

Interview of E. Karl Faitz, Building and Zoning Director done 4/27/77 by
Carol Adams for the Oak Lawn Local History Dept.

Int: Your name is E. Karl Faitz and I'd love to know what the "E." stands for?

Faitz: Everett. Everett Karl Faitz, Jr.

Int: Where were you born?

Faitz: Chicago, Ill., on Aug. 16, 1932.

Int: How long have you lived in Oak Lawn?

Faitz: Since 1960.

Int: How long have you worked for the village of Oak Lawn?

Faitz: Since 1960.

Int: I understand that your titles have changed over the years. Would you tell us what your past and present titles are?

Faitz: Originally I came to the village as a building inspector in March of 1960 and for the next three and a half years I was a building inspector. Then Don Chapman left in July of 1963 and I became Acting Building Commissioner.

I took the usual examinations and was appointed Building Commissioner in October of 1963. Then in 1965 and '66 the titles were changed by Village Manager J. J. Salovaara. He was trying to give a better description in the title of what the job actually was. So the title was made Director of Building and Zoning and remains that today.

Int: What is your educational background?

Faitz: I spent a lot of time all over the United States at different schools. My Dad was career army and we moved around a lot. Came back to the Chicago area finally and graduated from Calumet High School. Then I attended Wilson Junior College for a year, went to the University of Illinois for a couple. In those days money was a little harder to come by so I had to work my way through school, literally.

Faitz: Then there^{were} various night school courses at different universities and then I finally decided that enough was enough and finished six years of night school at Northwestern University and graduated in 1972 with a Bachelor's in Business Administration, finance major, and they were nice enough to graduate me with distinction. And on the other side I also teach so I've been faculty for both the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin. I attend and/or teach at all sorts of different seminars, conferences on a professional level dealing with building and zoning and umpteen subjects that correlate with those two. If I had a dollar for every hour I've spent either giving instruction or taking instruction, I'd be a lot wealthier man than I am.

Int: Would you describe some of the activities of your office.

Faitz: Originally, of course the idea was building and zoning which in effect is nothing more than being sure that a building intended for a specific use is on a piece of ground zoned for that use. And then of course to be sure that the building itself is built according to the building codes. Well that's the way it used to be. Since that time we have added as a village government many @ many other services, and if water doesn't run thought it, you can't drive over the top of it, you can't arrest it, and can't squirt water on it when it's on fire, it winds up in the Building Department. We are traditionally the garbage can of government so we have inherited a large stock of other type of functions. At the present time we have housing, vacant property, commercial existing property, health, sanitation, business licenses, junk cars. That will give you a general idea. If there's anything having to do with land, structures, oh, I forgot signs, or some such thing chances are it will wind up in our department.

Int: How come sanitation winds up with you?

Faitz: Because we're an enforcement and inspection department. Health and Sanitation involve inspection and enforcement of health rules. So the concept was, inasmuch as we're geared for inspection and enforcement, that health and sanitation would fit in with or correlate with, say, building inspection or commercial property inspection. We do have a certain amount of overlap that works well in a single department. For instance, if you have a health inspector and a building inspector go out on a single problem, if you can't solve the problem with the regulations of one code you can usually solve with the other. So actually it works out rather well.

Int: What was your involvement in the formation of the Comprehensive Zoning Plan of 1963.

Faitz: Well, I came in at more or less the tail end of it. The original study as I understand it ^{using} Stanton and Rockwell ^{as} the land planners and then various citizen's committee^s were formed. When I came in as acting Building Commissioner in July of 1963 ~~that~~ I became involved in the process of putting together the amendments and then taking a final review of the plan ^{to} see if I could locate some of the more obvious loopholes and to make any suggestions that I thought possibly would be of value. The final comprehensive was adopted then in December of 1963. My input was confined to the finishing up of the document.

Int: And at that time working with the citizen's committee which I understand had several real estate people on it, was there political pressure exerted?

Faitz: Not too much. At least not at the time I was involved with it. What usually happens is that people are appointed to a board or a commission and by the time that board or commission begins to function for a few months on

Faitz: their own they form a comradeship of their own and pressure on the board members is resented from the outside. It almost becomes a "them or us" situation so that usually with a group like this you'd have more of a problem with ~~somebody's~~ specific hang-up or private hobby horse. They feel this is the way it should be because that's how they figured it out in ~~their~~ own mind. That's where you get into more of a problem ~~than~~ anything political.

