

August, 1967

Edward L. Cushman, Chairman

Richard V. Marks, Secretary-Director

HIGHLIGHTS *of the Commission Meeting*

DETROIT COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY RELATIONS • FOURTH FLOOR - 150 MICHIGAN AVE. • 963-9550

COMMISSIONERS SEEK MEETING WITH JUDGE TO DISCUSS ISSUES INVOLVING RIOT PRISONERS

Four Commissioners were named by CCR Vice-Chairman Alma Polk to request a meeting with Recorder's Court Judge Vincent Brennan to discuss community relations issues involved in dealing with the more than 4,000 prisoners arrested during the Detroit riot. These Commissioners are: the Rev. James J. Sheehan, Chairman; Mrs. Kathleen Straus; the Rev. Roy A. Allen; and Nelson Jack Edwards.

The Commission expressed particular concern with problems emerging from the riot as cited in a CCR staff report, such as the large number of prisoners arrested. Questions were raised about detention of prisoners, including: proper housing facilities, humane treatment of those detained, the method and speed of arraignment, contacting relatives about prisoners' whereabouts, etc. The four-member committee was authorized to act on behalf of the Commission.

COMMISSION WORKS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

The committee of Commissioners appointed to meet with Judge Brennan will also work with CCR staff to maintain constant and complete contact with all areas of the community. The Commission cited the need for such communication in order to know the needs and feelings of everyone in the community.

CCR field staff reported that the primary citizen concern at this time, which could cause increased tension, was alleged police searching of homes without probable cause. Police abuse of citizens and property was also reported by some citizens.

Commissioner Stanley Winkelman stated that the efforts of policemen and firemen, in general, during the riot was excellent. However, in a problem of this magnitude, he observed, there are bound to be some abuses, and these complaints must be thoroughly investigated. Yet, Mr. Winkelman said he was surprised at how few complaints there were in relation to the extent of the riot.

Commissioner Henry Szymanski contended that the widespread use of guns by citizens in all areas of the city was a contributing factor in the continuance of the trouble. Mr. Winkelman questioned the extent to which a citizen has the right to bear arms, and when this right can and should be limited.

COMMON COUNCIL REQUESTS REPORT ON BOAT AND YACHT CLUB DISCRIMINATION CHARGES

Common Council has requested the Commission to report on complaints of alleged discrimination by the Detroit Yacht Club and the Detroit Boat Club. Although they are private organizations, the clubs lease city land and are therefore bound by the non-discrimination requirements of the lease agreement.

Secretary-Director Richard V. Marks reported that CCR representatives have met once with representatives of the Yacht Club and have planned another meeting later in August. Mr. Marks said the CCR is asking the Yacht Club representatives to carry the concept of affirmative action to their governing board.

CCR INVESTIGATES EMPLOYMENT PATTERN IN CONSTRUCTION OF CITY FACILITIES

Complaints of discrimination against Negro employees of the Art Institute have prompted Councilmen Nicholas Hood and Mel Ravitz to request an investigation of: 1) the employment pattern at the Art Institute, and 2) contract compliance procedures used in reviewing city contractors under the city's Fair Employment Practices Ordinance, particularly relating to contract awards for the addition to the Art Institute.

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CCR REAFFIRMS CONCERN ABOUT LACK OF INTEGRATION IN ELECTRICAL APPRENTICE CLASSES

Commissioners authorized the CCR Committee on Schools, headed by the Very Rev. Thomas Ruffin, to contact Dr. Norman Drachler, Superintendent of the Detroit Public Schools, and restate the Commission's support of the Board of Education's decision earlier this year to exclude the electrical trade from the Apprentice Training School until it shows substantial integration. The Board, at the administrative level, has moved to readmit the electrical apprentice classes which have been suspended since April of this year. The initial decision on suspension of the electrical class was reached because the class had no Negro members for the second straight year and did not comply with the Board's January 23, 1967 policy of equal training opportunity.

In May, the Commission offered its "good offices" to convene a meeting of the Board of Education and the Associated Electricians who have sought to share the school facilities. The acceptance of this predominantly-Negro group of contractors might serve as grounds for settlement of this problem, but the AE has not yet been admitted to the established apprentice program. In addition, there has been no change in the racial composition of the electrical class and no specific affirmative action effort on the part of the Joint Apprenticeship Committee of the electrical industry, which selects the students.

Rev. Robert Potts, Chairman of the Coordinating Council on Human Relations, expressed the CCHR's concern over the decision to reopen the non-integrated class and urged the Commission and the Coordinating Council to make their feelings known to the Board of Education.

