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HOUSERS**
TEXAS LOW INCOME HOUSING
INFORMATION SERVICE



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FOR RELEASE AT NOON MONDAY, DEC. 9, 2019

Who: East and North Lubbock residents, Lubbock NAACP

What: Filed a fair housing complaint against the City of Lubbock

Why: Over the city's failure to address patterns of concentrating heavy industry in neighborhoods of color

When: Monday, Dec. 9, 2019 at Noon

Where: Press conference at Canyon Rim Park, Baylor St & N Avenue N, Lubbock, TX 79401

East and North Lubbock residents file fair housing complaint over City's failure to address historical and current patterns of discriminatory zoning

LUBBOCK — East and North Lubbock residents, the Lubbock Branch of the NAACP, Texas Housers, and Texas Appleseed filed a HUD fair housing complaint against the City of Lubbock after the city ignored repeated concerns from residents whose homes are situated near heavy industry, including concrete batch plants and cottonseed oil mills. They are calling on the city to address the discriminatory and unfair zoning practices that have led to their neighborhoods being overburdened by environmental hazards and nuisance conditions. The neighborhoods on the east and north sides of Lubbock are predominantly African American and Hispanic.

Over the last two years, residents have educated themselves, with the help of Texas Housers, about the history of segregation in Lubbock, zoning patterns and public investment in various neighborhoods, as well as processes for citizens to engage and intervene in housing and zoning issues. Residents believe the concentration of heavy industry in their neighborhoods has harmed their health and quality of life and hindered desired commercial development and investment in their community.

The city's history of codifying in city policy the segregation and isolation of African American and Hispanic people in Lubbock is deeply entrenched in zoning patterns and their impacts we see today. As such, the local chapter of the NAACP is filing the complaint on behalf of impacted residents.

"The NAACP fights for justice for all people and we stand against any form of injustice. When we see injustice, we have to make a stand to have equality for all people in the City of Lubbock."

Mitlon Lee, President of Lubbock NAACP Branch #6198

Background

Lubbock 2040 Plan

In May of 2017, the City of Lubbock began drafting a comprehensive plan that will guide land use across the city as well as goals to expand development, economic opportunity, and housing availability through 2040. The city claimed they wanted to engage residents in the process and ensure that the plan reflected priorities and goals of the people of Lubbock. Residents of North and East Lubbock attended countless committee meetings on the comprehensive plan as well as city council meetings to demand that the city phase out industrial land use in the East and North sides of town. Despite strong objections from community members, the city council unanimously approved the plan without addressing the concerns of East and North Lubbock residents. For residents living in communities surrounded by heavy industry, the city's actions were unacceptable.

"In our neighborhoods we have lived with heavy industry all our lives. I am babysitting my great granddaughter and that will be the sixth generation in my family that has had to put up with noise and chemical contamination," said Dora Cortez, Guadalupe Neighborhood. "I think a complaint is necessary to get city leaders to listen to us and implement changes now."

"The air quality is terrible and sickening," said Duke Holmes a resident of the Chatman Hill Neighborhood. "My niece suffers from asthma and allergies especially when she comes to the area. The look of the industrial buildings are an eyesore for any neighborhood. The 18-wheelers hauling cotton seed leave a mess up and down the roadways. The city has to do something and

soon. The days of Jim Crow are no longer and we as a people can't continue living in these conditions."

Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing

To receive federal Community Development Block Grants, the City of Lubbock must complete an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development mandates that local jurisdictions document patterns of segregation and barriers to housing opportunity and choice for all and create measurable goals and take steps to address those patterns and barriers. Residents of North and East Lubbock requested that the city document its discriminatory zoning practices and take steps toward ameliorating the current and historical impacts that heavy industry has had on communities of color in its fair housing analysis. The city ignored this request.

"I remember in one particular meeting, the members of some of the neighborhood associations implemented a document that addressed concerns and even included some potential solutions to the continual problems that were occurring," said Roger Wong Won, 2nd Vice President of the Lubbock NAACP. "Not only did the board not read the document that they had for over a week, they also voted that same day. When asked to reschedule the voting until they read the document thoroughly, their response was that they didn't have enough time. How can a city represent its people if they do not try to acknowledge and understand the concerns of their citizens?"

For generations, residents of color in Lubbock have endured injustice in the places they have called home. Decades of discriminatory land use and housing policy have now put their health and well-being at risk. The city must grapple with this history and take steps to address the remnants of a separate and unequal Lubbock and ensure every resident has equal access to all of the amenities and opportunities the city has to offer.

"More than 50 years ago, we as a nation made a commitment to ensure fair housing for every American by passing the Fair Housing Act. Part of this commitment is undoing the discriminatory policies made during the Jim Crow era that still haunt many neighborhoods of color today," said Adam Pirtle, Advocacy Co-Director, Texas Housers. "We're filing this

complaint to make sure that residents of neighborhoods like Chatman Hill and Guadalupe don't have to wait another 50 years to be treated equally. The City of Lubbock must act now.”

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About

The Lubbock NAACP Branch #6198 works to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and to ensure the health and well-being of all who call the Lubbock area home.

Texas Housers is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) and the state's foremost housing policy research and advocacy organization. We believe that all people should have a decent, safe home in a neighborhood of their choice, and that the voices of communities of color and low-income residents should be at the center of policy decisions that impact them.

Texas Appleseed is a non-profit public interest justice center. We work to change unjust laws and policies that prevent Texans from realizing their full potential, including payday lending reform, criminal and juvenile justice reform, youth homelessness, and fair housing.