Int: I didn't mean political with a capital "P" meaning governmental, I meant political with outside pressure in general.

Faitz: I didn't run into that at all. With most of the boards and commissions it is surprising how little quote "Political" politics unquote enters into some of these things. There are some blatant exceptions to this over the years but they are usually over some great big bubble like the Sears store or something more along that line.

Int: One of the reasons I brought this up was that this was one of the accusations in the last political campaign. That charge was made by the Homeowner's Organization that the village had not been tight on zoning per se.

Faitz: What they were referring to I think was not that the village had not been tight on zoning but that the village board, the elected board(s), rezoned property. So that I think again, you always have two levels of operation to function: the operating departments of the administrative & professional staff of the village in effect carrying out the laws and ordinances given to them by the Board of Trustees, that's one level of function. Then the other level of function is the Board of Trustees themselves. They do have the power to change the laws and ordinances, especially in rezoning. And that is usually where all the flak flies back and forth.

Int: Your own opinion as far as the 95th and Crawford site is concerned? There was some sentiment in the village that the Sears proposal was good, that it should go forward. That is was more of a quality operation than the K-Mart that is now proposed for the site. What was your feeling on it?

Faitz: Well, most of the staff felt that Sears was a more stable type of operation and we wouldn't have to worry about them going out of business in hard times but that is the kind of decision making that does take place at the political level.

Int: One of the big things that I would like to get into is your involvement with the aftermath of the tornado in 1967. Let's start at the beginning.

Where were you at the time the tornado hit?

Faitz: I was about three feet off the ground in ~~the~~ Volkswagen at 95th and Cicero when the big wind came through. It didn't occur to me that it was a tornado because the funnel cloud itself actually passed about a quarter of a mile north of me and 95th St. heading east was clear. There ~~were~~ no signs of any damage and then came all the rain and hail and then all of a sudden the sun popped out. Actually from 5:45 on it was a nice day. But I got to worrying about it because whenever that kind of storm comes through I'm always worried whether we lost signs or structures of any type. So I tried to call the police department and couldn't get a line and I thought, well maybe I'd better go see if anything is happening, and of course I walked smack into it. Between 5:50 and 6 o'clock, I parked in front of the village hall and myself in the middle of a first class disaster. And, of course, night was falling and there were no lights, no telephone, there was no nothin' and the only lighting that we had was the blood-red Marrs lights on top of the police squad cars and the ambulances. And that has got to be the eeriest environment to have to live in.

Faitz: From that point on -----Well, first of all, we didn't even know how badly we had been hurt. Communications at that time were very fragmentary because we had no phones and had to rely on radios. We got spot reports from squad cars and truck communications that such and such building was down and they were searching for survivors and we were trying^{to} plot something as to where this thing had touched down, but, adding to the total confusion, you couldn't get through north and south from all the trees that had been blown down and all the buildings that had been tossed in the middle of the street. You really couldn't get back and forth on the north-south axis. We didn't know for sure the total area of the damage until the next morning when we could actually get out and see what the hell had happened. A day or so later we had aerial maps, excuse me, I mean aerial photographs, which we put into a mosaic which in turn provided us with a map of that portion of the village that had been hit. But, Friday night, it never ceases to amaze me how we were able to get any organization, I mean functional organization, out of an absolutely chaotic mess. People were showing up, but they didn't know where to go. They didn't know what to do. But somehow or another we got them doing something that needed doing. And so many little problems. I'll go to the little ones first and then to the big ones because we had big ones too.

Problem, no power. That means you have to use gasoline driven equipment like chain saws or whatever they may be....portable generators. To operate them you need gasoline. We had thousands of gallons in the ground but we had no electrical power to pump it out of the ground. So about 12:30 our supplies and what was available started running low. I got on the telephone and rousted a vice-president from Standard Oil Company.

Faitz: I got him out of bed and explained what our problem was and that we were desperately in need of both regular and ethyl for all of our equipment because now our squad cars were starting to run low, the ambulances were starting to run low, the fire trucks were starting to run low.....we needed gasoline. Within ~~and~~ hour and a half we got~~the~~ first pumper truck and I'm not even sure if we ever paid for it. As a matter of fact they kept sending us trucks. As one would empty out they'd send in another one. At one time we had two trucks, one behind the police station and another at the corner of Southwest Highway and 95th St. They supplied gasoline to whoever happened to need it at that particular point in time. They took it out of one hose if they needed regular and out of another if they needed ethyl. So we did have gasoline then until we could get the power restored to use our regular sources. That was just one little problem.

