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# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

**PORTLAND BRANCH:** 2055 N. WILLIAMS AVENUE, PORTLAND 12, OREGON

TELEPHONE ATLantic 4-7722

**NORTHWEST AREA CONFERENCE:** 212 East 54th Loop, Vancouver, Washington

**WEST COAST REGIONAL OFFICE:**

690 Market Street, San Francisco 4, California

**WASHINGTON BUREAU:**

100 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C.

**NATIONAL OFFICE:**  
20 West 40th Street, New York 18, New York

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MAY 3 1957

EXPOSITION RECREATION COMM.

April 30, 1957

Mr. Carvel Linden  
623 Park Building  
Exposition-Recreation Center Office  
Portland 5, Oregon

My dear Mr. Linden:

Our president, Mr. Phil Reynolds, and the entire membership join me in thanking Mr. Richardson and Mr. Miller of the E-R Commission, Mr. Goodrich and Mr. Roork for being considerate enough and sympathetic enough to the problems of those people living in the area assigned for the E-R center to take a constructive part in our panel discussion last Sunday afternoon.

They may be pleased to know that by their appearance they have helped to create a climate which is certain to be conducive to an early and just solution of this special housing problem which poses such a responsibility and at the same time such a wonderful opportunity for the City of Portland.

Sincerely yours,

*William S. Thompson, Jr.*

William S. Thompson, Jr.  
Housing Chairman

WSThompson/aek

**PORTLAND BRANCH OFFICERS:** President, PHIL REYNOLDS, Belmont 4-3082 - Vice President, EDGAR WILLIAMS - Second Vice President, C. A. WHITE - Third Vice President, WILLIAM S. THOMPSON, JR. - Secretary, GUSTAVA THOMPSON, Belmont 6-9348 - Treasurer, GERTRUDE CROWE. **COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN:** Church, REV. W. LOUIS SMITH - Community Coordination, RUTH HAEFNER - Education, GUSTAVA THOMPSON - Entertainment, SYLVIA THOMPSON - Housing and Veterans Affairs, W. S. THOMPSON, JR. - Legal Redress, EDGAR WILLIAMS - Legislation, LORNA MARPLE - Membership, C. A. WHITE - Youth, GERTRUDE CROWE.

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April 12, 1957

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APR 16 1957

EXPOSITION RECREATION COMM.

Mr. Carvel Linden  
623 Park Building  
Exposition-Recreation Center Office  
Portland 5, Oregon

My dear Mr. Linden:

The attached statement has been given by this Association to the Oregonian, the Oregon Journal, and the Northwest Clarion as a basis for making known to the public what NAACP would like to see done in regard to the relocation of the families living in the areas assigned for the E-R center.

We want very much to take as constructive an approach as possible in this matter. We actually see in this problem a great opportunity for the city to establish a pattern which can be applied in the relocation of families in similar areas which must give way to Urban redevelopment and progress.

There seem to be no accurate figures as to the present number of families living in this area (at least any numbers that we have been able to determine). It would seem reasonable to guess that approximately 70 per cent of them are non-white.

Our committee is concerned mainly with answers to the following questions:

Will an up-to-date survey be made showing how much rent is paid, establishing the cost of homes in the area?

On what basis will reimbursement for properties torn down be made-on real value, appraised value, reproduction value, or market value?

We know that certain safeguards are written into the Federal law for Urban Renewal projects relative to this matter. Would it not be feasible for the city to apply the same safeguards to this relocation even though it does not come under Federal Urban Renewal?

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It is hoped that these and many other questions germane to this situation will be answered at the meeting Tuesday night at Eliot School.

Sincerely yours,

*William S. Thompson*

William S. Thompson  
Housing Chairman

Attachment  
WSThompson/aek



Out of the resolution of the location of the E-R site have already developed or will develop problems bearing upon final attainment of the actual E-R Center. One of these problems present or future, actual or fictional, involves the displacement and subsequent relocation of about 250 white and non-white families of which approximately one-fourth of whom own properties which must be torn down.

Some of these families living in this area are elderly; some are pensioners with fixed meager incomes. Others are at the bottom of the wage-earning scale. Some have purchased properties and live on them because of close proximity to their places of work, convenience of transportation and communication, discouragement encountered in attempts to locate in better neighborhoods, or for any one of a number of reasons which would be considered valid by persons living in any comparable neighborhood, of which there are certainly several right here in Portland. Certain families who rent may be paying amounts comfortably within their means in many cases, but in many more instances they pay at the very top of their ability to do so and in some cases pay proportionately more of their earnings than they can afford.

When is then and why is there the problem, whether real or fancied, involving this exodus and resettlement? The N.A.A.C.P. submits that there is no real problem if all the home owners being displaced who choose to purchase homes again are presented WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO OPERATE IN A FREE HOUSING MARKET IN THIS COMMUNITY; and if all the renting families being displaced are allowed to move into any section of the city to purchase homes or to rent apartments or houses commensurate with their ability to pay and in keeping with their social aspirations and inclinations. To take care of this particular exodus and relocation no thought of casting about the city for ground on which to build special housing units for these white and especially non-white families should be even contemplated, and certainly should not reach the planning stage. There is enough housing, new and old, and rental properties presently available to these families. Nor should future planning for relocation of families forced by

progressive municipal redevelopment to vacate areas, whether adjacent to the one under discussion or far removed, consider such solutions as are embodied in their "confinement" and related concepts.

The problem however is made real because of the manipulation and machinations of certain real estate interests who are committed to the principal of homogeneous grouping of races, or who have anticipated receipt of rich monetary rewards in return for little more than token investment, or both. In a recent estimate of the cost to the E-R Commission of buying up these properties, the figure of \$2,000,000 was mentioned. Real estate fees for handling these properties and exchanges, plus fees for some of the multiple of this number of exchanges accomplished by resort to certain tactics such as "block busting", could result in quite a substantial chain-reaction-generated-bonanza for the parties in on the "take", and in such an operation the whole Portland metropolitan area would be the party "taken".

All of the foregoing points up the fact that the City of Portland has been presented with an opportunity to take her place among the great progressive communities which shall recognize the evils attendant with the neighborhood "confinement" concept and have marshalled their forces to do something about these evils.

Since it is assumed that the authorities will pay fair market prices for these properties, legal responsibility of the city is not in question. However, it can be argued that the city has a civic and moral responsibility to these people. Within this fair city there are many civic and social service organizations, such as church groups, unions, lodges, fraternities, which include in their philosophies and day-to-day program concern ranging from expressed sympathy to dedicated and tenacious pursuit of a real solution to the problem of minority housing. Certain operators of rental units, appraisers, builders, building construction workers, mortgage and investment men, brokers and realtors must also be considered among these



interested organizations. Taken together they have collectively the machinery to give whatever assistance is needed--from actually assisting some families to move to working out fair and equitable assistance financially.

To these groups and organizations, representing as they do the heart of Portland, we extend an urgent but cordial invitation to join hands, and in concert plan and work out together the accomplishment of this relocation within the framework of a determination that no neighborhood in the Portland area shall be earmarked for or degenerate into a ghetto-ized status for any racial group.

Actually this operation is small enough in scope that it can with intelligent approach be carried out with very little disturbance of the total Portland scene as a whole, and best of all serve as a guide to similar undertakings in the future.

William S. Thompson  
Housing Chairman  
Portland Branch, N.A.A.C.P.  
BE 6-9348 - home phone

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