COMMISSION STEPS UP ENFORCEMENT OF FAIR NEIGHBORHOOD PRACTICES ORDINANCE

In response to a request from Commissioners at a recent informal meeting, staff presented a report on current enforcement of the Fair Neighborhood Practices Ordinance. The report stated that in recent weeks the number of areas surveyed each Sunday has been increased to three per week in a stepped-up effort to keep information current on real estate activity in integrated and yet-to-be integrated sections of the City.

Each violation reported and every citizen complaint received from community organizations and individuals is promptly followed-up with brokers by telephone. In addition, violation letters are sent to each broker or owner involved, after the violation has been studied in light of the brokers' previous records. CCR educational services are also offered including staff speeches and explanations of the FNPO to salesmen's groups in brokers' offices. Warning letters are sent to repeating violators pointing out that court action can be expected if violations continue. Court action is pending against two real estate companies.

STUDENTS WORK WITH CCR AS PART OF NATIONAL SUMMER PROJECT

As part of a nation-wide summer project of the Institute for Tutorial Development, two college students from Los Angeles and New York City are working with the Commission staff in an effort to strengthen their understanding of urban problems.

Under the direction of the CCR, they are working specifically in the Herman Gardens area in cooperation with a newly-formed integrated organization, Herman Gardens Parents for Action. This group is concerned primarily with increasing job opportunities for their young people, adding recreational facilities and improving communication among Herman Gardens tenants.

HIGHLIGHTS *of the Commission Meeting*

DETROIT COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY RELATIONS • 1106 WATER BOARD BUILDING • 963-9550 CCR WORKS TO INCREASE NEGRO ENROLLMENT IN AREA HOSPITAL NURSING SCHOOLS

CCR Chairman Edward L. Cushman appointed a special committee of Commissioners Alma Polk (chairman), Golda Krolik and Stanley Winkelman to meet with Dr. Norman Drachler, Superintendent of the Detroit Public Schools. Purpose of the meeting is to reach an agreement on: 1) effective short range efforts to get at the problems of Negro school achievement and motivation, and 2) the need for expanding the cooperative work study program, especially in the area of hospital services and nursing. The request for such a discussion resulted from the Commission's concern over the low number of Negro students in local nursing schools. A recent staff study showed there are presently 17 Negroes out of 918 enrollees in six area schools studied.

Secretary-Director Richard Marks reported that the Common Council had requested a report on the problem of "Negro enrollment in Detroit area hospital nursing schools".

COMMISSION DEVELOPS SUMMER EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Mr. Marks explained the development of Project SWEEP: CCR's Early Warning System, a year-round method of incident control. The program involves setting up a communication network with public and private agencies and civil rights and human relations groups within the community in order to facilitate: 1) communication of information about problems in the community; 2) analysis of these problems, and 3) community organization to develop solutions to the problems before they grow and spread. During the summer, particular attention will be given to 30 specific areas designated as possible areas of unrest and tension.

COMMISSIONERS QUESTION OBJECTIVITY OF APPRENTICE TESTING

CCR authorized using Commission "good offices" to reconvene a meeting of representatives of the CCR, Board of Education, Bureau of Apprentice Training, Associated Electricians and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 58. The meeting would be called to discuss entrance of the AE into union apprentice training classes, as well as the objectivity of the testing program used by the union to screen prospective apprentices.

CCR recently convened a similar meeting with the Board of Education, BAT and AE. CCR has been continually working with these organizations to allow the predominantly-Negro AE to share apprentice training classes with the electrical union. The Board of Education would not allow a new apprentice class to begin in the electrical trade this spring, because there were no Negroes in the class.

After hearing a report from Mr. Marks of this first meeting, Commissioner Kathleen Straus questioned why Negroes could pass the Detroit Civil Service Commission apprentice test but Negroes did not qualify for any of the 75 vacancies in the IBEW apprentice class. Mr. Marks revealed that 39 whites and 8 Negroes passed the civil service electrical apprentice test and 6 whites and 2 Negroes were selected by the city to begin apprentice training classes. "The civil service test for electrical apprentices is guaranteed to be non-discriminatory and we are certain it is the hardest of apprentice tests given, and 8 Negroes have passed it. Yet the union, with 75 applicants to be chosen, and have found no Negroes who can pass the test," said Marks.

CCR APPROVES FIVE ORGANIZATIONS FOR CCHR MEMBERSHIP

Five organizations were approved for membership in the Coordinating Council on Human Relations. They are: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Westside Human Relations Council, Metropolitan Detroit Labor and Community Association, Citizens Committee for Equal Opportunity and the Barton-McFarlane Community Council. Chairman Cushman is one of the main speakers at the annual CCHR delegate meeting held June 8 at the Downtown YWCA. Also speaking is the Rev. Robert L. Potts, CCHR Chairman. Theme for the meeting is "Detroit 1967: Summer and Beyond".