

Baltimore, Maryland
July 2, 1958

Charles H. Buck, Esq., Chairman
Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc.
Mathieson Bldg.
Baltimore 2, Maryland

Dear Mr. Buck:

The purpose of this letter is to solicit the cooperation of the Greater Baltimore Committee in the solution of what has become possibly Baltimore's most serious single problem - the rapid conversion of large areas of the city from all-white to complete Negro occupancy.

Until a few years ago neighborhood changes had taken place primarily in row house or multi-family areas--generally in the less desirable and more congested parts of the city. Recently, however, area after area of substantial detached homes in Baltimore's finest residential sections have been undergoing rapid changes from white to Negro occupancy. This has been taking place in Windsor Hills, Ashburton, Fairmount, Howard Park, Forest Park, Gwynn Oak, Arlington, Pimlico, Irvington, Montebello, Northwood, etc.

Even in these fine neighborhoods the traditional pattern of neighborhood change has continued. First there is occupancy by a few Negro families. Almost immediately the area becomes "off limits" to new white purchasers. The primary efforts of real estate agents become directed to sales to the Negro community or to speculators in Negro housing. The white residents panic and move out--almost invariably to the suburbs. The market is glutted even beyond the area of effective Negro demand. Desirable homes which cannot be sold either to white or Negro home owners simply deteriorate. Financially stable home owners are replaced by renters--usually of much lower means.

The implications of the new dimensions of neighborhood change for the future of the Baltimore metropolitan area are far-reaching and alarming. Unless this pattern of displacement of the financially stable white families within the city is changed, it will be only a question of time before Baltimore becomes almost completely a community of Negroes and lower-income whites.

If this happens, the Charles Center, the Civic Center and the cultural facilities of the city will be less attractive to the major portion of their potential users. The market for downtown business will fall off sharply. Assessments and tax revenue will decline, and the financial position of the city will deteriorate. The decline of the city

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as both a business and cultural center will be a serious loss to almost everyone in the entire Baltimore area.

The problem in Baltimore is becoming more serious every day. The demand for more Negro housing is continuing to increase at an accelerating rate. The Negro community, which has always lived in inadequate housing, is expanding rapidly. This demand will be intensified as a result of housing dislocation brought about by urban renewal developments in the city such as the Area 12 Project and the impending East-West Highway, which will mean that as many as 30,000 families--most of them Negroes--will need new housing within the next few years. There is virtually no supply of new construction to meet this demand.

Some of these families will purchase existing homes. Others will have to seek rental housing--primarily in areas that have already begun to change. This will increase the rate of overcrowding in many of the now fine neighborhoods. This will also mean that if these areas become overcrowded, Negro families of more substantial means will again look for better housing, extending still further the areas of change--eventually into the suburbs.

In the past, neighborhood change was considered more a moral than an economic problem. More recently, however, the economic implications have become increasingly apparent to business men and city planners, and have been featured by such leading business journals as Fortune and The Wall Street Journal, as well as in Time, Newsweek, and other newspapers and magazines.

Although time is growing short in Baltimore, it is still possible to deal with the problem effectively. The Greater Baltimore Committee, as representative of the mobilized business community of Baltimore, is in a strategic position to take the lead in stimulating the interest and creating the machinery necessary for a solution.

The Committee could, as one of the possible courses of action, undertake the project of organizing a conference of responsible business and community leaders for presentation and discussion of the problem. Such a conference would include real estate men, bankers, lawyers, city planners, educators and others.

One of the results of such a conference might be the organization of an appropriate agency or institution which would have continuing responsibility for the solution of the problem.

This agency might include as part of its program:

1. Stimulating the construction of new housing available to Negroes--

Charles H. Buck, Esq., Chairman
Greater Baltimore Committee

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perhaps the most important single method of alleviating the pressure on existing housing in the city.

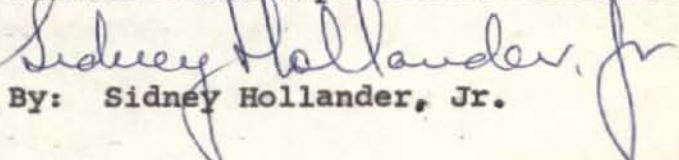
2. Developing a concerted public relations program designed to bring urban living back into fashion, and to create a climate in which mixed occupancy is accepted as something that can be lived with rather than resisted as something which must be run from.
3. Helping neighborhood associations financially in preventing deterioration.
4. Providing special assistance, financial and otherwise, necessary to stimulate renewed interest on the part of white purchasers in many of the available areas in the city.
5. Enlisting the cooperation of real estate brokers in the preservation of the city, and in the prevention of practices which promote panic and instability.

The Baltimore business community has already applied imaginative and bold thinking to the problem of rehabilitation of the downtown area. But a city is not only buildings; a city, fundamentally, is its people. This same type of bold and imaginative thinking must also be applied to the problem of what type of population we want the future Baltimore to have. Whatever may be the solution ultimately, whether along the lines above projected or otherwise, the important point is that the problem is now one which must be squarely faced up to; and only a direct attack upon it by the effective people in the business community holds any hope for solution.

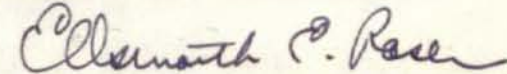
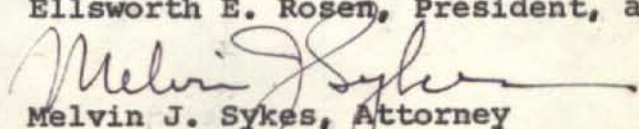
We earnestly request the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Greater Baltimore Committee at your earliest convenience to discuss this matter at greater length.

Respectfully yours,

Windsor Hills Improvement Association


By: Sidney Hollander, Jr.

Ashburton Area Association


By: Ellsworth E. Rosen, President, and

Melvin J. Sykes, Attorney

Charles H. Buck, Esq., Chairman
Greater Baltimore Committee

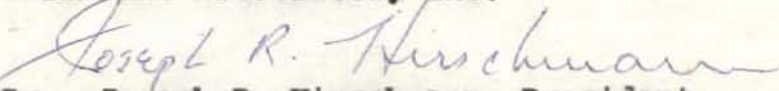
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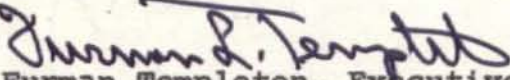
The Mount Royal Improvement Association

By: John R. Mollett, President

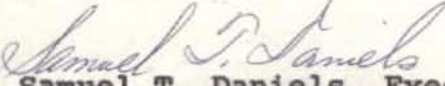
Fairmount Associates, Inc.



By: Joseph R. Hirschmann, President

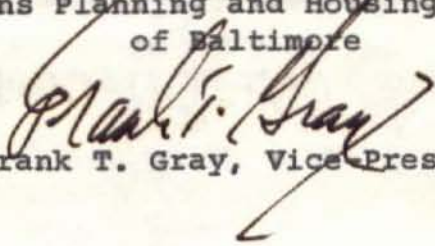


Furman Templeton, Executive Director
Baltimore Urban League



Samuel T. Daniels, Executive Secretary
Maryland Commission on Interracial
Problems and Relations

Citizens Planning and Housing Association
of Baltimore



By: Frank T. Gray, Vice-President