

# Fighting Back Agreement Is In The Works

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the blue - (the county) decided to fire Rock and decided the neighborhoods were trying to take too much control. . .decisions were being made without consultations, without informing us."

Walton said much of the problem lies with the neighborhood.

"There were people in the neighborhood telling Rock he didn't answer to the coun-

ty, he answered to them," he said. "That was not so."

Orr sees the situation differently. He accused Walton of trying to divide the neighborhood by bringing in people who did not speak for them.

"Bob Walton has had nothing to do with this whole process and comes in at the end and wants to attack the people in the neighborhoods," he said. "The question is who

does (Walton) represent, the county or his constituents?"

Walton response: "That is another attempt at divisiveness," he said. "I've told Leon Orr and Mattie Marshall (another neighborhood volunteer) that some of their tactics have not been in the best interest of the neighborhoods."

Walton also said he did not ask anyone from the neighborhoods to get involved.

"Whoever told you that is an absolute lie," he said.

Orr said Walton needs to remember the importance of the neighborhood committee.

"If it were not for the neighborhoods, there would be no grant. The county had its shot at it originally and lost it."

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# Stadium Contracts A Hot Topic

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Richardson Sports' collective ear these days. With the Denny's controversy and an all-or-nothing ticket drive that'll determine if Charlotte even stays in the race for one of two teams, African Americans are mobilizing now for the NFL bounty. As far as Richardson Sports is concerned, the only game in town right now is the NAACP.

"We are committed to a strong Fair Share agreement and minority involvement in all phases of our operation," said Mark Richardson, Richardson Sports' general manager. "This has been and remains our commitment."

In addition to the Black Business Coalition, other players in the drive for black representation are:

- The NAACP, which is negotiating a Fair Share arrangement with Richardson Sports, seems to have the inside track in negotiating. The national NAACP is negotiating a Fair Share agreement with Flagstar Cos. Inc., Richardson's food-service business after lawsuits were filed against Denny's restaurants by black patrons in California and Maryland.

- A group of civic and political leaders from North and South Carolina, many aligned with Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, proposes 20 percent of stadium contracts and team positions go to minorities.

- CABL, which has met with Richardson Sports to bring more contracting jobs to minorities. The group also proposes a 20 percent goal for stadium contracts.



Mark Richardson

Watson said all four groups have legitimate concerns, but wonders if their goals are being subjected to a divide-and-conquer strategy using other blacks to deflect confrontation.

"There is no division in my mind at all. There is enough

## Gabon

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a president at the head of the Government. President El Hadj Omar Bongo has held office since 1975 and he appoints the prime minister, cabinet, and judges of the independent Supreme Court. As recently as 1990, two coup attempts were uncovered and aborted.

Gabon, a mineral-rich country, has tremendous natural resources. At one point, Gabon had the highest GNP of any sub-Saharan country in Africa. Gabon, however, has chosen to continue its precolonial position of allowing other countries to control its wealth. For example, 90 percent of the petroleum exports are controlled by the French. Even more surprisingly, Gabon chooses to import 90 percent of its food (most of it comes from France).

Relations between the U.S. and Gabon are excellent. President Bongo made an official visit to the U.S. in 1987. The United States also provides military training to the members of the Gabonese armed forces each year and has also been extending military sales credits since 1981. Incidentally, the United States' private investments in Gabon exceed \$600 million.

Habari gani!

room for everyone," he said. "If you look around, routinely someone is selecting our leaders. What white folks figure is that they have a formula to handle negroes."

Richardson Sports has hired two blacks to work directly with minority interests: Carol Lilly on building contracts and Kent Matlock of Atlanta in public relations.

James said the BBC doesn't mind what others are doing, but the recently-formed group is interested in stating its own case for inclusion.

"It's not a question of being enough (representation). When the Japanese want to target an industry in America, they think about market share, not a Fair Share agreement," he said.

It may be too late for all of them. There isn't likely to be enough time to negotiate who gets what once the NFL makes its expansion decision. If Charlotte wins one of the two teams in the fall, construction would begin immediately. Regardless of the outcome, better-coordinated efforts among African American coalitions

would likely lead to better results and less confusion, Watson said. It's the best option in the high-stakes world of professional sports.

"You have to look at who's in the mirror," he said. "We've got to start building institutions that can accommodate our needs. When you get down to the bottom line and your result is zero, you need to change your approach."

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