Another little problem.....As people were being brought in—people that had been killed—they had to be put someplace, we had to have some kind of a temporary morgue and the VFW was converted into a temporary morgue. We had no idea how many people were still out under the debris but we had to have some kind of a count. You could count the whole bodies but periodically you would come up with pieces of bodies and try to match them to come up with the whole. Little problems.....tons and tons of them.

Major problems.....In order for us to function in two directions, to be able to act extra-legally to by-pass the normal amount of time to pass ordinances or pass laws it was~~important~~ important for the village to be declared a disaster area by the state and the federal government. This then gives the political head of government, the mayor or the village president, the

Faitz: legal power to make the types of decisions that have to be made. So we were trying to reach all these people that we had to get hold of. And finally, the declarations started coming in about 11 or 11:30, I guess the federal declaration didn't come in until about 2 o'clock in the morning. But if you recall, while the fire department was going through rubble looking for either survivors or casualties there were people right next to them with gunny-sacks looting simultaneously. In order to stop this, the police were ordered to shoot looters on sight. We had the problem of crowd control. At 5:30 p.m. on Friday, as you know, there are many arterial streets that run through the village of Oak Lawn carrying commuters from the city of Chicago or their jobs to their homes that habitually ~~came~~ ^{came} through Oak Lawn. We had the most monumental traffic jam you have ever seen in your life. There were cars everywhere and our perimeters looked like one massive parking lot. These cars had to be re-routed to get them around us. Then the sightseers. Everyone wanted to come see what Oak Lawn looked like after the tornado. So this was another problem. So all of these problems had to be handled literally simultaneously.

My planning as far as building and zoning.....I had to try to figure out number one, the total extent of damage, get some estimates of dollar costs, and I had to get all the damaged buildings inspected to find out whether or not the people could still live in the building or if they had to be moved out of the building. If they had to be moved out of the building we had to figure out where we were going to ~~put~~ ^{put} them. They had to have some kind of temporary housing. We had to remove debris from the streets in order to allow the equipment to get back and forth to do the jobs they had to do. We had to remove debris from private property. We had to knock buildings down.

Faitz: We had to amputate those sections of buildings that were in danger of collapsing and yet leave the good portions alone so they could be handled at a later date. We had contractors coming from as far away as Arkansas with blank contracts..... I had better preface the part on the contractors with this....On Friday we had torrential rain, hail, high winds. Saturday we had more rain and on Sunday we had, it was either a two or three inch , snow storm. All of these buildings that had been damaged, most of it was roof damage and this allowed all this moisture to soak into the buildings. And the people that owned these buildings were hysterical trying to figure out how they would close up the building so that their personal belongings in the home itself wouldn't be further damaged than what had already occurred. Unfortunately, there is a type of person who loves to take advantage of this kind of a situation. That's when these people, these ~~suede~~ shoe artists flowed in. They would go up to a building owner who was going bananas trying to figure out what he was going to do, they'd walk up and say we'll enclose the roof, close the doors and windows and take care of everything just sign here. And like a damn fool the homeowner would sign it. There were no prices listed, no extent of work to be done . It was a blank contract, which is like handing someone a blank signed check. When this problem started to surface on Saturday afternoon now we had something new to do. We had to chase down these guys. What we did, we gave them a choice. They could either tear up the contract and get the hell out of town or they were going to the State's Attorney's office and we would prosecute them for fraud. We lost a lot of people that way who thought discretion was the better part of valor and left town. Contactors that had been working in the village and had been licensed by the village prior to the tornado, we issued them special cards to show that "yes, they were legitimate contractors."

Faitz: And we insisted that any building or construction work that was done had to have a permit. We didn't charge them anything for the permit. But they had to have a permit so that we would know where the damage was and help us accumulate information on where the damage was and that we could inspect so that we could inspect those buildings prior to reconstruction. What would happen was the damage that you could see was one thing but unfortunately with the high winds that the tornado generates it has a tendency to torque buildings or twist them and there ^{were} was considerable amounts of concealed damage. When my men went to inspect the individual buildings with the contractor prior to the permit being issued this gave us the opportunity to go through that building with a fine tooth comb and be sure that everything was covered so that when that building was rebuilt it was rebuilt properly and in such a way that we weren't going to have problems with it later. And it worked. However, I will admit that we stretched the law a lot in the sense that when we found someone who was trying to play games they received very short notice to either do it the way it was supposed to ^{be} done or out.

