

NEGRO INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC POLICY
IN TULSA, OKLAHOMA

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the Watts riot in 1964, numerous racial disturbances have erupted throughout the United States. These riots became so extensive that the President of the United States, in July of 1967, appointed a committee to study the underlying causes of racial violence. The subsequent report of this Presidential Committee noted that one of the underlying causes was the inability of Negroes to achieve their goals through the normal political process.¹ If this finding of the committee is true, a problem of enormous proportions exists in the United States. Ideally, the democratic system is structured so as to peacefully meet the needs and wants of the society. If the political process is unfulfilling, then more drastic and violent means might well be used.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the responsiveness of the local government unit to many Negro grievances. The hypothesis of this paper is that the Negroes in Tulsa have limited means to achieve their goals through

¹U. S. Riot Commission Report. Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York, 1968), p. 147.

the existing political structure. In this study, the writer is concerned with the local government unit because the majority of contacts by people are not at the national level but at the local level of government. The success of Negroes in achieving their goal at the local level, whether better housing, schools, parks, or whatever, is of primary importance for a more harmonious pattern of race relations. Tulsa, Oklahoma, was selected as the governmental unit to be considered for various reasons. First, while there have been many studies of Negro politics at the local level, most of these have dealt with large Northern cities² or Southern cities³ and communities. There has been almost no studies of Negro politics in middle-size cities in the Southwest. Second, most of the studies have taken place in cities with a relatively high percentage of Negro population. Third, Tulsa was easily available to this writer as a unit to study.

To study the position of Negroes in the Tulsa political process, the writer will use an issue approach. The issue under consideration is the open housing controversy that occurred in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the fall of 1967.

²Such studies as St. Clair Drake and Hoarce R. Cayton, Black Metropolis (New York, 1945); Harold Gosnell, Negro Politician (Chicago, 1935); Fred Powledge, Black Power, White Resistance (Cleveland, 1967).

³Such studies as Daniel C. Thompson, The Negro Leadership Class (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1963); H. D. Price, The Negro and Southern Politics (New York, 1963); Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., Negro Political Leadership in the South (Ithaca, 1966).

The term "open housing" means the free movement of individuals into neighborhoods without formal or informal restraints because of their race or color. Fair housing, a term often used, means the same as open housing.

In studying open housing, this writer will not try to offer solutions to the problem, but to trace the development of the issue, the pressures applied upon the city administration, and the response of the city administration to these pressures. In doing this study, the following questions were used as guides:

1. What organized groups became involved in the open housing issue, and what techniques did these groups use to influence governmental policy?
2. Did the structure of the local political institutions restrict the efforts of Negroes in the open housing issue, and if they did, why?

As mentioned before, the hypothesis of this paper is that the Negro in Tulsa has limited means to achieve their goals through the existing political structure.

In order to determine if this hypothesis is valid, Chapter II will trace the historical development of the open housing controversy. The open housing controversy in Tulsa began, for the purpose of this study, on August 1, 1967. On this day, the Youth Council of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

submitted to the major of Tulsa a proposed open housing ordinance. The controversy ended on the 22nd of December, 1967, when the City Commissioners responded to the demand for open housing. Although events relating to open housing occurred before and after these two dates, the main controversy occurred between these two aforementioned limits. The third chapter is a description and analysis of the organizations involved in the issue. This will involve speculation upon their reasons for involvement, the aims of these groups, and their methods to influence the decision making process. The fourth chapter will be a description of the structure of the political institutions and the effect of these institutions on the open housing controversy. This will include a study of the local party organization and its membership, an analysis of the electoral system and of the city commission, and of the attitudes of Tulsans.

The research behind the interpretations and analyses made in the study came from three general sources; interviews, personal participation, and documents and newspapers. The primary source of data was interviews. To obtain perspective, one or more representatives of the various groups that were involved in the open housing issue were interviewed. Also interviewed were individuals who, because of their position, could have influenced the decision of the commissioners. The interviews occurred throughout the fall of 1967, corresponding with the open

housing issue. The interviews were conducted in an open-end nature, with a few preconceived questions being asked. These preconceived questions were used only as guides to shape the general course of discussion. There were several reasons why an open-end method was employed. One reason was that an over-all view of the issue and of the political process was being sought and a schedule of specific questions was not apt to produce this result. Secondly, this writer felt that a list of specific questions would not be conducive to the rapport and informality necessary for free and open responses. Finally, the open-end type questions allowed greater flexibility in pursuing answers and in varying the questions according to the individual being interviewed.

The second major means of gathering information was by personal participation. Throughout the open housing controversy, much time was spent each week living in Tulsa. This allowed attendance of the open committee hearings, related church and civic meetings, and it allowed a better understanding of the setting in which the open housing controversy occurred.

The third major source of information was examination and study of the documents and newspaper accounts related to open housing. The newspaper reporting on the open housing controversy was extensive and detailed. The newspaper description of the events that occurred provided a "check" of this writer's own account. The documents

issued by the different committees and organizations involved in the open housing controversy allowed for a more accurate determination of the official positions on the issue.

