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Considerations prepared by Human Relations Commission

LONG-RANGE PROGRAMMING TO IMPROVE INTER-GROUP RELATIONS IN SKOKIE:
SOME CONSIDERATIONS

The ordinance of June 13, 1961, establishing the Skokie Human Relations Commission, among other things, provided:

Section 9-43. PURPOSES.

The purposes for which this Commission is created are:

- (A) To encourage understanding and respect between residents of Skokie of various racial, religious and nationality backgrounds.
- (B) To safeguard the rights of all citizens, as defined by our ordinances, Statutes and Constitution.

Section 9-51. FUNCTIONS.

The functions of the Commission shall be:

- (A) To consult and cooperate with other public agencies in furthering the purposes of the Commission as set forth in Sec. 9-43.
- (B) To pursue a community-wide program of education to encourage inter-group understanding.
- (C) To inquire into human relations matters referred to it by citizens or village authorities.
- (D) To seek voluntary compliance with ordinances and Statutes relating to civil rights.
- (E) To enlist the aid of schools, religious institutions, service organizations and civic groups to promote understanding and good will among the people of the community.

In keeping with its purposes and functions, the Skokie Human Relations Commission will be giving attention to long-range educational programming in the months ahead. To assist the Commission members in their task of policy decisions and choices of strategy, the following ideas are suggested for consideration:

1. There are few people in any general community population who have strongly rooted convictions and interest in inter-group relations; they will be found at opposite poles in attitude and behavior. The few positively inclined will undertake a prodigious task to influence the many; the few with strong negative inclinations will be almost impervious to change and a continuing possible source of community discord.
2. A catalogue of the key positive people, together with all their organizational affiliations (whether members or officers), should be compiled, complete with addresses and telephone numbers,
3. To the greatest degree possible, simultaneous and continuous efforts should be directed to the major social institutions in the community at their various levels of function.

A catalogue of key personnel (including program chairmen) and activities should be maintained. For example:

Religions	-- Clergymen (Ministerial & Rabbinical Assns.)
	-- Lay Leaders
	-- Organizations, programs, activities
Education	-- School board members
	-- Administrators
	-- Teachers
	-- PTA's
	-- Students (inc. Adult Education)
	-- Special exhibits, programs, contests
	-- Library resources (inc. village library)
Business	-- Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.
	-- Special groups, as real estate, banking, etc.
	-- Unions
Miscellaneous	-- Fraternal groups
	-- Civic groups

4. A system of priorities, based on Skokie's needs, should be worked out to assure proper emphasis in programming.
5. A division of labor should be agreed on to assure proper coverage and lack of duplication.
6. Assistance of specialized agencies should be sought, as deemed appropriate.
7. While formal programming (speakers, conferences, symposia, etc.) will undoubtedly receive major attention, informal programs (Parlor meetings, off-the-record briefing sessions, etc.) should also be utilized, especially for more sensitive problems.
8. Cooperative efforts with other communities should be carried out whenever they coincide with Skokie's interests.
9. While the interracial problem is the most dramatic of the inter-group problems in Skokie, the inter-religious problem appears to be the most pervasive and present difficulty confronting the village.
10. Recognition must be made of the fact that some inter-group tension is inherent in the holding of divergent convictions in a pluralistic society; that not all tension is caused by "trouble-makers," "bigots", etc. The task of the Commission is to hold this variety of conviction to the level of decent and civil discourse so that civic peace can be maintained and the common good -- the good of all -- assured.