In those days we had 24 hour court for the first two weeks after the tornado. The court system provided a judge on call for 24 hours a day and if I remember correctly the shortest criminal case prosecution took place here. They picked up a guy for looting, mug shot him, finger-printed him, arraigned him before a judge, presented the case, heard the case, sentence was given and the guy was on his way to the county jug in 45 minutes. Now that's got to be a record of some sort for justice. And he was guilty as sin.

So this was the type of thing that had to happen. Since that time, there have been many disasters in the United States of different types and one major thing that constantly keeps popping up--if the local community loses control the people suffer. Because all kinds of things happen.

Faitz: Again, let's go back to people taking advantage of other people in hardship. So many things can happen and just messes up people's lives. Disasters are bad enough without having additional financial problems created by scalpers. We didn't allow that to happen in Oak Lawn. We were a little rough and we were a little short but we were correct. We tried to stick to the law all along the line as far as we could, but we didn't play games. And I think that one of the reasons that the village came out of it as well as it did in as short a time as it did is because we did clamp on these kinds of controls.

When the insurance people came in on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday....
~~the~~ these were the ~~two~~ days all the assessors popped up and the federal government showed up... we were told in their estimation it was going to take from 12 to 18 months for Oak Lawn to rebuild. Six months after the tornado, we had all the debris cleared, we had the last building permits issued for the buildings that had been totally flattened, and 8 months after the tornado reconstruction was finished. Now, the only way that that could be accomplished is that you have to be right on top of it and you have to be really pushing. This is precisely what we did.

Int: What personally were your involvements? You ^{have} given kind of a broad spectrum of some of the activities that went on right after the tornado in the building department. You went around Xing buildings and ^{initialling} ~~initially~~ them to mark them for destruction. Did you run into any opposition during that time?

Faitz: First of all, my own personal involvement was ~~first of all~~ organizational. Friday night about 2 in the morning I went to Don Chapman's house, my ex-boss who at that time was with Oak Park and a member of the Suburban Building Officials Conference.. We had set up sort of a quasi-disaster committee back in '64 or '5 when Oak Forest had the tornado and we went out to help them. And I asked him if he would start making phone calls to members of the Suburban Building Officials

Faitz: asking them to send me men, qualified building inspectors. There is a difference between a qualified building inspector and a willing volunteer who may or may not know that much about construction. They started coming in at 6 o'clock Saturday morning. At that point in time we were starting to get an idea about how much damage had been done. So I assigned two inspectors to an area and they were responsible for going through every single building in that area to see whether or not it was ~~either~~ safe for people to occupy, ~~or if~~ portions of the building should be barricaded off but the rest of the building ~~was OK,~~ or if the building had to be completely evacuated.

Then, as the reports started coming in on Saturday ~~then~~ I started going back out again on the worst ones, so in effect I always got the goodies, I always got the worst ones because that was my job, number one, and I was the only one that was legally authorized to condemn or destroy buildings. Then as I was going through these buildings, I had different volunteers, Alice Ihrig was one, who would act as photographers. When we came to a building that we knew had to come down we took pictures of it because I knew I was going to have to show proof to somebody as to why it was destroyed, usually the insurance company, that the building ~~in truth~~ was a dangerous structure that had to be removed. Incidentally, I thought I was going to get sued right, left and sideways later, but at that point in time I couldn't have cared less because I had problems and I had to clear my problems. You know I never had one suit filed against me, not one single suit came out of that thing.

The claim adjusters, and we must have had at least 150 to 200 insurance companies involved, would come in and I'd show them the photographs and go over the property with them and they would write out their reports and the settlements were made and the buildings were rebuilt. It worked so well it ~~was~~ sort of scary.