The author turns now in Chapter II to the brief historical account of the open housing controversy.

CHAPTER II

A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE OPEN HOUSING ISSUE IN TULSA

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the foundation necessary for the interpretations and analyses of the open housing controversy. This will be done by first setting the scene in which the issue occurred. This requires a description of the social and economic position of the Negro in Tulsa. Secondly, there will be a historical account of the open housing issue.

Metropolitan Tulsa has an estimated population of 418,974.¹ The median family income of Tulsans is slightly higher than the national average, and over 18% of the population have incomes exceeding 10,000 dollars a year.² In 1967, the unemployment rate in Tulsa was low, with less than four per cent of the population unemployed. College education is emphasized in Tulsa, with "twenty-five per cent of the people 25 years or older having gone to

¹U. S. Census Bureau's Census of Population: 1960, I, Characteristics of the Population, Part 38, Oklahoma (Washington, 1963). Heretoforth referred to as Census, 1960.

²Ibid.

college, as compared to 17% of all urban residents in the country."³ Most Tulsans own their homes, and most of the homes cost over 15,000 dollars.⁴

The above figures apply to the entire citizenry; however, if these figures are broken down for Negro and white Tulsans, a different picture emerges. Tulsa Negroes comprise less than 10% of the population.⁵ Economically, many Tulsa Negroes "work as menials and day laborers for wages as low as 50 cents to 85 cents an hour."⁶ The average family income of a Negro is 2,973 dollars, compared to a city average of 6,229 dollars,⁷ and the unemployment rate among Negroes is over twice as high as the city average. This low economic position of Tulsa Negroes is reflected in their housing. According to Mr. Otis Williams, a Tulsa realtor:

³Bertil Hanson, "The Oil Folks at Home," Urban Politics in the Southwest, ed. Leornard E. Goodall (Tempe, Arizona, 1967), p. 197. Hereafter this will be cited as Hanson.

⁴From a 1965 Urban League pamphlet which showed the following statistics for every 1000 homes built in Tulsa between 1960 and 1964:

Cost per Unit	Number of Units
25,000	129
15-25	700
10-15	150
8-10	20
under 8	1

⁵1960 Census reported that of the total Tulsa metropolitan population of 418,974. There were 30,551 Negroes and 7,949 other non-whites.

⁶Hanson, p. 218.

⁷"The Cycle of Poverty in Tulsa," 1965.

Until 1958, approximately 75% of Tulsa's Negro population was boxed in an area (North-Central part of the city) between Archer Street on the South, Pine Street on the North, Cincinnati Street on the West, and Peoria Street on the East.⁸ About 55% of the dwelling units in this area are dilapidated, obsolete, or otherwise substandard. Approximately 47% of the dwelling units are rental property. Within this area the average home value is less than \$6,000.00 ... the percentage of non-resident ownership in this area is quite high. There are some landlords who have no intention of keeping their property in repair, thereby causing some families to live under conditions which are a disgrace and a blot on the face of the city.

Since 1958, Negroes have moved as far West as the Osage County line and as far North as East 52nd Street North. Very few Negroes if any, have moved South of Admiral Street. The overwhelming majority did not even bother to look for a home in that direction because of the expectation of discrimination and prejudice.⁹

Given this situation, there existed a desire by Negroes to improve their position in Tulsa via civil rights activity. In the late 1950's, as the national civil rights movement gathered momentum, Tulsa Negroes centered their activities on the desegregation of public facilities and public accommodations which were believed to be more immediately obtainable than open housing.

Tulsa experienced continued civil rights activity which culminated in 1964 with a city resolution supporting

⁸See Appendix A.

⁹A statement by Otis Williams, a Tulsa Realtor, to the Associated Committee on Housing, August 21, 1967, published in the Report of the Associated Committee on Housing, September 14, 1967, p. E-19.

public accommodations, and subsequently, the enactment of an ordinance to enforce public accommodations. After the passage of this ordinance, the civil rights movement in Tulsa seemed to have become directionless. Although there were efforts by Tulsans to improve the position of Negroes, especially in the area of better jobs, there was really no issue that united the Negro community until 1967, when the issue of open housing became a forceful political and emotional question in Tulsa. The issue brought a cohesiveness to the Negro community that had not been present in Tulsa since 1964. The effort by Negroes to achieve open housing represented not a desire to move into previously all white areas of town, but the feeling that a Negro should have the right to do so.

Concern over Negro housing and efforts to improve it had been present in Tulsa for several years. In 1962, city and county officials toured Tulsa's northside and came to the conclusion that something had to be done to remove and replace the large percentage of dilapidated housing structures. Some public housing was initiated to relieve the problem of substandard housing; however, this public housing tended to be of poor quality and too small in numbers even to begin solving the problem. Some people felt that there were other more important aspects to this problem of substandard housing, such as racial segregation. Norman Green, associate director of the church strategy program for the American Baptist Home Mission, observed

that "Tulsa is probably as restrictive in its housing for Negroes as any city its size in the nation."¹⁰ Green believed that the inability of Negroes to purchase homes freely was a major problem in Tulsa.¹¹ Until 1957, Negroes in Tulsa occupied essentially the same residential area that they had occupied in 1920, although the population of the Negro community had greatly increased. Even after 1957, when Negroes did move into other areas, this growth was into contiguous areas which were older neighborhoods. By 1957, there were few if any Negroes living in the relatively newer sections of the city.

