

September 6, 1967

MEMORANDUM

FROM: JUNIUS WILLIAMS
TO: INVOLVED PARTIES
SUBJECT: CONTEMPLATED STRATEGIES (MED. SCHOOL)

The following is an attempt to outline a possible strategy to combat the proposed medical center.

The last memo discussed the kinds of legal ammunition available. At this point, it is necessary to form a group that will best put the information amassed to work and make the most mileage out of it. This mileage can only be attained by recognition of the true nature of the fight: it is essentially a political struggle, and not a legal one.

The nucleus group envisioned must be the base of a new and growing political base. The newness is meant to express and emphasize the need to include more people from the site area in the struggle. There has been no sizeable involvement nor concerted effort by the residents. Legitimacy will depend upon success in involving them.

The purpose of the nucleus group and the political movement that will grow up around it will be two fold: (a) it must counter the appealing image of the medical school as put forward by state and local officialdom; (b) it must serve as a symbol of unified resistance to a medical school on 150 acres of land. There has been opposition but the powers-that-be have seen no evidence of the community's ability to sustain a long term effort against the medical school.

Only if we embarrass federal state and local officialdom by pointing out the other side of the story, and only if we convince these same officials that there are people listening to this story will we succeed in convincing the courts or HUD to stop the project.

The nucleus body must be incorporated. This is so that it can receive funds from Foundations and individuals to do an alternate plan (this plan aspect of the strategy will be explained in the paragraphs that follow).

At some point in the very near future, the corporation must proclaim its raison d'etre to the press. This is the first step in getting the publicity needed. A press conference should be called announcing the following things: (1) "We feel that the people of the site area ought to plan what will happen in their neighborhood. Pursuant to this feeling we have asked for the technical assistance of the Architects Renewal Committee in Harlem (ARCH) in assisting the people of the area to do an alternate plan of the entire 150 acre medical school site. ARCH has agreed to help us in this respect. (2) We feel that the medical school plan is not only excessive, but also stands in violation of state and federal laws. We have therefore retained the services of lawyers who are at present preparing a case based on these statutory violations. We plan on bringing this case before the Department of Housing and Urban Development and before the state and federal courts. (3) We feel that our action is not only necessary, but timely. Recently we have received assurance from HUD that the medical school urban renewal application has not been ratified. We also know that the plan for the medical school has received considerable criticism from the urban renewal experts at HUD. We feel the plan is entirely off base, and that insufficient attention has been paid to the housing needs of people, as was pointed out by HUD. Consequently we are prepared to bring into existence our own more feasible plan, considering the needs of the people in the area, and to stop the present plan as supported by Newark and the Medical College Board of Trustees."

At a later time when lots of site residents have been involved (or perhaps by necessity at the first conference) a public statement has to be made about the conditions for allowing the medical school to be situated in the area.

The starting public position of the group should be as follows: "Undoubtedly the Central Ward's first need is low income housing. We are prepared to let the medical school Board of Trustees situate the school in the 26.4 acres of the Fairmount tract. Such a building project will not displace any more people."

If the medical school wants to expand, let it build upward and not outward. Since people can live on the 13th floor, so can medical students. Besides, this kind of expansion will cost the tax payers much less money.

The main organizing thrust of the corporation will come from the alternate plan. Some of the black Vistas have agreed to serve as organizers. Money and technical assistance is coming from ARCH. Dick Hatch has arranged for a grant of money from the Aaron E. Norman Fund for "our" alternate plan. It promises to be fairly sizeable. It will be used to set up an office, pay the salaries of two staff people, and purchase office equipment. The office will of course be located in the site area.

The actual mechanics of involving people via the alternate plan were discussed in a memo entitled "An Argument for an Alternate Plan," (August 15).

The legal aspect of the fight was also discussed in more detail in a recent memorandum. There are certain defects in the present plan that can be exploited in the courts and at HUD. These two arenas can be separated conceptually for purposes of strategy.