Faitz: ^W The we made arrangements with the fire department because we had so much debris everywhere. We figured out that if we did have a building on the block that had to be destroyed, if it was a wooden structure or a brick veneer structure, that ^{the} fastest way to get rid of it would be to burn it. At the same time, I made arrangements for bulldozers to take debris from everybody else's back yard if it was burnable and push it into the fire to cut down on the amount of haulage we had to do. The first day we started to do this that mark of Zorro, if you want to call it that, was a big "X" in dayglo red paint on the building. So I'm doing my thing and one of the fire officers came up to me about an hour or so later and says, "Do you really want to take those two buildings on 50th? They don't really look that bad." I couldn't figure out what he was talking about so I said, "Let's go take a look at them." What happened was some of the neighborhood children had a can of dayglo paint and they were going up and down the block spraying "x's" on buildings that were perfectly all right and the fire department couldn't tell my "X" from someone else's "X" so that's when we went into that elaborate ^{trip/w} the X's and my initials "EKF." I figured if the kids could duplicate that "God Bless Em." Another small problem. Fortunately, the fire department was on the ball to realize that there was nothing wrong with that building.

The system that finally evolved was this. I would go through the building first, since I had a list from the other inspectors, and in all probability I had already seen the building once myself, and I would take one more shot at it to be sure in my own mind "yes, it had to go." We would take photographs of it and I would put my triple X and the whole shot. Then a group of volunteers would come who would take everything out of that building, and I mean everything, and pile it on the curb and trucks would come by and pick

Faitz: it up and take it to a temporary storage place until such time as people could take it to wherever they were going to take it. Then the fire department would come ^{behind} them and set up water curtains on each side of the house to protect the other homes and torch it. After we got the fire going the bulldozer kept ^{pushing} combustible stuff into the fire. It took quite a while to get through the entire town from start to finish. Well, the strip was over three and a half miles long, and it was anywhere from a couple of hundred yards to a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wide. We had over 900 buildings damaged, we destroyed about 150 or 160 buildings. That's a lot of buildings. Of course, after that part was over with then we started playing the game....of course simultaneously, and this is the hard part for people to understand.....these things that sound like they are in nice neat chronological order that went smoothly, without any hitches, well, it's not true. These things were all occurring simultaneously, together.....one minute you are talking about taking a building out, the next minute you are talking in terms of juggling some guy and the next minute you are talking in terms of whatever was happening. No five minutes was alike. All of these things had to literally be done simultaneously so that you were constantly making decisions and switching subjects back and forth as quick as the problem came up.

Int: Were you cut off from your home by the tornado?

Faitz: I was cut off in the sense that I didn't see it very much. I think I was averaging about two or three hours sleep for about three weeks in a row. Which really helped things because as I got tired my tact and diplomacy level slips and being a good German the other side of the ^{German} character starts coming out in the open a little bit more. And in a sense it was helpful because I wasn't wasting as much time trying to settle these petty problems that I simply didn't have time for. A problem would come up, a decision

Faitz: would be made and "That's it baby." If you don't like the decision you can appeal it to whoever will listen to you. It worked in the sense that it surely cut down time. By the time it was all over with the people weren't even mad at me, which was another shocker. Now, the comment about whether people wanted their homes destroyed or not. We had more of a problem with people whose homes were damaged but not damaged enough to warrant destruction. They were afraid of their homes. They were positive if the home was not destroyed and totally rebuilt, all of a sudden ^{two} ~~to~~ or five years from now the roof was going to come down on them. They were terribly frightened. It's easy to understand because people just don't know that much about construction in the first place, and wouldn't know what's good and what's bad if you gave them a guide map. And people that have sustained damage..... well, its like an automobile accident. You take it to the garage to have it repaired but it's never the same. This is exactly the same way people felt about their homes. So we had more of a problem convincing people that your home is not unsafe , that whatever damage has been taken can be repaired with no problem and finally get down to the point where you say, "Look, sir or madam, which ever the case may be," There is no way that I am going to destroy your home." They would get very upset with me because ~~they~~ wanted that thing burned. They wanted it down. I think we had two people that were really up-tight about the fact that ~~the~~ buildings had to be removed but that was about it. We had 50 or 60 people who were adamant that ~~the~~ homes were unsafe and it was up to us to take 'em out. Everything seemed to go in reverse.