In an effort to study the housing problem, the Associated Committee on Housing was established, in February of 1966, by the Community Relations Commission which is a bi-racial city agency appointed by the Mayor to promote race relations. This committee consisted of twenty-seven members, including representatives "from the business community such as real estate, finance, and home builders, as well as representatives from professions, government agencies, civil rights groups, civic, religious, and educational organizations."¹² During the first year after the Associated Committee on Housing was formed, there was little effort by the committee to study the housing

¹⁰Tulsa World, December 4, 1964.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Report of the Associated Committee on Housing, September 14, 1967, p. 1. Hereafter cited as Report.

problem. It seems that only after the initiation of proposed action by other groups did the committee begin to work seriously. These other groups that were working on the problem of housing were primarily Negro.

In the winter of 1966, the Youth Council of the Tulsa Chapter of the NAACP placed on its agenda a drive to secure passage of an open housing ordinance. However, action was delayed by the youth council after House Bill 896 was introduced in the State Legislature proposing a State open housing law. House Bill 896 was introduced by Archibald Hill, a Negro representative from Oklahoma City. The bill provided for the already established Human Rights Commission to investigate any complaints of discrimination in housing. The Commission would have had the power to conduct hearings, issue subpoenas, and seek enforcement of its findings in the State District Court.¹³ The bill was referred to the Committee on Urban Affairs, which failed to release it before the end of the legislative session.¹⁴

The inaction of the State Legislature on this issue, coupled with a study of this issue at a national NAACP convention, prompted the Tulsa NAACP Youth Council, in the last week in July, to draw up their own fair housing

¹³House Bill 896. Introduced First Session of the Thirty-First Oklahoma Legislature, 1967.

¹⁴On February 14, 1968, The Committee on Urban Affairs voted five to four to give it a "do not pass" recommendation.

ordinance. On August 1, Reverend B. S. Roberts, a Negro minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, on behalf of the NAACP youth group, submitted the proposal to the City Commission. This proposed fair housing ordinance provided for the City Attorney to investigate any complaints of discrimination in the selling or renting of housing, or in the lending of money for such purposes. If the City Attorney found a complaint valid he would prosecute the violator in the Municipal Court of Tulsa. If the violator was found guilty, the proposed ordinance provided for a fine of not less than fifty dollars or more than one-hundred dollars for each offense. "Each day that any violation of the provisions of this ordinance continues shall constitute a separate offense."¹⁵

Upon receiving the proposed fair housing ordinance, Mayor Hewgley requested the City Attorney, Charles Norman, to determine if the City Commission had the authority to enact such an ordinance, and if it did, what conditions must exist for such an ordinance to be valid. On August 30, the City Attorney submitted a memorandum in response to the questions posed by Mayor Hewgley. This memorandum concluded "That the Board of Commissioners may adopt legislation to prohibit discrimination in housing," based on the police power of the city to promote and protect the

¹⁵See Appendix B.

public health, safety, or welfare of its inhabitants.¹⁶

However, to be valid, any action

should be based on a determination by the Board of Commissioners that some or all of the following conditions exist within the city of Tulsa:

1. That a pattern of segregated housing exists in the city.
2. That adequate housing above substandard quality is not available to members of Negro and other minority groups who are willing to pay the fair value thereof.
3. That efforts by Negro and minority groups to obtain better housing opportunities within the City have been made and have been unsuccessful.
4. That a high percentage of housing available for sale or rental to Negro and minority groups is of substandard quality.
5. That the rental paid by white renters are approximately the same as paid by Negro and minority group renters for substandard housing.
6. That real estate brokers and agents have failed or refused to show or exhibit housing units in certain areas of the city to Negro or minority group members.
7. That as a result of discrimination in housing, racial concentrations occur which tend to increase the problems of law enforcement and police and fire protection.
8. That discriminatory practices in housing in Tulsa are detrimental to the health, welfare, or safety of the community.¹⁷

¹⁶Memorandum of Law prepared by Charles E. Norman (Tulsa City Attorney), p. 12 (Mimeographed).

¹⁷Ibid, p. 13.

