

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION
1203 CITY HALL
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

EDGEWOOD-KIRKWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD HEARING, MARCH 14, 1967, WESLEY
AVENUE SCHOOL

The first neighborhood hearing of the Community Relations Commission of the city of Atlanta was held March 14, 1967 at 8:00 p.m. at the Wesley Avenue School.

Mr. Hamilton Douglas, Jr. presided. Other Commission members present were Mrs. Mary Stephens, Chairman, Mr. C. G. Ezzard, Mr. M. O. Ryan and Mrs. Sara Baker.

Mr. Douglas told the group the committee was very grateful to be at the meeting, and to feel free to tell them what was on their minds. He told them how the Commission was established and why. He asked individuals desiring to speak to sign a card. The following is what the individuals had to report to the Commission.

1. MR. CHARLES TURNER, 1567 Paxton Street, Mr. Turner stated that he was happy to have the committee in the neighborhood. He was concerned with trying to get low rent houses. He said most of the people in the community were wage earners, that they had few professionals. He said they had been promised this, they even made a survey and made plans, but since then they have built a new school, put up a warehouse, and built a park. The apartments in the area are sub-standard. He would like for the Commission to help get low rent housing in this area.
2. MR. JAMES DEAN, 17 East Lake Drive, Mr. Dean said that he has been living in the N.E. area for 9 months, and was buying a house on East Lake Drive. He told the committee he had 10 things that he would like to bring before them.

1. What are some of the real concrete powers of the Commission.

Mr. Douglas answered by saying the Commission was formed to find out the problems that exist in the city and make recommendations to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, because, he stated, they are going to correct the things that are wrong. He said the problems that will be heard tonight has a relationship to various parts of the city, for example, police service, and poor service will be heard from, from all the areas. The committee will take the problems back to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, and the different departments. The Commission does not have the power to do what needs to be done, but will recommend what it think needs to be done. He stressed the fact that since the Commission has come this far in its program, he believes it will be able to help correct some of the wrong.

2. We need more parking signs on East Lake Drive
He stated there has been several accidents in front of his house because of no parking signs.
3. There is a need in the East Lake area for enforcement of Health Laws.
General sanitation is bad. He stated the sanitation department was coming around 2 or 3 times a week, now sometimes they do not come around at all during the week.
4. There is a need for proper street lightning on Memorial Drive, East Lake, and Boulevard.
5. There is a need for Enforcement of the Housing Code.
6. Better sewer conditions are needed, he said when it rains, it seems like a flood.
7. There are no sidewalks on Boulevard and East Lake.
8. Education. East Lake Elementary is overcrowded. The first of February the school went on double sessions. He said the parents were only notified one week in advance of the double session, this was unfair because the parents did not have time to make the adjustments. Example, a child changing from going to school in the morning and start on the afternoon session, the problem of getting someone to look after him in the mornings because the parents have to work. There is no P.T.A. in the school. During the 1965-66 term there were only 42 Negroes in the school with a capacity of 625. Now there are 900 students with the increase of Negroes moving into the neighborhood.
9. The stores in the area are very unsanitary. The vegetables and meats are of a very low grade.
10. Rezoning. The area is in a transitional period from whites to Negroes. Now they want to rezone it for business. In his area, Carter St. and East Lake Drive.

Mr. Ryan complimented Mr. Dean on his remarks. Then he asked why there is no P.T.A. in the school. Mr. Dean said because the students are 80 to 90 % Negro and the parents do not want to meet together. He said the principal is retiring, but this should not have anything to do with the P.T.A. Mr. Ezzard asked Mr. Dean what did he do. He said he was student at Atlanta University School of Social Work. Mr. Ezzard suggested to him that he come to the Commission and see what he could do to help. He said he would.

3. MR. RALPH LONG, PRINCIPAL OF WESLEY AVE. SCHOOL, Mr. Long stated that it was the responsibility of the parents and not the teachers or principal to start a P.T.A. The teachers and principals are suppose to cooperate with them after it is established.

He also brought up zoning. Two years ago there was no liquor stores from Moreland Avenue to Decatur. Now that the Negroes are moving in, there is a store on almost every corner. He said as far as crime is concerned it is going to get worse and all these liquor stores are contributing to it. He said who ever is permitting all these stores licenses should not be permitted to do so. Mrs. Stephens stated there has been a lot of changes in the permitting of licenses. It is now out of the hands of the Board of Aldermen. Mr. Long said he would like to know who to see about the matter and he would follow through. He said they would go to court if that was necessary to halt the number of stores that were being permitted to open.

