

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Public Hearing on Housing

April 25, 1950

7:30 P.M.

Held in the Auditorium of the
Central Christian Church

The meeting was called to order with Mayor Glass Presiding.

Roll Call:

Present: Councilmen Drake, Johnson, Long, MacCorkle, Mayor Glass
Absent: None

The meeting was scheduled to be held in the Council Room, but the crowd was so large, the meeting was moved to the Auditorium of the Central Christian Church.

MR. HERMAN JONES opened the discussion explaining the Housing Program in general, giving a brief history, and introducing the AUSTIN HOUSING AUTHORITY, MR. HUBERT B. JONES, MR. A. J. WIRTZ, MR. E. H. PERRY, LOUISE HAINES, AND MR. W. G. CLARKSON. Mr. Jones stated several organizations desired to be heard in this hearing, endorsing the program and urging the Council to execute the cooperation agreement.

MRS. MELVIN ROACH, League of Women's Voters, spoke in support of the program. MRS. REBECCA MEYERS, American Association of University Women; MISS HELEN SELLERS, Soroptimist Club; MR. PAT MENDEZ, Lulacs; PAUL SPARKS, CHARLES BIRDWELL, Labor; REV. HAROLD T. BRANCH (Col), Baptist Ministers Union, DR. E. H. GIVENS, Negro Citizens Council, REV. HERBERT A. SNEED, (Col) representing tenants of the Housing Authority; MAJOR HORACE SHELTON, representing veterans organizations; FORMER MAYOR TOM MILLER, giving history of the Austin Housing and general trend of subsidies, MR. A. J. WIRTZ, all spoke favoring the public housing.

MR. N. A. GIBLIN spoke in opposition; GEORGE SANDLIN, Real Estate Board; MRS. ROGER WILLIAMS, MR. M. H. CROCKETT, MR. FRED MORSE, MRS. GEORGE FRANCISCO, MR. PAUL PFEIFFER spoke in opposition to public housing.

MR. BOB PINKSTON favored public housing. MR. CLINT LITTLE thought this building would increase the cost. MR. JOE HILL spoke in opposition, and represented a group opposing the housing. He filed a number of petitions protesting.

Those favoring the additional public housing units, felt these houses would help to clear out the slum areas in Austin, and that there was a need for additional low rent housing units. The proponents felt that private enterprise had failed to furnish this type of rent house. Better living conditions would result to the low-income group through this type of housing. A better moral and spiritual outlook would be gained through better housing--better health, and less crime would result. Major Shelton in his speech felt that Veterans needed low-rent homes--that the Real Estate Board would not lend to the veterans unless the Government backed the loans--yet, they opposed the Government helping out through public housing. It was brought out by Former Mayor Miller that education had been subsidized, the University had obtained a grant for the Main Building, City accepted a grant of \$750,000 for the Hospital; real estate had received subsidies, and that no one should object when a little subsidy was given to poverty.

Those in opposition felt that a project like this took taxable property from the tax rolls, was socialistic to use public funds to favor some at the expense of others; that private enterprise could not compete with the Government; and that other countries under government control have found it unpleasant. Other cities had turned down the offer.

MR. GEORGE SANDLIN presented a petition whereby contractors and investors had pledged to build 6,345 units, each unit not to cost more than \$5,250.00, if the threat of Public Housing were removed.

Mr. Joe Hill in opposition stated the City would lose \$18,000,000 in taxes the next 40 years; that the Housing Authority was operating extravagantly and way over figures that real estate people would operate on; that accurate figures could not be obtained.

Both sides of the question were heard, and both sides had their presentations in much detail. Different ones requested that the question be turned over to the people to vote. All present were given opportunity to be heard, and the meeting lasted until 1:30 A.M.

No action was taken by the Council at this public hearing.

APPROVED: 
Mayor

ATTEST:


City Clerk