

12
JULY 18th, 1967.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE SKOKIE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION AND MY FELLOW MEMBERS OF MANKIND.

BEING DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH THE VAST AND COMPLEX SUBJECT UNDER DISCUSSION BEFORE YOU THIS EVENING, I FEEL THAT IT IS INCUMBENT UPON ME TO APPEAR HERE AND FOR WHAT THEY ARE WORTH, MAKE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS.

I PRESUME THAT IT IS THE TASK OF THE COMMISSION TO HEAR AND EVALUATE THE PROCEEDINGS OF THIS MEETING, TO HELP THEM IN THEIR FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE VILLAGE BOARD CONCERNING THE ROLE OF THE VILLAGE IN "OPEN HOUSING PRACTICE".

SPEAKING WITH OVER 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE AS A REAL ESTATE BROKER IN SKOKIE AND HAVING SOLD MANY HOMES TO CATHOLICS, JEWS, PROTESTANTS AS WELL AS WHITE AND NON-WHITE BUYERS, I CAN TELL YOU UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT THE ATTITUDES OF A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE HOME SELLERS HAVE CHANGED TO A MARKED DEGREE AND THEY WILL, TODAY, SELL THEIR PROPERTY TO ANY RESPECTABLE BUYER, REGARDLESS OF RACE, RELIGION OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND.

MANY OF THE WHITE HOME SEEKERS COMING TO SKOKIE ARE MOVING OUT OF AREAS OF CHICAGO WHERE THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS DEGENERATED TO AN EXTENT THAT THEY FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF THEIR CHILDREN AND THEMSELVES. NOW IF THIS IS TRUE FOR THE WHITE HOME SEEKERS, IT IS JUST AS TRUE FOR THE DISCRIMINATING NEGRO HOME SEEKER. IN PURSUIT OF THE ABOVE STATEMENT, IT BEHOOVES ALL OF US TO COMPLY WITH ALL LAWS AND ORDINANCES WHETHER OR NOT WE AS INDIVIDUALS FEEL THEY ARE JUST AND EQUITABLE, THEREFORE IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT ANY LAW OR ORDINANCE ENACTED BE IN TRUTH, JUST AND EQUITABLE.

IN JUNE OF 1967 THE STATE LEGISLATURE PASSED HOUSE BILL 1179 WHICH OUTLAWES THE PRACTICE OF BLOCK BUSTING AND IMPOSES A PENALTY FOR THE 2ND OFFENSE OF UP TO FIVE YEARS IN THE STATE PENITENTIARY OR \$10,000.00 FINE, OR BOTH. IN LIGHT OF THIS LAW IT IS VERY EVIDENT THAT A REAL ESTATE BROKER MUST BE VERY CAREFUL WHEN HE SELLS THE FIRST NEGRO FAMILY IN AN ALL WHITE BLOCK. SHOULD THE OCCASION ARISE THAT A SECOND AND THIRD HOUSE IS PUT UP FOR SALE IN THE SAME BLOCK, THEN THE REAL ESTATE BROKER CAN WONDER IF HE IS STARTING A TREND TOWARD AN ALL BLACK BLOCK OR A NEGRO GHETTO, WHICH IN THE MINDS OF MANY PEOPLE IS UNDESIRABLE EVEN THOUGH IT BE VOLUNTARY AND SATISFIES THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE EXPRESSED BY THE HOME SELLER AND HOME SEEKER.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE ARE DEALING HERE WITH THREE FACTORS: HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN DIGNITY.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLIES THAT IF AN OWNER WANTS TO SELL HIS HOME OR RENT HIS APARTMENT, HE MUST NOT USE RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN OR ANCESTRY AS AN ELEMENT IN HIS DECISION. CONVERSELY, THE HOME SEEKER'S HUMAN RIGHTS GIVE HIM THE ADVANTAGE OF DETERMINING THE MAKUP OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD, SUCH AS THE CHURCHES, TEMPLES AND THE GENERAL CHARACTER AND REPUTATION OF THE COMMUNITY BEFORE HE INVESTS HIS LIFE'S SAVINGS IN A HOME, SO THE SELLER DOES NOT HAVE THE SAME ADVANTAGE AS THE BUYER.

HUMAN NATURE DICTATES TO THE INDIVIDUAL THAT HE KEEP HIS HOME OR SELL IT ON THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS THAT HE ALONE PRESCRIBES. HUMAN NATURE DICTATES ALSO THAT TO THE INDIVIDUAL HOME BUYER, HE BUY A HOME WHEREVER HE CHOOSES IF PRICED AT A FIGURE HE CAN AFFORD IRRESPECTIVE OF HIS OR THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S RACE, RELIGION, OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND- SO USING THE HUMAN NATURE FACTOR, AN IMPASSE CAN OCCUR.

