

STATEMENT OF MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
TO FOURTH WARD CIVIC ASSOCIATION
SEPTEMBER 25, 1969

The following is submitted in response to the statement presented by the 4th Ward Civic Association to the Mayor and Town Council and discussed at the recent meeting of the two groups.

ON HOUSING

You are not entirely correct in stating that the Town of Cheverly has no open occupancy law. The Prince George's County Commissioners enacted a Fair Housing Code in 1967 which applies county-wide, including Cheverly. The County code supplements existing Federal and State laws regarding open occupancy and provides what we feel is the best method presently available to legally attack the problem. We feel that the County is in a better position than the Town to attack the housing discrimination problems for the following reasons:

1. Discrimination in the sale of houses is not a problem limited solely to the Town of Cheverly, but is, in fact, a problem throughout the Nation. The fact that numerous realtors are involved in selling houses in Cheverly, all of which have offices outside Town limits, means that steps to attack discriminatory practices by realtors should be applied on a regional or County-wide basis to achieve any meaningful results - economic results which will affect the pocketbook of the realtors.

2. The County has the power to enforce their Fair Housing Code on a regional basis and has the necessary administrative ability through their Fair Housing Commission to carry out the

provisions of the law. The fact that no complaints from Cheverly, and very few total complaints from the entire County, have been filed to date with the Commission indicates that the existing enforcement methods have not been adequately utilized.

These facts, and the desire to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts, leads the Mayor and Council to suggest a resolution urging the County to take necessary actions to assure the strict enforcement of their Fair Housing Code. The resolution also states that the Town will provide guidance and assistance to Cheverly residents seeking redress under the Code. (see attached resolution)

HUMAN INDIGNITIES

Your statement refers to two specific cases in which it is felt that a Cheverly police officer used harsh police tactics during the month of July: the unwarranted questioning of youngsters in Town; and the stopping of children from playing in the streets in the 4th Ward.

It is a policy of the Police Department, and one strongly encouraged by the Mayor and Council, that our police officers enter into discussions with teenagers in Town by taking the time to stop and talk to the youngsters in Town. By so doing they not only develop a better relationship leading to mutual understanding and respect by getting to know our local youngsters but serve a very important crime prevention function as well. This is particularly important when groups of teenagers are observed whether it be daylight, when the vast majority of housebreaking

and malicious mischief occurs in Cheverly, or in the evening. Quite naturally, the officer is expected to be courteous at all times and to respect the inalienable rights of all persons, whatever their race, creed or color. If our police officers do not perform as they are expected, disciplinary action can and will be taken. However, we feel that good law enforcement necessitates that our officers continue to attempt to foster interaction between the youth of Cheverly and our Police Department by stopping and communicating with teenagers whenever possible.

In regards to stopping youngsters from playing in the streets, it is unlawful for anyone to play in any streets anywhere in Cheverly, with no exception. This ordinance was enacted for the obvious safety of our youngsters in Town. The posting of "Children Playing" signs in various parts of Town is intended to warn motorists that children frequently play in the neighborhood, but does not give the children permission to play in the street itself.

Mention is also made that in July a resident on Cheverly Avenue set her dog on your youngsters for no apparent reason. There is no excuse for such actions and immediate police actions and immediate police action should and will be taken if such occurrences are reported to our police department. Upon investigation of this case, however, it is discovered that the incident referred to in your statement was not reported to the police for their assistance. We have always urged citizens to report incidents

requiring police attention immediately, so that action can be taken. In any case where a citizen is dissatisfied with police action, he or she should contact the Town Administrator or their elected officials.

We are sure you realize that the HEW meeting in June at which hated opinions were expressed by several individuals was a meeting that was organized by a group which has no direct relationship with the Mayor and Town Council. This being the case the Mayor and Town Council are not responsible for any statements made at the meeting by anyone other than themselves. We are also sure you realize that the hatred and prejudice expressed at the meeting was an expression of a limited few who do not speak in any official capacity for the Town. While it is regrettable that the statements were made it must be borne in mind that these individuals also possess the right to freely express their opinions. The Mayor and Town Council in no way condones the offensive statements made and will not tolerate any occurrence of violence such as was threatened at the meeting.

MEMBERSHIP IN SWIM CLUB

Membership in the Cheverly Swim Club is not within the jurisdiction of the Mayor and Town Council. The Swim Club is a private club which is totally independent from the policies of the Mayor and Town Council. Consequently, the only possible affect the Mayor and Town Council could have on the Club's membership policy would be through the power of persuasion. The Mayor and Town Council are willing to meet with Club officials to discuss this particular situation and will attempt to do so.

SUGGESTED RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF COUNTY'S FAIR
HOUSING ORDINANCE

Whereas, the practice of providing equal opportunities in housing is a stated goal of the Board of County Commissioners of Prince George's County and a matter of legitimate concern to municipal, county, state and national governments; and,

Whereas, the Board of County Commissioners of Prince Georges County adopted on November 21, 1967, General Resolution No 33-1967, an Ordinance to Promote and Encourage the Abandonment of Discriminatory Practices in Housing in Prince George's County Maryland; and

Whereas, the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Cheverly, Maryland are of the considered opinion that Resolution No. 33-67 provides a Fair Housing Code for the general welfare of all citizens and is consistent with the public policy of the governments of the United States of America and the State of Maryland;

Now therefore be it resolved by the Mayor and Town Council of Cheverly, Maryland, in public session September _____, 1969, do support Resolution No. 33-67 and urge that Prince George's County Government take the necessary actions to assure its enforcement.

Be it further resolved that the Town of Cheverly will provide guidance and information to all citizens of Cheverly seeking redress under the Fair Housing Code with respect to properties located in Cheverly, Md.