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ADMINISTRATOR

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ATLANTA, INC.

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September 30, 1966

Mr. J. H. Calhoun  
Special Assistant for Community Development  
Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Incorporated  
101 Marietta Street, N. W.  
Sixth Floor  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Mr. Calhoun:

Thank you for your letter of September 26. I am pleased to know that Mr. Sweat has been in communication with you concerning the visit made to his office by the officers of the two groups which we organized in the Boulevard NE section.

As you requested, following is a list of complaints which were presented to Mr. Sweat by these citizens:

They expressed frustration over discrimination which they have experienced and which they continue to experience. As one man put it, "we just don't have the opportunities that the white man has." They stated that the lack of opportunities applied equally in education, employment, housing, and in receiving the services of the City. They complained that there had been discrimination in Housing Code enforcement: "Negro property-owners are forced to keep their properties in a better state of repair than white property-owners in the Boulevard area." They complained that the amount of rent they paid was too high for the type accommodation which they had.

More specifically, their complaints might be categorized in the following fashion:

1. The complete absence of any publicly-sponsored recreational facilities in their community. They expressed that one of the most needed facilities in their community was a youth center. This center should be located as near the scene of the riots as possible. Program development for the center must be dictated by the needs of the youth in that area.

2. They were quite concerned because of inadequate services from the Sanitary Department. Trucks from the Sanitary Department come to the area only once a week -- sometimes on Wednesday, sometimes on Friday. Garbage and trash are allowed to pile up. The trucks, they said, need to come through the area two or three times a week on a regular basis. It appeared from their conversation that it might be necessary to force the owners of large apartment buildings to provide receptacles for both garbage and trash. They told Mr. Sweat that the Sanitary Engineers do not fulfill their duties in picking up garbage which they scatter as they collect the waste out of garbage cans.

3. A major point of the discussion concerned housing conditions. A few of the housing problems are:

- a. General deterioration.
- b. Building infested with rats and roaches.
- c. Inadequate maintenance and care for the public portions of the buildings, such as the halls and other commonly-shared spaces.
- d. Inadequate exits from the building.
- e. Inadequate accommodations.

Time and again, they reiterated the fact that their rent was too high. (I might note here that since their visit to Mr. Sweat's office, some of the residents have received notices that their rent is being increased. In some cases, the increase is in excess of ten (\$10.00) dollars a month. I am gravely concerned about this matter.)

4. They complained about the manner in which some of the policemen performed their duties in handling the crowds on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday nights. They pointed out that there were instances of police brutality both on the streets and at the police station. They also reported that a number of innocent parties were arrested during this melee. Furthermore, they said, in some instances the Caucasian policemen called the people names which were most displeasing. They were disturbed by the fact that they have not received sufficient protection by law enforcement officials. The murder of the Vornier youth and the shooting of the other youth are apt examples of this matter, and there are many others.

5. This committee of citizens reported to Mr. Sweat that the manner in which the ambulance attendants exercised their responsibility on the Saturday afternoon when the shooting took place was infuri-

ating. They maintained that the ambulance by-passed the two Negro victims, and picked up a policeman who had been injured later. In their opinion, this incident was a continuation of an old established pattern of discrimination: The Negro lies on the streets unattended while the "white" man is treated. They want this matter fully investigated, and they want some concrete actions taken to eliminate future occurrences of a similar nature.

6. From what they said, it was obvious that the Georgia Baptist Hospital is an object of frustration to them. Why, they wanted to know, was it that Georgia Baptist did not receive the two youth who were shot, as they did the policeman? (They are not interested in the fact that Georgia Baptist Hospital is a private institution. Evidently, Georgia Baptist has an exceedingly poor image in the community.)

7. Traffic control, especially on the east-west streets, was reported as a problem. Large trucks utilize the narrow residential streets between Boulevard and Glen Iris. Also, there is a problem with the speeding drivers of automobiles on these same streets, as well as on Boulevard.

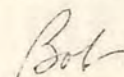
8. One of the most disturbing factors which they reported was the lack of opportunities to obtain a decent job and earn a decent wage. They asked for paying training positions for desirable jobs. They are tired of being maids, janitors, porters, and laborers. Income seems to be a problem for nearly everyone in that community.

9. Most of all, the people on Boulevard want to be somebody. They are tired of living in a society which denies them an opportunity to be somebody. They are sick of formal leaders in their community and in City government who do not either know or care about the conditions under which they live. They want the City and their formal leaders to listen to their problems and to bring about a rapid change

Basically, these are their complaints at this time.

Let me express my appreciation to you for the manner in which you have cooperated with us in working with these problems. I very much appreciate the support which you gave me personally during a very trying period two weeks ago. Thank you very much.

Cordially yours,



Robert N. Lynn