What you think would normally happen, ~~just~~ the opposite seemed to ^{be} true. In those days I was going to Northwestern and I was in behavioral science courses. And I finally wound up writing a thesis for them. ^(on the tornado) It was unbelievable

Faitz: to watch all the shadings in character, traits, and motivations that would appear, and how they would change over a period of time. In week one you have one person, by week four you have a changing person, by week six you have a totally different personality from the guy you first met right after the tornado. By this time so many things have happened in his mind ~~so~~ ^{that} his motivations are changed and he's totally off on a different track than when you saw him the first time around. People were beautiful-until Sunday ~~at which points~~, I guess there is a relatively short time in which people are humane to other people and after that short period of time expires ~~to~~ go back ^{to} individual self-motivating 'what's in it for me' attitudes. During the weekend, Friday, Saturday and Sunday we ~~had~~ ^{would} tremendous numbers of volunteers who would do absolutely anything ~~to~~ help, they really wanted to help. By Monday everything switched. We had our first complaint. A homeowner gave me notice that if I didn't fix his sidewalk and driveway that week he was going to sue me. The reason he was uptight was that we had a fire engine parked on his driveway through the weekend and he contended that the fire engine cracked his driveway. So I sent a guy over to take a look at it. That crack had been in that driveway since the driveway ~~poured~~ ^{was}. So here was a guy who thought he was going to get a new driveway for nothing. Claiming the fire truck broke his driveway slab.

Int: You were talking about after the tornado taking on emergency powers. I know that Fred Dumke took over and backed you to the hilt. Could you tell us about that?

Faitz: Oh yes, that has do with organization. The picture was, here is the mayor, a bunch of the trustees, department heads all sitting on the police department steps at 6 or 6:15 Friday night with nothing showing

Faitz: but red Marrs lights, knowing that we were in BIG TROUBLE, and trying to figure out what's the quickest way of handling this damn thing. A normal organizational chart has all sorts of delegations of responsibility and all sorts of people. You know the usual corporate structure. Well, ~~were~~ pretty sure that wasn't going to work. We had what is known in the trade as a flat line organization. It was a very simple outfit. The village president, ^{as} the political head of government ~~was~~ was empowered with emergency powers, was the head of it. There were four operating departments directly under him. The police department which was to do normal police operations--crowd control, anti-looting, traffic -- all of the normal things a police department would do. The Fire Department's responsibility was looking for survivors or casualties, fire watches. Public Works Department was involved with cleaning up the streets so we could get equipment through and keeping the water supply and the sewer systems functioning, all the utilities owned and operated by the village. Then came the building department. Whatever was left over, if it was on private property, it was mine. Mayor Dumke went into an extremely elaborate system of instructions. It came out in two sentences."You people know what you have to do. Go ahead and do it and if anybody squawks, send them to me." That's it. And that's exactly the way we operated. It went so well, ~~so~~ that if I needed something, say, from the Public Works Department I'd talk to Don Canning or Charlie Reich direct. Or if I needed a police officer or a fire truck I'd talk the Police Chief or the Fire Chief and we'd just do it without going around and all through channels. This was probably the most important aspect of the whole thing because in effect ~~what happened~~ was the mayor gave four operating department heads carte blanche to do whatever we had to do. And if I needed a piece of equipment, I 'd say

Faitz: "You with that crane move over here" and that's the way it happened. I got to tell you this story. I keep thinking of these things after the fact, but to give you an idea on how this thing operated. Okay. Saturday morning we had building inspectors coming in from other towns. We paired up two inspectors and we had a lot of other volunteers offering their services so we paired two inspectors with three carpenters and made them a crew. While the inspectors were inspecting if they across leaning walls or things of this kind the carpenters could shore them up. Okay, we needed equipment and we needed material. So I called Beatty's lumber because I know the people over there and told them what was happening, asked them if they would give me credit for whatever materials these guys took out, four by fours, two by fours, whatever, tar paper, plywood, the kinds of things you would use for emergency purposes. No problem. The carpenters who were working with us would take their truck over there and load up with whatever they thought they might need and off they'd go into the wild blue yonder. Well, I figured it was going to cost me a pretty good buck for all this stuff. The first bill I had from Beatty's about a couple of weeks later was for about \$25-or \$2800₀₀ dollars. (He later corrected this figure to \$28,000.) Which in those days-1967-was a lot of money. The next bill I got was for \$17,000. and it kept going down and down. My final bill, because what happened was the carpenters would use what they had to use out of what they took out but they all brought back what they didn't use. Unbelievable, my final bill was \$1300₀₀ total. But this is the way things worked out.

