

OCT 1 1975

Harold Weisberg
Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
9/27/75

The County Council
Rockville, Md. certified-return receipt

Dear Council,

Your reaction to charges of authoritarianism and lack of due process, of non-responsiveness and of the abuse of citizens is to prove all these charges and justify a few more, one of which is blackmail.

However, I owe it to my wife and myself and to citizens in general to bring this to a head and by this letter I am doing it.

On January 14 I asked for a tax exemption of our property ~~you please~~ ^{propose} to take. I have repeated this proper, normal and quite legal request countless times, the last two at the phoney hearing you held and in writing August 9. There has been no response.

The very least I can expect from the taxes I paid for years is that you do respond. But in all this time there is nothing that can be called a response of any nature. Not to my many letters. Not to my appearances at council offices. Not to phone calls. Not to my protest and request at the sham proceeding in July at which time, on the record, I was promised a response. Not since January!

For all practical purposes you are confiscating my property, having contrived a series of ex parte methods and denied me due process in the course of it. Now you want me to pay taxes on property you plan to take under conditions that for me are confiscatory?

By this letter I am informing you that unless you write me to the contrary and if you do set up some prompt proceeding for the adjudication of any dispute I am assuming that my request for exemption of taxes to which I am entitled has been accepted. If you do not and it is later found that I must pay taxes, which I doubt, I will not pay interest. I have the amount set aside in an escrow account.

I do want to sell the property. I have been trying to for years because we need it for daily living. (We are in our 60s and I have no regular employment while my wife works part-time only.) You have prevented this, without letting me know that you had, why or how. When I learned of it by accident in the course of trying to sell the property to the county I immediately took the proper steps, with a request for a tax exemption and for negotiations about a sale. So, finally, in July you had an appraisal made. I have not been told a word about it nor have you made me any offer. While I need to sell this property I do not propose to be robbed of all its value as I have made clear. I do not know the appraised value or the conditions controlling it. I know nothing about it, in fact. Why must you keep this secret.

When I learned you were considering acquisition and would hold a meeting on it I asked to be notified so I could appear. You held the meeting without notifying me. You then had your non-responsive flunkies hold a proceeding at which not one of you was present. Long later he wrote apology for his negligence and said he had not yet prepared a "report" for you or digested the information. The fact is he had not even read what he himself put into the record prior to the hearing, my first written request for the normal tax exemption.

Instead, knowing our circumstances, he sought to blackmail me by making an indecent "offer" that is a diktat: I pay the taxes and then when you take my land you give them back. If this is fair it is no less fair that I not pay the taxes and then you won't have to give them back to me.

This entire matter and every detail of it is an outrage against any concept of government. Except, of course, those I did my share of keeping from being imposed on us (it was said) in World War II.

To this minute my taxes are and always have been paid in the county in which my wife was born and raised and into which I moved in 1948. I think I am within my rights in asking what in the hell this money is being spent for if it is not spent in any kind of communication with citizens/taxpayers on necessary business?

Except, as I have said, in the practice of dictatorial methods.

I ask again why the adjoining land, owned by speculators, is exempt from this taking when it is wetland and mine isn't and when the ostensible purpose of this entire operation is to effect a parkland continuity blocked by that speculator-held land. I think this is a proper question. I have never had an answer.

I presume you will be in touch with those of your employees who handle tax matters.

I wish I could think that any of you, officials or employees, are capable of shame. It is an outrage that you abuse us this way and so persistently.

No complimentary close is justified.

Harold Weisberg