During the period after the introduction of the NAACP's proposed ordinance, there was great emphasis by the religious community in Tulsa on the necessity of an open housing ordinance. On August 12, a joint letter was submitted to the city commission by representatives of the Tulsa Council of Churches, the Catholic Center, and the Jewish Community Center. The letter pointed out that failure to adopt an open housing ordinance would result in "overt manifestations of frustrations and hostilities ..." and that "A Fair Housing ordinance is long overdue in Tulsa ..."¹⁸ Each spokesman emphasized that, although the letter was in keeping with the policy of their respective groups, the letter had not been voted on by their boards. Also, the letter was not an endorsement of the NAACP's proposed ordinance, but a recommendation for the enactment of an ordinance.¹⁹

On September 13, Monsignor Cecil Finn, of Christ the King Catholic Church, submitted a petition signed by fifteen Tulsa area priests. The petitioners, "aware of the fair housing proposal before the City Council ... strongly urged the immediate adoption of such a proposal."²⁰ A week later the Reverend Don Newby, Director of the Tulsa Council of Churches, presented the Mayor an "Affirmation

¹⁸Tulsa World, August 12, 1967.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Tulsa World, September 13, 1967.

of Responsibility," issued by the executive committee of the Tulsa Council of Churches, urging, as fellow Christians, "The adoption by the City of Tulsa of an effective fair housing ordinance."²¹

On September 14, 1967, the Associated Committee on Housing submitted their report to the Community Relations Commission. A week later, the Commission recommended, by a vote of eight to one, the report to the City Commission. The salient findings of the Associated Committee's report were:

1. Almost total segregation in housing exists in Tulsa ...²²
2. Minorities have been reluctant to move out of the segregated areas because of a fear of being 'rebuffed and humiliated.'²³
3. Efforts on the part of a few to move into other than ghetto (or near-ghetto) areas have not been successful on the part of minority-group families.²⁴

The report went on to recognize the "need for concerted community action to provide minority groups with access to housing," and that "an effective solution to these problems appears to be impossible without effective fair housing."²⁵ The report recommended an effective

²¹Pamphlet issued by the Council of Churches, August 12, 1967.

²²Report, p. 3.

²³Ibid, p. 3.

²⁴Ibid, p. 3

²⁵Ibid, p. 5.

ordinance, if such proved necessary, for the implementation of open housing. The report suggested an ordinance whereby "The Community Relations Commission would act as an arbitration body, and upon failure to eliminate the problem by mediation, ..." ²⁶ the City Attorney would then be directed to take appropriate action. This was a slightly different approach than the NAACP's proposal, which provided that upon commission of a discriminatory act the matter would be referred to the City Attorney. However, with the associated committee's report, there was the inclusion of a mediation step before resorting to legal action. Also, the associated committee's report viewed the ordinance as only a smaller part of a much broader effort. The report envisioned a total community effort, including religious, educational, and civic programs. ²⁷

In response to the increasing demands for action by religious, civil rights, and civic groups, Mayor Hewgley, at the end of September, 1967, created a special committee. The purpose of the Mayor's Special Committee on Housing, as it was officially known, was to submit a report within sixty days, "with documentation regarding need for legislation and advice about effectiveness of specific

²⁶Report, p. 11.

²⁷Ibid, pps. 12-15.

legislation."²⁸ To do this, they were to determine if any or all of the conditions (the eight conditions which the City Attorney felt needed to be present for a valid fair housing ordinance) were present in Tulsa.

Within a week Mayor Hewgley had appointed twenty-three members²⁹ to the committee and designated, from the members, Austin Gavin as the chairman. Gavin was a prominent lawyer and past president of the Tulsa Bar Association. He had also been, for a considerable length of time, a civic leader in Tulsa, active in the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and was described as a "liberal Catholic."

The rest of the committee was composed of members representing various groups concerned with the question of open housing. The variety of groups represented ranged from apartment owners, mortgage companies, realtors, home builders, and religious groups, as well as civil rights organizations. The committee was bi-racial, with eight of the members being Negroes. The Negro members ranged from Amos Hall, one of Tulsa's best known and oldest Negro leaders, to Shirlie Scoggins, a leader in the 1964 public accommodation demonstration in Tulsa. Even before any meetings, the majority of the committee seemed to favor

²⁸Tulsa World, September 28, 1967.

²⁹There were actually twenty-four members appointed. Charles Kothe resigned shortly after his appointment and was replaced by Mrs. Willa Johnson, a North Tulsa realtor.

the principle of open housing and felt the need for some type of ordinance.

On the twenty-eighth of September, the Mayor's Special Committee met for the first time in a closed session. Mayor Hewgley convened the meeting and charged them "to objectively weed truth from fiction, replace emotion with logic, and recommend sound citywide solutions to problems encountered."³⁰ The Mayor added that, "it will be the committee's job to determine if an ordinance should be passed, taking as its foundation the eight points (as stated in the City Attorney's memorandum)." The Mayor felt that the report was a good one and should be used as a basis for the committee's work. However, it did not contain specific cases of discrimination, which he believed should be available in considering a fair housing ordinance. The Mayor evaded questions of why he appointed a new committee instead of utilizing the established associated committee. After the Mayor's opening remarks, the committee agreed to meet every Wednesday and to have open meetings to answer the questions posed to them.

The committee also agreed upon a format to be used for the public meetings. There would be at least three public meetings, and at each there would be a discussion of two of the first six questions. At the end of the

³⁰Minutes of the First Session of the Mayor's Special Committee, September 14, 1967.

