—Catonsville tenants

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from evicting them from their Winters Lane homes, in which many of them have lived for several decades.

Johnson, who inherited the properties from his father in 1974, had already put the houses up for sale at $45,000.

The 61-year-old landlord had ordered that the families vacate the premises by Sept. 30 after the management for the properties, Frederick Realty, received letters from the residents detailing the wretched condition of the houses.

The letters were sent after a June 26 meeting was convened between county officials, Ruland, Johnson and Thomas Murphy, an agent for the realty, to discuss the deteriorating condition of the houssnes.

Subsequently, Murphy sent letters to each of the tenants, stating, "Various officials of Baltimore County and others associated with Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc. feel that your housing is inadequate.

"Their suggestion that large sums of money be spent on the house . . . . would make it too expensive for the owner to continue as your landlord. We, therefore, feel that it is in the best interest of all concerned for you to vacate as soon as possible," reported an Aug. 13 Catonsville Times article.

Judge J. William Hinkley awarded the families a temporary injunction to remain in their homes until the conflict with Johnson is resolved.

He ruled that the families would incur irreparable harm if they had to relocate: that their uprooting was not in the public interest and that they would be more inconvenienced than their landlord if evicted.

The three conditions are necessary for a temporary injunction to be awarded.

In addition, Hinkel said the families stood a good chance of winning a suit they filed against Johnson alleging that the eviction attempt was in retaliation for their complaining about the rundown state of the houses.

The suit seeks $20,000 in compensatory and punitive damages to each of the plaintiffs.

One of the residents, Mrs. Irene Gaines, expressed enthusiasm in purchasing the homes. "If it costs us a few more dollars, we're willing to pay," she acknowledged, explaining that she had lived in her home for 40 years, raised eight children, and that the families really do not want to relocate.

"You couldn't have a closer-knit family than the people in this neighborhood," Mrs. Gaines continued.

The AFRO contacted Johnson's home, inquiring into his feelings about the possible sale of the property to the families, but was told by one of his family members that he was not talking to the press.

Ruland, who acknowledged that the families are waiting for an appraisal of the properties to determine their worth, said a Baltimore County block grant has already been promised to them for acquisition of the properties.

At AFRO presstime, the appraisal had not yet been presented , but Ruland expects it by Monday. She said it is also expected that the properties are worth less than $45,000 Johnson wants to sell them for.

The activist added that BNI, along with St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center, a non-profit organization that rehabilitates and sells them to low-income families, and the Catonsville residents are also seeking state loans.

These might be awarded to them after a Nov. 3 meeting of the Community Development Administration, which is a part of the Maryland State Department of Economic Development.

Ruland explained that they are applying for loans under the state's Home Ownership Incentive Program, the Rental Production Program and the Construction Loan Program, all of which provide low-interest or interest-free loans.

The BNI organizer is confident that the renovations, particularly of the homes in the worst condition, would probably start immediately after the cost is finalized and the funds are made avaiable.

"We want to do the type of rehabilitating that would last a long time," asserted Ruland, who added that they may form a Winters Heights Housing Corporation to "take on" other rental housing if the project is successful.

Ruland said the project has already prompted two housing development groups, the Enterprise Foundation and the Human Resources Development Administration, to want to give their assistance.

David Kennedy, the lawyer from the Legal Aid Bureau, who is representing the families in the case, seems optimistic about the planned acquisitions, but hopes to avoid anymore legal conflicts with the properties

"I hope we can work this out without any further court action," he commented.

The suit, according to Ruland, was a legal precedent in Baltimore County in that there is currently no Housing Code in the county. She said the suit "speaks directly to the need for a Housing Code."

The tenant organizer, who began working with BNI last November, has made an impression on the Catonsville families, said Gaines.

"We (the families) have a lot of confidence in Barbara Ruland because she has really opened doors for us," the Catonsville mother remarked.

—Showdown

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elected office next year, and is an announced candidate even though she said she has until late June, 1987 to file.

Gallagher, with 27 years as a councilman and almost four as council vice - president, is considered to be the front runner for the expected vacancy.

If Mayor William Donald Schaefer is successful in his bid to become Maryland's next governor, Clarence Du Burns, the present council president would assume the mayor's mantle leaving his post unmanned or womanned.

