

MEMORANDUM

WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER, Mayor
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR • CITY OF BALTIMORE
230 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland 21202, (301) 396-3100



TO: Mayor William Donald Schaefer
FROM: Mark K. Joseph, Development Coordinator *MKJ*
DATE: November 20, 1973
RE: Fairfield Sewers - Benton Memo

The issue raised by Mr. Benton is no different than the original issue - is the cost of sewers worth it in a neighborhood which is zoned heavy industrial and seems to be dying anyway as the younger population moves away?

It is my impression that you met several months ago with the Fairfield community and the sixth district Councilmen, and promised that the sewers would be installed. I have made this commitment previously on behalf of the administration because we are not in a position to relocate the existing families.

It was my understanding that the issue of a lack of cost benefit was no longer the essential issue. Stop the sewer now, and we're back to where we started well over a year ago except that now the community is not only upset about broken promises from past administrations but this one too.

MKJoseph:smc

cc: Mr. Mark K. Joseph - File

I don't mean to give the impression that I think Charlie's concern is unwarranted. From a cost point of view he is 100% right. It's just that this community has been jerked around for years. MKJ

FAIRFIELD INTERCEPTOR SEWER
April 15, 1974

PRESENT: Mayor
Benton
Kuchta
Berkowitz
Hasfurther

Last year, the City promised to begin making improvements in the residential section of Fairfield. The first of these was to be sanitary services with construction to begin this spring. There are some serious questions now, however, on the advisability of spending money for approximately 120 homes. The average assessed value of the homes is \$125. It would cost \$1,000/home for the sewer hook-up. For the 17% homes with outhouses, it would cost \$3,000/home for hook-up and necessary improvements.

In all, it would cost \$2 - \$3 million for these initial sewer improvements, not to mention costs of street lighting, paving, etc. It was suggested that a more economical and beneficial move would be to buy the home owners out and relocate them. The area could be used solely for industrial expansion.

Mr. Benton estimated that the City would be spending approximately \$25,000/home for the sanitary sewer improvements.

Mr. Benton and Mr. Berkowitz agreed that the best move would be to relocate the people and change to industrial use. It was pointed out that the people would not take such a decision very easily.

Mr. Kuchta explained that the industries in the area are under pressure from the Environmental Protection Agency to improve industrial waste removal. If they know that the City is going to build the interceptor, they can just tie into it and not build their own.

One-half of the contract is for residential improvements. Mr. Benton pointed out that costs have risen 50% since the bids came in.

Another meeting will be held later in the week to make decisions. Mr. Kuchta is getting a map of the area. Mr. Benton will have assessments of all properties. Mr. Embry will be at the meeting with information on possible REAL loans.

LJB:jmp

Fairfield Gets Help But Will It Be Enough?

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rectify years of what the agency considers racial discrimination against the once flourishing farm community.

Focusing on a stark contrast in city aid between Fairfield and the nearby and predominantly white Wagners Point community, the agency is drawing plans for organizing the Fairfield residents, and will investigate such tactics as approaching Legal Aid about a discrimination lawsuit or holding a public hearing on the situation.

"It's sickening. There has to be something this agency can do," said Mildred Ireland, a CRC member, after a staff view of the problem at a meeting last week.

John B. Ferron, CRC director, said he has met with city planning and public works officials, and will meet soon with Mayor Schaefer, at the Mayor's request.

But he warned the commission "it is reasonable to anticipate" he will be told the city does not intend to devote any more time or money to the Fairfield community.

For Fairfield is an anachronism, a collection of homes literally surrounded by heavy industrial operations. The community is zoned M-3, the city's heaviest industrial zone.

Huge cylindrical oil tanks, with names

such as Tenneco, Conoco and Sunoco on their sides, cast shadows over the area's nine residential streets. The smell of oil and chemicals is thick, and the guttural rumble of heavy trucks punctuates the air.

The Brooklyn Salvage and Waste Company, a junkyard where scrap iron is heaped stories high, sits almost in the backyards of some homes along Carbon avenue. Elsewhere, homes are interspaced with weedy, junk-strewn vacant lots, and the unimproved roads are puddled with slick water.

But it is a place with long roots, and many of its people do not want to leave, despite the encroaching industry.

Although old and ramshackle, many homes are well cared for, with bright plots of flowers in front and flourishing vegetable gardens and cornfields in the back. Chickens and white ducks scatter about one of the yards.

"I was born right over there, in that house," said Joe Queen, pointing up Tate avenue. He returned to Fairfield six or seven years ago after several decades of running a small farm in Anne Arundel county.

"I lived here something more than 50 years," said Alexander Iverson, 72.

A widower, "I got married and moved uptown three years ago," he said. But he returns to sit in the sun with friends in

front of the barbershop. His son lives in the family house down the street.

Mrs. Fincher said most of the homes in the community are owned by their residents, some of whom are second generation dwellers.

And the residents' argument is that they are still citizens of Baltimore and deserve more services than they are getting, despite their industrial zoning, which they would like changed.

"You pay the same taxes here as (anyone) in the city. You should have sidewalks," said Mr. Iverson.

Sidewalks, street lights and playgrounds are needed, said Mrs. Fincher. And absentee owners of unkempt vacant lots need to be forced to keep up their properties.

One bitter basis of their complaints, and of the CRC's involvement, is the disparity between Fairfield and Wagners Point, another small residential area about a quarter mile down Fairfield road.