Alright, the organization for the rest of the village came through the Village Manager's office, J. J. Salovaara. His job was to run the day to day normal operations of the village. Our four operating

Faitz: departments were to work on the tornado first and our normal operations second. Normal operations had to go forward, you couldn't just shut the village down because we happened to have a tornado. So after about the first month----it was a heavy construction year anyway,[—] about \$20-some odd million worth of construction in 1967, and that was all on top of all the tornado stuff. So it was a very hectic year. As a matter of fact, I had just come out of the hospital. In fact I couldn't get into the hospital because if you recall in January we had the big snow. I was supposed to go in on Friday and snow hit on Thursday and I went to work with the Public Works Department helping them out until Sunday. So, we get the streets cleared so people could get through and open up the town to normal operation. Finally, we got people out of the hospital so I could go into the hospital in January and I came out of the hospital in February and I was convalescing during March and the first week in April and I was just starting to come back when the tornado hit on April 21, so that was a rotten year.

Int: I was reading an article on the clean-up in Xenia, Ohio and after three years they are still in a sad state.

Faitz: That's correct and I'll tell you why. It's exactly what we didn't let happen here. Friday night and Saturday morning the whole world wanted to help us. By the whole world I'm talking about other organizations. They were going to move in take over our responsibilities for us and they would do it. No way! No way in hell^{were} we going to let outsiders come in and screw up our town! Which is one of the reasons why we had our organizational plan . And now Dumke had a new problem because everybody was going to take over. The Sheriff's police was going to take over law enforcement, Civil Defense was going to take over everything. Oh yes,

Faitz: the National Guard. General Kane, God bless his soul, was going to take over everything and declare martial law. It was a toss up as to whether General Kane and Sheriff Joe Woods were going to have a shoot-out at 95th and Cicero. Everybody was going to help us right out of our socks. That's why it was so important to get these emergency declarations. Particularly naming the village president as the head of the government. Once he had those declarations we had to politely tell all of them, "We appreciate your help, please cooperate, function under the control and command of [redacted] then he'd name us and you should have seen the faces drop. Now all of a sudden they weren't operating our town ~~from us~~ - they were taking directive from the locals. The fact that we had a professional staff, versus, let's take Xenia. They were a part time community. They were totally disrupted. They didn't know what to do next. What they did was, they laid back and allowed everybody to take them over, including HUD (Housing and Urban Development). I got involved with HUD after the floods in 1972, I think it was, I went to Elmyra, New York as a consultant for HUD and I never saw such a mess as what I saw there, It was unbelievable. Example: We had a trailer park, with trailers brought in from Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio, in operation in two or three weeks. Went I got to Elmyra they were still fighting over the bits and pieces of all the federal laws. They didn't have their trailers installed for three months. Three months later nobody needed them. Do you know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars ~~were~~ was wasted? Absolutely, unbelievable. And nothing was accomplished. That was Elmyra, most of the East Coast, and that was Xenia. By the time everyone gets through helping them when they get that town put back together they won't recognize it or want it.

Int: We just finished taping Fred and he said when he picked up the phone to order trailers he had no idea how he was going to pay for them, whether it would come from the village, the federal government or he would have to pay for them out of his own pocket.

Faitz: I was there when that happened, you want me to tell you the other side of that ? This is in the Civil Defense headquarters with all the federal representatives, press, people from Oak Lawn and the other towns that had been hit. Hometown, Belvidere. Oh incidentally, that day there were 44 funnels sighted and they were coming in at us from Milwaukee to Gary. It was like dodging torpedoes except some of them were going to get through and that's what happened to us.

We had all these people at the Civil Defense headquarters. They were telling us what the federal disaster funds will cover and what they won't cover. So Fred is telling them that he had a problem with people. We had people that had been displaced from their homes and we had to have someplace to put them in some kind of shelter. We want to use trailers because it's the cheapest and easiest way to go. What will the federal government do to help us there? Well, he was told, the laws don't provide for any payments for trailers. ^{They} ~~we~~ have some trailers down in Texas we can bring up after a while. We had already checked on those and they were dogs. They were old plywood jobs that they used to use for the Air Force. So, Dumke is sitting there and, Oh, everybody else is dressed, you know, suits, ties. Fred's got a suit on and the rest of us were pulled out of the field on twenty minutes notice and told we were going. We looked like the bloody devil, boots, you know-working clothes. There were seven or eight of us from different departments surrounding Fred to discuss this federal funding program. Fred suddenly says , "Get me a telephone."