³¹Ibid.

first three open meetings, the committee would decide if a fourth open meeting would be necessary to discuss the final two questions. This was done because the final two questions were of a specific nature and might well be better answered at a closed session with representatives of the fire, police, and welfare departments speaking. At the open meetings, everyone would be allowed to speak. The only requirement was that a speaker must stand and state his name and address. The speaker would then be allowed five minutes to present facts pertaining to the questions before the committee that week. After everyone had had an opportunity to speak there would be a short period whereby a member of the committee could question the speakers and where the speakers could offer rebuttal. Thus, the open hearings were designed to obtain valuable information relating to the specific questions; however, mainly because of the emotional nature of the issue, it turned out much differently.

The first open meeting was held on October 5 with an overflow attendance. This meeting was supposed to consider the first two questions (Is there segregation in Tulsa? and Is adequate housing available to Negroes?). In actuality, two speakers considered everything but the questions. There were a few people who did try to factually answer the questions. Reverend Don Newby submitted maps to the committee which showed the Negro population to be concentrated in one relatively small area of

the city. Leroy Thomas, project director of the Seminole Hills Demonstration Housing, cited the lack of adequate housing for Negroes in Tulsa, mainly because of the concentration of Negroes in one small area of town consisting of sub-standard housing units. Thomas felt that the

Negro people for the most part have a feeling completely analogous to those of whites. We will permit discrimination on the basis of economics, religion, education, and a myriad of other causes, but the black man won't accept discrimination on the basis of race alone.³²

R. J. Thomas, vice president of a mortgage company, believed that there were hundreds of homes in every section of Tulsa which could be purchased by anyone desiring them. However, Mr. Thomas could not say exactly where these homes were located.

The speakers who were opposed to open housing could be divided into two general categories. The first category included most of the white speakers who seemed not so much opposed to the civil rights movement as concerned about the value of their property. Typical of this were the comments of one speaker. "Fight for your rights, but don't put a bayonet in my back. When the Negro moves in, property goes down ..."³³ There was also a group present who seemed to be irrationally opposed not only to an ordinance, but to the whole general area of civil rights.

³²Minutes of the First Open Meeting of the Mayor's Special Committee, October 5, 1967.

³³Ibid.

Representative of this type was Ted Cotton, a real estate broker, who charged that the ordinance was being supported by "Fabians, statist, socialist, Marxist, and misinformed individuals who think when we become mongrelized all our problems will be solved."³⁴ The proponents of an open housing ordinance also tended to speak emotionally and in generalities about the problems of discrimination. They tended to concentrate on the moral issue and to answer to the more extreme claims of the opponents of open housing.

The next day Mayor Hewgley expressed confidence in the committee and the open meetings, despite the fact that little was accomplished in securing facts. Hewgley believed that, "when everyone lets off steam, the committee will be able to make a study and give an objective recommendation."³⁵ He did hint, however, that if this committee did not work out, a vote of the people might be required.

At the second open meeting, held on October 12, to consider the third and fourth questions (Have Negroes been unsuccessful in obtaining better housing? and Is the housing available to Negroes substandard?), testimony ranging from veiled threats to emotional accusations dominated the session. Verbal attacks against the committee itself grew in intensity with again very little evidence from

³⁴Tulsa World, October 5, 1967.

³⁵Ibid.

either side being presented. Following the testimony, Jimmy Jones, one of the committee members, bitterly commented that he had "other things to do than listen night after night to the same emotional arguments."³⁶ After the open meeting, the committee convened in a closed session. The purpose of this session was to decide what course the committee should take, since the open meetings were not being productive. In order to answer the questions adequately, the committee would be divided into four sub-committees. The sub-committees would independently research the questions and report back to the general committee. At the same time, the special committee would continue with the public meetings.

Chairman Gavin opened the third public meeting by admonishing prospective speakers to present facts that were related to the questions. This meeting was undoubtedly the most productive of the open meetings (Question Five: Do Negroes and whites pay the same rent for sub-standard housing? Question Six: Have realtors failed to show Negroes housing in certain areas of town?). "For the first time since the committee launched its public hearings, the presentation of facts took precedence over the airing of feelings."³⁷ Bruce Kirton, administrator of the Tulsa Federal Housing Authority (FHA), presented the

³⁶Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Mayor's Special Committee, October 12, 1967.

³⁷Tulsa World, October 20, 1967.

position of the FHA in relation to selling houses to Negroes. The FHA in Tulsa had recently sent out letters to brokers asking them to sign statements that they did not discriminate in the selling of homes. If not signed and returned, the brokers would not have been allowed to sell FHA financed homes. However, at the present time, Kirton added, there were only nine repossessed homes for sale in Tulsa and these were mainly on the North side of town.³⁸ Several Negroes related personal experiences of discrimination in trying to rent apartments, buy houses, and build new houses. After the open meeting, the committee held a closed session. The committee voted to have one more public meeting to consider questions seven and eight (Does segregated housing increase the problems of law enforcement and fire protection? and Is segregated housing detrimental to the health, welfare, or safety of the community?); however, the format would be somewhat different. Several witnesses, knowledgeable in areas relating to the questions, would be called upon to testify. After their testimony, these witnesses could be questioned by the committee or the audience. The meeting would then conclude with a period in which people from the audience could give additional information to the committee.