4. MR. JAMES CROWLEY, 50 Mason Avenue, N. W., Mr. Crowley is concerned with recreation, he said it is very poor in the area. In the past 10 years the area has grown tremendously, and recreation facilities have not been added to accomodate them. There is a small "jumped up park" in back of the school, Wesley Ave., but it is not adequate. It was put up to keep the Negroes out of Chandler Park. The part is not properly supervised. More trained supervisors are needed. (look into the facilities of Walker, and Besser Brandon parks.) Mr. Howard Long of the Recreation Department was sent to the meeting by Miss Carmichael, he said he would take the complaints back to Miss Carmichael and Mr. Delius.
5. MR. A WATSON, 187 Wesley Ave., Mr. Watson stated the need for a better lightning system. He said there is night school from 6:30 until 10:30 and the area around the school is so dark some people are afraid to come out. He asked the Commission to help get lights on baseball and football fields, he said if these areas are lighted, crime will go down (Mr. Douglas said if he had not studied a map for half an hour before coming, he would not have been able to find the school.) Mr. Watson said it is even worse when there is a heavy rain. Also Foote and Second Streets are not paved, this is also bad when it rains. He said no lights have been added since the area was lighted up in the beginning. He also mentioned old houses that should be torn down, he gave an example of a fire downstairs in one of the schools, and the fire wagon could not get in because of the houses.
6. MRS. ELIZABETH GIFFORD, 1565 Boulevard Drive (Left before her turn)
7. MR. DELMAR R. YODER, 1800 Memorial Drive, Edgewood Neighborhood Service Center. Mr. Yoder stated that he was speaking as a professional and was working with the people in the area. He said the Commission needed to deal with Public

Relations of minority groups, and he said Miss Bullard could lead it. This group would let the people know about the good things going on in the neighborhoods. He said that crime, and filth always get a place on the front page, but the good things are overlooked. He stated there are many good families in this area.

He said that Bert School was started sometimes ago and seems like it will never be finished. Others schools have been finished that were started after this one. He was concerned with white abandonment of areas when Negroes start to move in. He said it should be someway to get people to stop moving. He was also concerned about getting low rent housing. He said the Commission should try to influence the Urban Renewal to help with this. He stated that the city has built a new stadium and other nice things of this nature, but we need something for the people of areas like Buttermilk Bottom, etc. He said the City Wide Service Agencies are not providing services. He gave the Metro Atlanta YMCA as an example. He said the Atlanta and Dekalb Government work against each other. When something is brought up one say it is the responsibility of the other. He said he was glad Mr. Long of the Recreation Department was present, but Miss Carmichael and Mr. Delius already know of the problems that exist.

8. MR. HENRY W. BROOKS, 1312 Dupont Avenue, S. E.

Mr. Brooks said when he moved 7 years ago it was a very nice neighborhood, now it is junked up with one thing and then another. The City was suppose to check on this. On Wylie Street refrigerators are dumped. The people are ruining the neighborhood by using it as a junk yard.

9. MRS. LOUISE WHITE, 220 Hutchins Street, Mrs. White is a civic worker. She said she live in the heart of Edgewood. Agrees with Mr. Brooks about the junk yards. Said the civic group cannot do a thing about it. She gave an example of a car being dumped on LaFrance Street, the police put a ticket on it. Now people are taking parts off it, soon it will be a pile of junk.

She was also concerned about sanitation, said people are dumping their garbage out in the back yard, she asked that people should please be made to get and use garbage cans. She said there are housed with 3 rooms and people with 11 and 12 children are living in them. They are called one way houses, because they have one way in and one way out. She said they wanted some places built for these people to live with a parking space and somewhere for the children to play, and definitely no one ways because they are hazards.

There is a need for a red light at the corner of Whiteford Avenue and LaFrance Street, other signs should be used also. Example (Slow-Children Playing).