Faitz: He called Salovaara at the hall and so everyone could hear him he says, "I want 100 trailers, order them, I don't care where you get them, just get them. Have them brought into Oak Lawn and if you have any problems just let me know and I'll take care of it." He puts down the phone and stands up in his crutches and he says, "Gentlemen, obviously the only way that the people of Oak Lawn that have been displaced from their homes after this terrible tornado" I'm paraphrasing "if the federal government will not help the village of Oak Lawn, then by God the village of Oak Lawn will take care of its own. I have just ordered the village manager to buy 100 trailers to be brought into Oak Lawn immediately. If the federal government won't help us then Oak Lawn will do it on its own." And with that he starts stalking out. We are going--oh boy he's done it again. Really done it this time. So we start to go up a really long flight of stairs and as we're going up -----

Int: Where is this place?

Faitz: Westmont or Darien. That big federal complex that is the regional headquarters for the Civil Defense. Anyway there's a real long flight of stairs going out and he's going up with his crutches. We said it's going to be dinner time before we get out of this place. He says , "Take your time, take your time ." And sure enough, one of the feds comes running after us shouting, "Mayor Dumke, Mayor Dumke, don't leave yet. We want to discuss it ." Well what happened was when he dropped that bomb on them all the reporters in the room from all the major newspapers are writing like crazy and man this is stuff that is really going to make the federal government look really bad. Found this out afterwards that a phone call had gone into Washington to whoever the hell was the head of HUD at the time and all of a sudden a law got changed. So now they want

Faitz: to talk about it. The way it finally wound up, the village of Oak Lawn purchased the trailers, actually on credit, installed them and then when they were no longer needed we sold them by bid, people gave us sealed bids on the individual trailers. ~~okay whatever~~ whatever the difference was between the price the village had bought them for and the bid price for their sale the federal government made up the difference. It cost them less money that way than any of the mickey mouse systems that they have used since. It only cost them a few thousand dollars per trailer for 100 trailers ~~and, man,~~ we had them. We had the state police from Michigan, the state police from Indiana and the state police from Illinois escorting convoys of trailers down the expressways all the way through to Oak Lawn. Boy, you try to do that today and try to get away with it. But again the thing is there was ~~the~~ job that had to be done and there are two ways of doing it -- you can do it the way we did it or you can do it the way other people seem to do it. ~~and~~ You can rebuild a town in six months or you can rebuild a town in three years. Take your choice. And you know what it finally boils down to ---I guess I can't use that word but its a beautiful word----Balls, that's what it takes, Brass Balls. We found that if you come on in a positive way to somebody who has authority over you like the federal government and you tell them ^{if} Hey, the way you want to do it isn't going to work, this is the way we want to do it and it's going to work. You either help us do it or get out of our way, Because we're going to run right over you. Surprisingly once they realize that you're not kidding that you're going to do exactly what you said you were going to do all of a sudden the opposition just sort of disappears and they get out of your way. And this is what it takes. I'm so proud of this town and all the people that worked in it during that period. Well again, the personal relationships that came out of this thing. The ~~comeraderie~~

Faitz: that came out of this thing. It is probably one of the most gratifying things that I can remember in my life to be able to pull this whole thing off the way we did.

Int: Tell us a little bit about your paper on post tornado trauma.

Faitz: Well there's two versions. The actual version which I turned in and I have a copy of that I will give to the library in another ten or fifteen years after everyone involved is either dead, retired or out of office so they can't sue me. The other version is the version---word got around that I was doing this paper and everybody wanted to see what I was writing because they wanted to be sure that if they were in this thing that they weren't in it in an unfavorable light. So I wrote two versions, the version I showed everybody else and the real version. So the real version I donate to the library in another ten of fifteen years. It was fun to do because I went into the motivations of different people and why they were doing what they were doing. I don't think that I'm telling tales out of school on the Mayor because his motivation was very simple. It was his town by God and nobody was going to come in and run his town. And that was his motivation from start to finish. We will do things our way, Oak Lawn is our town, these are our people and by God we'll take care of our own. And from that point on that's the way it went. If anyone got in his way he ran over them.

Couple of times I had a few problems with people that were giving me a real tough time and again short tempered and lack of sleep I'd put up with just so much not like under normal circumstances where you have to babysit someone for hours. You reached a point where you had had it, you weren't getting anywhere and this thing was not getting resolved. I'd tell them, "Go see Dumke" and that's the last I ever heard of them.