On October 25, the last of the open meetings began with the testimony of the pre-arranged witnesses. First

³⁸Minutes of Third Open Meeting of the Mayor's Special Committee, October 19, 1967.

to speak was Captain Herb Hartz, of the Tulsa Police Department. The Police Chief was to have appeared, but had decided to attend an IBM school, and only at the last moment informed Captain Hartz he should attend. Captain Hartz was not completely prepared to answer the questions, in fact he was not even aware of the questions under consideration. The only information he was able to offer was that there appeared to be a high incidence of violent crimes in a segregated neighborhood. Another witness was retired Fire Captain F. C. Wagner, who was unable to understand why he was there since he had been retired for over five years and did not have the slightest idea of the situation which presently existed.

For the next five weeks the committee met in closed sessions to answer the questions posed and to decide what recommendations, if any, should be made. At different times during this period, the four sub-committees reported. The sub-committee to study the first two questions concluded that there was a pattern of segregated housing existing in Tulsa. In support of this they quoted other studies and presented racially-plotted maps which reached the same conclusion. A vote was then taken by the committee and there was unanimous agreement that racial segregation existed in Tulsa. This subcommittee also concluded "that adequate housing 'above substandard quality' is presently severely limited for most Negroes regardless of their ability or willingness to pay ..." and that this

was due in part to the fact that housing for Negroes is limited to a small, clearly definable area of Tulsa.

The second sub-committee found

that there have been instances of unsuccessful efforts by Negro(es) ... to obtain better housing opportunities within the city ... and the majority of the Negro population lives in an area of heavy deterioration, dilapidation, and other substandard features.

The third sub-committee "was unable to prove or disprove whether whites pay the same as Negroes for substandard housing." They did conclude though that for various reasons, which they did not ascertain, real estate brokers and agents failed or refused to show housing to Negroes.

On the final two questions, several findings were reported by the sub-committee. Their first conclusion was that "the concentration of welfare recipients does cause a continuation of dependence on the welfare system and, that if these concentrations could be decentralized, it would be a step in the right direction toward lessening the welfare load in Tulsa. "Thus of the concentration of Negroes, a high percentage who are on welfare, tends to increase and perpetuate the welfare system." Secondly, the sub-committee found "that racial concentration does tend to increase the problem of law enforcement and police ... protection."

After the submission of the reports, the committee set out to determine whether the scope of their authority allowed them to suggest action in the area of open housing to the City Commission. The Chairman, Austin Gavin,

originally thought their report should be a "simple statement answering the questions."³⁹ Other members on the committee believed that the Mayor wanted something more "than a yes or no answer,"⁴⁰ and called for the committee to give a recommendation. Peter Bradford, a staff member furnished by the City Attorney's office, believed "the committee was formed to determine certain facts ... we (the committee) could if we wished suggest action or alternative action."⁴¹ Don Hale, the Mayor's administrative assistant, believed that the committee should answer the questions; however, he was not sure whether the Mayor wanted any recommendations of policy. The committee then decided that they should make recommendations to the City Commission.

To carry out this action, Gavin, on November the 29th, appointed a drafting committee to prepare a report. One week later the drafting committee submitted its report for committee consideration. The report was actually two proposed open housing ordinances. The first of which, for the purpose of clarity, was designated as Plan A, the second as Plan B. Considerable discussion followed, concluding with the adoption of Plan A as the majority report

³⁹Minutes of the Closed Meeting of the Mayor's Special Committee, November 1, 1967.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Minutes of Closed Meeting of the Major's Special Committee, November 15, 1967.

and Plan B as the minority report.

Plan A, or the majority report, envisioned an open housing ordinance which, with several notable additions, was similar to the NAACP proposal. One addition was that the majority report made it unlawful to take economic reprisal against a person who had filed a complaint. It also made it illegal to encourage people to violate the ordinance or to obstruct any person from complying with the ordinance. Secondly, the report provided for the creation of a Fair Housing Board to "initiate or receive and investigate complaints charging unlawful housing practices ..." The Fair Housing Board would try to conciliate such complaints; upon failure to secure voluntary compliance, the Board would transfer the complaint to the City Attorney who, if he felt there was sufficient evidence, would prosecute the charge in the city courts. The third major addition to the NAACP proposal provided that any person who filed a false complaint would be guilty of a misdemeanor. Finally, the proposal would authorize the City Commission to prepare a "comprehensive educational program ... in order to eliminate prejudice."

The minority report, or Plan B, also proposed an ordinance, but one without penalties. The report essentially incorporated a voluntary approach. The report recommended the City Commission adopt a resolution stating that open housing was the official policy of Tulsa. A Fair Housing Authority would be established under this

plan, and would be composed of seven members. The purpose of this body would be to investigate any acts of discrimination in housing. However, they would have no power to enforce their findings except through the persuading of people not to discriminate. A full time position of Fair Housing Coordinator would be established "with the sole responsibility of developing and implementing community programs to effect the community policy of non-discrimination in housing." A Housing Information Bureau would also be created to list all houses that were for sale or rent on a nondiscriminatory basis. Finally, the plan called for a comprehensive community program to help eliminate discrimination. The minority report suggested that if the voluntary approach did not work, a penal ordinance would be necessary.