10. MRS. RUTH FLEMISTER, 29 Daniel Street, S. E., Mrs. Flemister had her 16 year old daughter with her. She said she was operated on by Grady Hospital when she was 15 months old. She is now handicapped. Grady will not give her a card because they say her husband makes too much money, she said he is a common laborer and has 3 children to support. She said she has been to other places to have her daughter treated, but they will not because Grady will not sign for it.
11. MRS. GEORGIA USHE, 2170 Boulevard Drive, Mrs. Ushe was concerned with sanitation, she said a lot of the stores carried a terrible odor, and they keep a lot of old boxes out in front. Also teenage boys hanging around outside beer stores and breaking in people houses. A light is needed at Ruckeford Street and Boulevard Avenue. There has been several accidents at this site.
12. Mr. Joseph Finch, 1628 Foote Street, Apt. 7, Mr. Finch expressed the need for more recreational facilities. He said a YMCA should be organized so the teenagers will have something to do.
13. MRS. LAURA W. NUNNALLY, 1286 Fair Street, S. W. (left)
14. MRS. F. W. ARNOLD, 57 Raymond Street, S. W. (left)
15. REV. D.E. MYLES, 1361 Dupont Ave. S. E., Rev. Myles said he was happy to be at the meeting, that every body had touched on about everything he wanted to say but he would make a few remarks. He was concerned with what did it mean when people spoke of low-rent housing? He said he was asked to move from several different places because he was making too much money to remain. But during these times he was sick and in the hospital and could not work for quite a while. He said he is paying taxes in Fulton and Dekalb counties. At the Dupont and Whitefore Ave. schools, children are very destructive, something should be done about it. He expressed a need for more Police protection. He commented on Mr. Long's remarks about the Liquor stores, and said the thing to do about them is to boycott. He stated that some of these responsibilities lie at the people door.

16. PROF. JOHN DAVIS GAITHER, 1560 Foote St., N.E., Mr. Gaither stated he was happy to be at the meeting. He said if we stayed until the midnight hour, the same problems would continue to come up. He commented on some of the problems. Lightning Atlanta was suppose to be one of the most lighted areas in the world, it is in certain parts, Ex. Peachtree Street. But, other areas are badly in need of light. Atlanta-Dekalb When you go to Atlanta to try and get something done, they tell you its in the jurisdiction of Dekalb County, and when you go to Dekalb, they send you to Atlanta. Police Protection there is one policeman on foot and when he goes to one area of his beat, people are doing what they want to on the other end, and vice versa. House Construction You can tell where a Negro live because of the way the house is constructed. Low-rent housing He said houses should be built up to present day standards.

Mrs. Baker asked him when he referred to low rent housing, did he mean sub-divisions or government projects. He said the kind that are in the Thomesville area. Mrs. Baker said those houses are bought and not rented Prof. Gaither told the committee to take what has been said and take it seriously, because the Edgewood-Kirkwood area is on the move.

The question of what type of houses the people are trying to get was re-introduced. It was decided that houses that comply with the Housing Code Enforcement. It was pointed out that some of the houses the people were talking about were built before the housing code was in effect.

Mr. Douglas explained that the problems would be turned over to the proper departments.

It was suggested that a specific resolution be prepared by the people of the neighborhood of the things that are wrong.

Mr. Long said these things had been reported 10 years ago and nothing has been done about them. Mr. Douglas replied by saying that this Commission has been established to try and help the people communicate with City Hall and see that these problems are solved.

17, MR. JAMES COSBY, 1424 LaFrance St., N.E., Mr. Cosby stated that he was having trouble with Real Estate Companies. He was concerned about Educational programs. He said somebody should be hired to teach the people in the underpriviledge areas how to live.

18. Mrs. Charity Hill, 1514 Foote St., Mrs. Hill's concern was with lights, and street paving. She referred to Foote St., and Mason Avenue. She complained of the dust, she said gravel was put on the street but it only made things worse.

19. MR. J. A. MCLAIN, 2079 Delano Dr., N.E. , Mr. McLain was concerned with rezoning of the Kirkwood area. Houses that had For Sale signs in front of them now have signs of rezoning for commercial use. He stated that we are trying to keep communities from going slum, but how can we when city hall is passing these laws. Mr. Douglas stated he would get the city attorney to draw up a list of what the city of Atlanta is responsible for. He stated that except for court house functions, most of the things are concerned with the city of Atlanta.
Mr. McLain said there should be enforcement of the various Codes, sanitary, housing, etc. He said the Federal Appraisal System should be looked into.

Mr. Douglas thanked the people for staying and suggested that the committee conduct a tour of the community and see some of the things the people are talking about.

Mrs. Baker told the group the Commission would get a list of what Atlanta and DEKALB county is responsible for.

Mr. Long thanked the committee for coming and said the community has been making some progress but that they still had a long way to go.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.