

177 Go Home in City Cars; Aldermen Demand Fairness

By MARION GAINES

An Atlanta Aldermanic Board committee found Wednesday that some 177 city employees are driving home daily in city-owned vehicles and urged action to end "inequities" in the practice.

The Local Government Study Committee unanimously adopted a resolution directing the establishment of an "equitable, uniform policy" regarding the use of the vehicles.

The resolution also aims at getting uniform personnel practices adopted in other areas such as automobile allowances and use of city-owned housing.

Vice Mayor Sam Massell Jr., committee chairman, said it

was apparent in the case of the free housing and vehicles for city employees that "some are justified and some are not."

"The problem that confronts us is establishing guidelines which will be equitable and uniform," said Massell.

The resolution authorizing the uniform policy specifies that the task will be undertaken by the personnel department and the comptroller's office under the direction of Mayor Ivan Allen Jr.'s office.

The action on the vehicles and houses was the latest to come from the government

study committee, which was created especially to evaluate the controversial report of city government operations rendered last winter by the Public Administration Service.

The PAS report was critical of the present use of city-owned houses and vehicles, declaring that in some cases the housing and cars were being used as special rewards to favored employees in some departments.

Information released by the aldermanic committee showed this breakdown by departments on the number of employees

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Peachtree Peach



Staff Photo—Marion Crowe

Pretty Connie Campbell comes from Miami, Fla., and is attending the Fashion Institute of America in Atlanta. She was presented at the International Debutante Ball in New York in 1965.

Aldermen Check Use of City Cars

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driving home city-owned vehicles:

Water department, 65; Construction department, 47; Parks department, 22; Police department, 21; Sanitary department, 9; Fire department, 7; Planning department, 2; Auditorium, 1; Motor Transport, 1; Prison, 1, and Traffic Engineering, 1.

The aldermanic committee spent more than three hours Wednesday hearing about free housing and vehicles from Paul Weir, general manager of the Water department; Grady Ridgeway, manager of the Atlanta Airport, and Ralph Hulse, City Prison administrator.

Weir vigorously defended the fact that his department has employees living rent-free in 31 city-owned houses on waterworks property.

He said it was necessary to handle emergencies involved in maintaining a 2,000-mile-long system with some 125,000 customers stretching over a 600-square-mile area with a plant value of more than \$150 million.

PHASING-OUT POLICY?

Asked if he would agree to a policy of "phasing out" all those houses absolutely not needed, Weir replied: "I'm not so sure that would be a good policy."

If anything, he said, he would be inclined to feel the city should build "probably more" rent-free houses.

"We're having difficulty hiring people now; we don't want to run off those we have," he said.

Weir said his employees in rent-free houses occupy them

with the understanding they are on call on a 24-hour basis.

He said there have been occasions when the water supply would likely have "shut down" if the employees in the rent-free housing hadn't been available in emergencies.

The aldermen asked Weir how he justified giving houses to some employees while others in the same job classification didn't get them.

"Of 12 men, say, we may have two with more leadership and capability than the others," Weir said, "so we put them into the houses."

The decision is made, he said, on the basis of "which man can do the plant (the water operation) the most good."

Ald. Everett Millican asked Weir why an office manager, who works in City Hall during working hours, should have a city-owned car to drive home to Mableton every night.

EVENING QUERIES

Weir said that was "a good question," then replied that many early evening calls about water cutoffs are often handled by this office manager via the radio in his city vehicle.

"We get about an hour's extra work a day" out of employees driving radio-equipped vehicles, said Weir.

He was asked why one Water department employee has a city-owned vehicle assigned fulltime to him and also draws an allowance of \$25 per month for using his personal car.

Weir said the city vehicle was not assigned to the man himself; "it's assigned to the division in his name."

MAY OR MAY NOT

Asked if the man drove the city vehicle off the water plant premises, Weir said: "He may or may not."

Hulse told the aldermen he agrees in principle with the idea of phasing out certain rent-free housing at the City Prison Farm.

Ald. Hugh Pierce said there are several city-owned apartments at the prison that are "not fit to live in and are a disgrace to the city."

Hulse agreed.

Ald. Millican said the city is "not setting a very good example" by forcing people in other sections to demolish slum dwellings while permitting "worse than that" to exist at the prison farm.

Oswald Gun Buyer Called a Trespasser

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of the weapons. "He didn't purchase anything. He just paid \$10,000 for the right to litigate."

King also agreed to pay Mrs. Oswald an additional \$35,000 conditioned upon his obtaining possession "free and clear of all adverse claims," according to the record in the case.

King's attorney, William C. Garrett of Dallas, contended that at the time King paid Mrs. Oswald, the government merely had the guns as evidence before

Chief Judge Elbert P. Tuttle of Atlanta asked if there was "a substantial question of the constitutionality" of the special condemnation act as class legislation allowing eminent domain. Timmins said there might be.

"Is the record-keeping statute violated by the use of a fictitious name unless the user gets something he would not otherwise be entitled to? Ordinarily it isn't against the law to use any name you want — it's a little bit inconvenient," Judge John Brown of Texas said.