The vote to determine which of the two proposals would serve as the majority and the minority report was reportedly close and did not follow racial lines. The exact vote of the committee was neither released nor taken down in the minutes of the meeting, although three weeks earlier, on November 15, in a closed session, a "straw vote" was recorded. Thirteen of the members in attendance voted for a strong ordinance and this included every Negro member present.⁴² Four members voted in favor of a voluntary approach and/or an ordinance, with only one member

⁴²Ibid.

voting against any action.

On December 8, Chairman Gavin reported to the City Commission. In his report, Gavin summarized the action of the Committee and listed its findings regarding the questions posed. Gavin urged the City Commission "to undertake immediately positive action and assume aggressive leadership to eliminate racial discrimination in housing." Gavin then concluded by making nine recommendations. These recommendations were of the same type as the minority report of the committee. As for a penal ordinance, which was included in the majority report, Gavin hoped that it would not be needed, but if the City Commission felt that one was needed, Gavin believed that "such an ordinance be immediately referred to the people" for their approval.

After hearing the committee reports and Chairman Gavin's report, the Mayor set the following Wednesday for a public hearing on the issue. The result of the open hearing was similar to the open meetings held by the Mayor's Special Committee. The speaker's topics ranged from "interpretations of property rights, individual rights, the United States Constitution, and the Bible."⁴³

On December 22, Mayor Hewgley, at a meeting of the City Commission, recommended "that a resolution be adopted declaring open housing to be the official policy of the

⁴³Tulsa World, December 13, 1967.

TABLE I
MEMBERS OF MAYOR'S SPECIAL COMMITTEE ACCORDING
TO PREFERENCE ON OPEN HOUSING ORDINANCE

Voting for a Penal Ordinance	Voting for a Voluntary Ordinance	Voting Against Any Ordinance	Absent
Wayne Carpenter	John Dorchester	Everett H. Johnson	Rabbi Norbert Rosenthal
Dr. C. J. Roberts	Bob Davidson		Edwin Wienecke
Ememett Edwards	Jim Kirkpatrick		Don Herrington
Robert Fairchild	Daniel Stoltje		Willard Vann
Dr. Finis Crutchfield			
Amos T. Hall			
Mrs. Willa Johnson			
Jimmy Jones			
Father F. S. O'Brien			
Reverend B. S. Roberts			
Mrs. Shirlie Scoggins			
John Finegan			
Dr. Charles Christopher			

Source: Minutes of closed meeting of the Mayor's Special Committee,
November 15, 1967.

City of Tulsa."⁴⁴ Hewgley then asked the commission to adopt an ordinance to help bring this about by voluntary compliance. Under this there would be a seven member Fair Housing Board "to implement the declared policy of the city." The proposal would also establish a Fair Housing Director to work "with all groups ... to encourage and foster open housing not on the basis of a punitive ordinance, but on the basis of understanding and good will." Although the words are slightly different, the Mayor essentially recommended the Special Committee's minority report.

Finance Commissioner Fay Kee moved for adoption of the Mayor's recommendation. All of the Commissioners voted in favor of the Mayor's resolution and ordinance. Stret Commissioner J. A. LaFortune prefaced his vote with a statement. LaFortune commented that he had studied the reports of both the Community Relations Commission and the Mayor's Special Committee. From these reports, LaFortune's "personal conviction (was) that Plan A is the most constructive," with the exception of making the Community Relations Commission the mediating agency rather than creating a new board.

The action of the Commissioners was essentially the adoption of Plan B of the Mayor's Special Committee's Report. The omission of a penal ordinance was not

⁴⁴Tulsa World, December 22, 1967.

unforeseen by observers. With all of the pressure exerted upon the city commission some action toward open housing had to be taken. Yet the adoption of a strong ordinance would have resulted in a referendum petition and/or intensive pressure upon the city commission to submit the open housing ordinance to a vote of the people. If Tulsans had voted on a strong open housing ordinance, it probably would have been defeated, severely damaging race relations. Thus, a weak compromise ordinance was adopted by the city commission.

The pressure groups whose activities made such an ordinance inevitable will be discussed in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

AN ACCOUNT OF THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS AND A STUDY OF THEIR MOTIVES

A characteristic of the American political system is the competition of interest groups to influence public policy. Just as this is true at the national level, it is true, as well, at the lower levels of government. In Tulsa, in the controversy over open housing, this was also true. Various groups in Tulsa exerted extensive pressure on the city administration to accede to their wishes. The decisions made by the city administration seemed to be a result to varying degrees of these pressures. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the participants, goals, motives, and tactics.

Churches

Members of the religious community in Tulsa were participants in the open housing controversy. Serving on both the associated committee and the Mayor's Special Committee were several clergy as well as lay religious leaders. For the purpose of this study, the religious community was divided into four general categories: The Tulsa Council of Churches (essentially Protestant),

Catholic, Jewish, and Negro Churches. Although the churches cooperated in supporting open housing, they should be analyzed separately, for they approached the question with different methods and often for different reasons.