"So far . . . so good," Gallagher said in his quest for the presidency. Last spring, when Mayor Schaefer expressed his interest in running for governor, there also was discussion about how the victory would affect the council.

The transition process is underway, but incomplete, Gallagher said. He said he is hoping the mayor will step down before the end of the year since it is almost assured Schaefer will be a winner in November.

Gallagher said his big concern now "is the most delicate thing happening now (the transition)," and he does not want to do anything to cause divisiveness on the council."

He wants to be council president on an interim as well as elected basis, but he said he does not want to be mayor.

"You can forget that," Gallagher said.

The job can be had for 10 council votes and Gallagher said he expects there will be some trade offs. So far though, no councilmembers have approached him with requests.

Gallagher said he gets along well with its black members and has no animosity with any of them.

"It's in Du's best interest to have a working coalition with the councilmembers, all 19 of them, not just 10," he said.

The new council president has the power to reassign all present council chairmanships and that is a concern council members will have when voting for the interim president, Mrs. McLean said.

Right now, "it's up in the air," she said.

Mrs. McLean said her reason for not supporting the idea of a picking a non - council member for the job is because of its connotations that present council members do not have the ability to lead.

She said she would like to think that Gallagher works well with the council's black members, but the concern now is that of all members being considered for the job will have to go through the usual compromises and trade-offs.

The general consensus, Mrs. McLean said, is that the city council will not remain as the same system. Voters are looking for a change, something new and fresh."

She said she will have to consult with her advisors on whether to seek the elected council presidency in 1987.

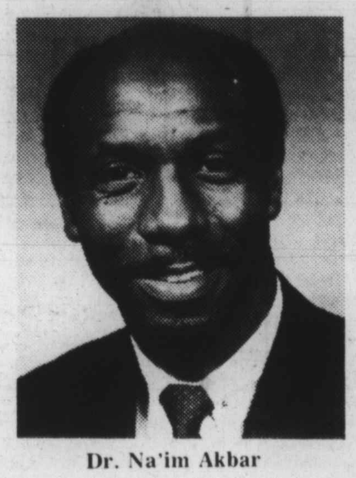
Joseph DiBlasi is another council member whose name is mentioned as a hopeful and Nathanial McFadden has said he wants to replace Gallagher as council vice - president.

Second Annual Community convention slated for Saturday

On Saturday, September 27, 1986 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Keyworth Library, 2610 Keyworth Ave. just off of Park Heights Ave. The Second Annual Baltimore Community Convention will be held.

Symposiums will be held on community organizing and collective community economic development. The featured speakers will be Robert Woodson of the National Neighborhood Enterprise Institute and Dr. Na'im Akbar a nationally renowned psychologist, lecturer and author.

The sessions are open to the public and a registration fee is required. For information on the convention call 728-5509.



Dr. Na'im Akbar

—Lead

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ment, said the problem is not unusual in new plumbing systems that are less than four years old.

The lead, he explained, is gathered from the soldering at the joints of pipes. When water sits and is unused for a period of time, such as over the summer vacation as was the case, the lead reacts and comes out into the water.

The problem is reconciled by daily flushing, where running water alone creates an inner lining in the plumbing and shields the lead from infecting used water.

Six of the nine schools: John Edgar Howard, Westside Skill Center, Mt. Royal Elementary, Frederick Elementary, Booker T. Washignton Middle, Canton Middle;

Frederick Douglass High, Robert Poole Middle, Hamilton Middle, and William S. Baer received extensive flushing and recent tests shows lead problems have been cleared.

Dunbar Middle, Lyndhurst Elementary and Dallas Nicholas are still undergoing flushing and monitoring to alleviate the problem. Pipes are flushed one hour prior to the convening of classes each day and water fountains all day long.

Testing was not initiated by any reports of health problems in the named schools, although sources at the Health Department would not concede that they were necessarily following normal procedures.

The problem in all of the schools is expected to be extended by next week when flushing will discontinue.

Torres said that in about four years 'we will be out of the woods.' Most of the city schools, he said, have new plumbing system and are expected to have a lead problem.

Officials say the amount of water being used in this situation has not been calculated and the cost to the city has not been determined.

Meanwhile, July 1, 1986 a new Maryland ordinance, Comar 9.20.05, which states solder can only contain .2 percent lead goes into effect.

Prior to this date, 50 percent lead in solder was acceptable.