PAGE ONE.

2016 003.063

OF THE THREE FACTORS AFOREMENTIONED, IT CAN BE SAID THAT HUMAN DIGNITY IS THE GREATEST. IT'S A SAD COMMENTARY THAT A LAW OR ORDINANCE COMPELLING GOVERNMENTAL SANCTIONS REQUIRING COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN HOUSING CONCEPTS BE ENACTED AT THIS TIME WHEN SOME MODEST PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS. THE ENACTMENT OF AN ORDINANCE BY THE VILLAGE WOULD IN A MANNER BE AN INSULT TO BOTH THE NEGRO AND THE WHITE RACE. IN EFFECT THE VILLAGE WOULD BE SAYING TO THE NEGRO, THAT HE IS INFERIOR AND DOES NOT DESERVE THE RESPECT OF HIS WHITE BROTHERS AND A LAW MUST BE PASSED TO FORCE HIS ACCEPTANCE, AND BY THE SAME TOKEN, THE VILLAGE WOULD BE SAYING TO THE WHITE MAN, THAT HE IS SO BIGOTED HE WILL NOT ACCEPT HIS RESPECTABLE NEGRO BROTHER UNLESS BY THE ENFORCEMENT OF A VILLAGE LAW.

IN MY HUMBLE OPINION, IT WILL BE FAR BETTER FOR ALL CONCERNED THAT SKOKIE BE FURTHER INTEGRATED, IF THIS BE HER DESTINY, ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS RATHER THAN A COMPULSORY BASIS, AND CONTRARY TO SOME NEWS RELEASES, IT IS AN ESTABLISHED FACT THAT INTEGRATION HAS TAKEN PLACE IN SKOKIE, AND WITH NO UNPLEASANT INCIDENTS, UNDER THE VOLUNTARY PLAN.

BY THE ENACTMENT OF THE CHICAGO ORDINANCE, SHOULD IT BE DONE, THE VILLAGE WOULD BE GIVING THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION, OR, IN FACT, ANY ONE MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION, THE DUTY AND AWSOME RESPONSIBILITY, FIRST, TO ADOPT RULES; SECOND, TO INITIATE COMPLAINTS; THIRD, TO INVESTIGATE; FOURTH, TO PROSECUTE; AND FIFTH, TO FIND GUILTY THE ACCUSED. IN EFFECT, IT WILL BE TYING INTO ONE PACKAGE, LEGISLATIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE AND JUDICIAL FUNCTIONS INTO ONE BODY, A PRACTICE THAT IS CONTRARY TO OUR PRESENT FORM OF GOVERNMENT. EVEN THE DRAFTERS OF THIS ORDINANCE HAVE THEIR DOUBTS AS TO ITS CONSTITUTIONALITY AS EVIDENCED BY THE INCLUSION OF PARAGRAPH ELEVEN WHICH READS "IF ANY SECTION, SUBDIVISION, PARAGRAPH, SENTENCE OR CLAUSE OF THIS ORDINANCE IS FOR ANY REASON HELD TO BE INVALID OR UNCONSTITUTIONAL, SUCH DECISION SHALL NOT EFFECT ANY REMAINING PORTION, SECTION OR PART THEREOF.

IN CONCLUSION MAY I SAY THAT ALTHOUGH THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE REFERS TO RACE, COLOR, RELIGION AND NATIONAL ORIGIN OR ANCESTRY, THE FACTS ARE, WE ARE TALKING ONLY ABOUT THE NEGRO HOME BUYER. IN THE 1940'S SKOKIE WAS IN FACT VIRTUALLY 100% POPULATED BY PEOPLE OF THE CHRISTIAN PERSUASION, SINCE THEN, WE HAVE SOME FIFTY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH FAITH AND NO STATE LAW OR VILLAGE ORDINANCE WAS EMPLOYED. IN THE YEAR 1960 SKOKIE HAD NO NEGRO FAMILIES LIVING WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES AND TODAY WE HAVE MORE THAN A SCORE OF NEGRO FAMILIES LIVING WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES AND TO DATE NO STATE OR VILLAGE ORDINANCE IS IN EFFECT.

UPON PRESENTING THE ABOVE OBSERVATIONS, I RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THE SKOKIE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND TO THE MAYOR AND THE VILLAGE TRUSTEES, NOT TO ADOPT THE CHICAGO OPEN HOUSING ORDINANCE OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF INVOLUNTARY OPEN HOUSING ORDINANCE.

Arthur E. Simmons,