Wagners Point is predominantly a white community. Its couple of blocks of red brick rowhouses have sidewalks, curbs, a newly paved road, streetlights and a well-equipped playground. Yet it, too, sits in an M-3 industrial zone.

Joseph Deasel, a CRC staff member, told the commission last week the con-

trast seems to be patently obvious discrimination.

"I know it is," said Mrs. Fincher. While the city may well see as a lost cause, a community longer viable and which will eventually be swept aside by industry, it has Wagners Point what it has no Fairfield.

Mr. Deasel said he believes good chance a discrimination suit the city could succeed.

The CRC's first effort, however, will be directed toward organizing residents into a more cohesive improvement association, said Iverson. It has been diluted by factional fighting from frustration over each to accomplish improvements.

"The people, they get to the point just feel the city's not concerned with us," said Mrs. Fincher to explain the community split.

The feeling is understandable. Atonia Kilma Keane, chairwoman of the CRC, acknowledging her agency many which failed the community involved in similar efforts in 1961, pledged to keep after the city on Fairfield's problems.

"We didn't do that very well," she said. The agency is trying again. Fairfield, it may be the last try

Fairfield Gets Some Help But Will It Be Enough?

By Stephen McKerrow

Good things come in small and infrequent doses in Old Fairfield, a tiny black enclave incongruously surviving amid the heavy industry on the Wagners Point peninsula in south Baltimore.

A community reminiscent of the shanty farm villages one sees fleetingly while speeding through the South to Florida, the neighborhood got a couple of small injections of help last week.

But whether the dosages were enough to insure survival remains to be seen.

The community got a \$5,000 check from the Campaign for Human Development to be used to establish a grocery store, and the Community Relations Commission voted to make the area a top priority in its anti-discrimination work.

"Wait a minute! Somebody hold me!" gasped Nellie Harris, a Fairfield resident, when Jennie Fincher waved the yellow check with the big black numbers.

Mrs. Fincher is president of the Fairfield Improvement Association, and the

postman had just dropped off the mail as neighbors chatted in front of Johnson's Barbershop on Tate avenue.

"We've been waiting a long time. We can surely use this and more and more out here," said Mrs. Harris.

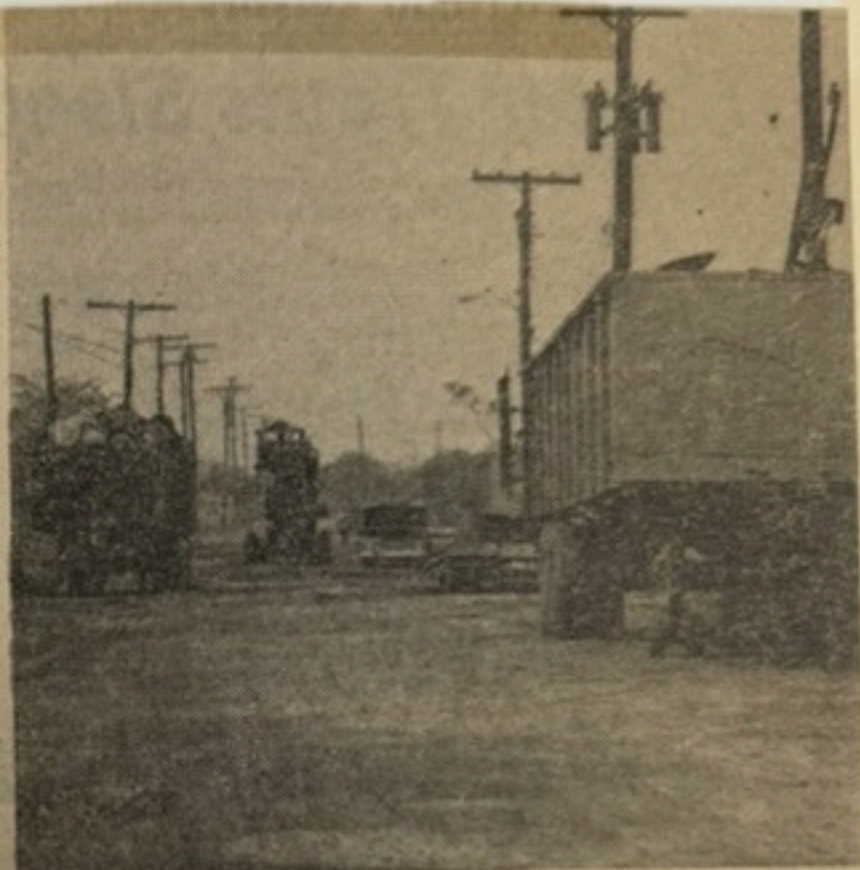
The grant from the Catholic charity will fund renovation of a small, abandoned and vandalized store on Brady avenue, and help provide jobs in the cooperative venture for three people, said Mrs. Fincher.

Fairfield residents must now journey for bread and other necessities to Westport, about a mile to the west.

The last time Old Fairfield got such good news was in 1976, when the city finally extended sewerage service to replace the outhouses and septic systems most homes had. It was the last city community to get what most Baltimoreans have taken for granted for decades.

The CRC decision represented a final attempt on its part to persuade the city to

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RESIDENTIAL VIEW—Abandoned vehicles constitute the everyday Fairfield residents, who see little hope for their neighborhood, which at was a flourishing agricultural community.