry S. King