Shelia Jones, an attorney at ARCH, has agreed to file an administrative complaint based on the lack of relocation resources available and failure of the city to involve Newark's citizenry in the planning process. This will be done at the regional office of HUD; it will be directed at cutting off u/r funds for the first 46.4 acres of land. Shelia was formerly affiliated with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and was successful in helping stop an urban renewal project in Pulaski, Tennessee. This should be our first attempt to make use of the legal facilities available, and it should be seen as an action taken by the nucleus corporation.

Simultaneously, a court suit should be filed in the state court of N.J., challenging certain irregularities in the contract between the city of Newark and the Board of Trustees of the medical college. These irregularities are as follows:

(a) There is some question about the state legislatures' power to change the condemnation procedures set up to contest the taking of land by urban renewal activities. Under the special enabling legislation passed earlier this year (Senate #251) the city of Newark can take the land they want without anybody's being able to stop this taking for any reason whatsoever. The only thing that can be contested by an owner of the land is the amount of money he or she receives for compensation.

(b) There is some question as to the legislatures' right to bind future city administration to the medical school project; this irrevocable contract seems to fly in the face of due process guarantees.

(c) There is some question about the legislatures' action regarding the extension of Newark's debt limitation. Newark is a bankrupt city; the 15 million dollar grant will jeopardize the city's ability to pay for public improvements in years to come, if not repaid; return of the \$15 million is based upon the contingency of federal ratification of an urban renewal application for the first 46.4 acres of the medical school area.

(d) There is some question as to whether the destruction of the voting power of the South Ward as a result of the medical school constitutes a violation of constitutional rights.

(e) As an ace in the hole, we can file a suit claiming racial discrimination by the labor unions once the contractors have been hired. The Board plans to start building in April of 1968.

Mike Davidson, of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, is very much interested in the case from the court room litigation aspect. We are awaiting a decision from Jack Greenberg, his director, as to whether the Inc. Fund will get involved in a suit on our behalf. I am told that a lot depends upon our finding a private attorney who will file the papers and make all the necessary motions; the Inc. Fund will make their resources available to him. Such a person should not be hard to find. I have a few people in mind. Again, this court suit should be seen as a part of the action taken by the new community corporation; the lawyers in both the administrative action and the court suit should be seen as lawyers retained by this group.

This brings us to what might be called the public fight. While we are engaged in the organizing necessary to make the alternate plan a reality and the legal actions are taking place, we must focus much public attention upon these two activities. This means much news publicity. We can call attention to our position by such tactics as follows:

(a) The corporation and its' members (hopefully as many as 50-100 people organized from the medical school site area) should take a trip to Washington, D.C. To see the head of HUD, Robert Weaver. The corporation can ask his "support" of our efforts.

(b) We should call attention to the failure of the Newark Housing Authorities to cooperate with people in Newark who are desirous of getting information about what they plan to do in the medical school area. For example, they have not released a letter of criticism from HUD sent to them about the school plan; also they have not supplied us with their most recent relocation plan as applies of the 46 acre area. We should point out other revealing little things about the operation of the Housing Authority: NHA says that there are a certain number of housing units available to the residents of the city of Newark. However, sources at Public Service say that the study on which this assessment depends was never done; the surveys used to prove community support of the medical school are fraudulent in many respects; two highways coming in this year will displace more people than NHA admits it can relocate in one year's time. (over 1000 families) This type of exposure tends to discredit the agency.

(c) Newark is known now as one of the infamous riot cities. We should capitalize on this. The rebellion was caused in part by the medical school controversy, and no one wants a return of violence.

(d) We must seek to get comments from established people in the community who think the medical school project is unsatisfactory. This includes doctors, architects, and city planners especially. We should be able to find such people by looking into the the Blight hearings, through such contacts as ARCH may provide and through contacts that everyone in the nucleus corporation is sure to have.

In summary the best strategy of attack might be called the "foot in every pie" approach. We cannot put all of our eggs into one legal basket. Essentially the legal material must serve to give HUD or the courts the language they need to do what our community pressure has forced them to decide. Hence, it is very important to galvanize community support into a well organized, third force political group.