

*Completed  
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# School Planning Debated

People Battle  
City Planner

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A meeting on a report critical of the Atlanta Board of Education this week unexpectedly turned into an impromptu symposium on community control versus professional planning.

The meeting was called by the education subcommittee of the Citizens Central Advisory Council, a body that pools community representatives who help make policy at anti-poverty neighborhood centers.

The subcommittee had issued a list of recommendations to the school board on various aspects of the school system, and several members of supt. John Letson's staff were on hand Monday night to reply.

## THREE HOURS

The staff members heard a three-hour series of complaints from the subcommittee on the alleged difficulty of communicating with the board or involving neighborhood residents in the planning process.

Finally, faced with a question about expanding Price High School, assistant superintendent for buildings Dr. Darwin Womack said flatly:

"I'm telling you as a planner it ought to be bigger. It's the best thing. I'm a planner and I'm supposed to know."

Womack immediately faced an uproar in the room at the West Hunter Baptist Church where the meeting was being held.

The Rev. Mance Jackson, director of an Interdenominational Theological Center project in the Lightning district, stood and said, "He (Womack) is not responsive to the will of a community of people."

Womack, said Jackson, has no children in the affected school. "That man," he added, "has no business serving this kind of community."

## EARLIER CLASH

Womack and Jackson — who suggested sit-ins to tie up construction sites of unwanted schools — clashed once earlier on local control.

"That's the trouble with participation," Womack said. "People think they have veto power." Even if a school is built against the wishes of some of the residents, he added, that does not prove the school board did not listen to community opinion.

"A community has the right to have veto power," replied Jackson. If the community is against a school, it should not be built, he added.

The school system also came under attack for being inaccessible to citizen complaints. "The bureaucratic red tape not only frustrates us but dumbfounds us," said Jackson.

"If we want to raise Cain about the lunchroom, who do we see?" asked one woman. "If we want to raise Cain about how the money is spent, who do we talk to?"

## ACCOMPLISHED FACTS

Mrs. Maggie Moody, chairman of the subcommittee, complained that the school board's public meeting only presented citizens with accomplished facts, and that she had been unable either to address the board or to attract members to subcommittee meetings.

The meeting covered only five of the subcommittee's 13 recommendations, and ended when Mrs. Moody said the list would have to be forwarded directly to the school board for a reply.