The Council of Churches of Greater Tulsa was a voluntary organization aligned with the National Council of Churches. A church was not automatically a member, but joined voluntarily. In Tulsa there were about one hundred and forty member churches and about one hundred more who used the services of the council. The council was largely composed of Protestant churches, with only five Catholic or Orthodox members. The executive director of the Tulsa Council was Reverend Donald Newby. Reverend Newby was a member of the Christian Church and had served as a consultant to the All-Africa Conference of Churches. Reverend Newby, since his appointment as executive director,¹ had been actively involved in social issues. However, the original involvement of the Council in open housing occurred before the arrival of Reverend Newby on the Tulsa scene.

The involvement of the Tulsa Council in open housing began during the previous year. The single most important reason for their involvement was the moral question, that was a belief by the churches that "discrimination based on

¹Reverend Newby became executive direction on June 1, 1967.

race ... (was) irreconcilable with the basic teachings of Christ ...,"² and they as Christians should prevent such discrimination. Secondly, the churches really became committed to open housing by the efforts of laymen such as Bob McGowan, a high school teacher, and clergymen such as Reverend Tihele, a white minister in a predominately Negro church. These men constantly urged the council to take a more active role in trying "to obtain justice for the Negro."³ However, the Council did not become actively involved until after the NAACP Youth Council's proposal.

The members of the Council of Churches played two roles in the controversy. First, they brought pressure to bear on the city administration to pass an open housing ordinance.⁴ At the same time they pursued a policy of educating the public to dispel the myths surrounding the issue. They attempted to do this by declaring the first Sunday in October as a day for the clergy and congregations to consider open housing. The council also had churches in every area of town present educational forums. At the forums there was to be a panel of people, for and against open housing, to discuss the issue. A forum held at Carnegie Grade School the night of November 15 was typical of the meetings. Each panel member gave a short speech

²From an interview with Reverend Newby, November 29, 1967.

³Ibid.

on his position and then the audience was free to ask the members questions. As in the open committee meetings, the people in attendance seemed already decided and used the forum as a sounding board for their views.

The actions of the council were taken by the authority of its executive committee only. Although there was no open dissent on the policy statements issued by the council, it was well known that several clergy of the member churches did not agree. According to Reverend Newby, even a larger percentage of the congregations represented did not agree with the council's actions. In one member church on the south side of Tulsa, the minister requested all members to sign a card pledging their support of open housing. The entire congregation refused, believing a church was not the proper place for that type of action.

Only 9.9 per cent of the population of Tulsa were Catholics⁵, and even a smaller percentage of Negroes were Catholics. Yet the Catholic church in Tulsa had been very active in the Negro's quest for civil rights. There were four parishes in the northern part of Tulsa which included the Negro community. The church had pursued a policy of transferring "salvation" priests from these parishes and replacing them with activist. As defined by Father O'Neil

⁵These figures are based on a survey made in September 1965 by volunteer canvassers who contacted about 70% of the households in Tulsa under the direction of the Department of Survey and Special Studies of The Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board.

of Saint Monica, a salvation priest was one who primarily was concerned with helping people "get to Heaven," whereas an activist priest was much more concerned with improving conditions, especially social conditions, here on earth.⁶ The priests were very active in trying to develop a more cohesive community program in North Tulsa, because of its low economic level. One priest, Father O'Brien, had organized the North Tulsa Democrats to increase the political power of the people in the area. A Catholic church allowed community aid programs to use its buildings. Several Negroes led by a priest created an instant action group, known as DON'T (Don't Overlook North Tulsa), designed to be activated only as issues affecting North Tulsa developed.

As part of this involvement, several priests were very much involved in the open housing controversy. They petitioned the Mayor for action and participated in numerous educational forums. To dramatize the substandard housing, the priests organized a tour through the major parts of the Negro community. The Parade Tour of Homes, as the tour was officially known, attracted more than 1,100 people. However, not everyone attended for the same reason. One couple from Nebraska thought that it was a tour of model homes in Tulsa. Father O'Brien, one of the sponsors, observed two impressions the tour made on people. A feeling that Tulsa "should do something about this," and

⁶From an interview with Father O'Neil, October 31, 1967.

"Good God, how can people live this way?"⁷

After the failure of the City Commission to pass a strong ordinance, many churches continued their activities. A group of Catholics and Lutherans attended church services on Christmas Day in all parts of Tulsa wearing mourning bands "to express their grief over the (open housing decision) ... of the City Commission ..."⁸ A group of Catholics also took out an advertisement in a national Catholic lay newspaper. The advertisement read in part:

Tulsa, Oklahoma -- A Model City
If you are a bigot, if you want to live in a
segregated city, if you would enjoy using the
poor, welcome.⁹

The primary goal of the activist priests in the open housing issued seemed to be other than the enactment of a strong ordinance. The primary goal seemed to be the development of a lasting cohesiveness in the Negro community. Even if a strong ordinance was passed, some activist priests favored allowing the people to vote on the question. For a defeat would, they believed, really solidify Tulsa Negroes. It would be a "slap in the face," as one priest described it. Because of the role the Catholic

⁷From the minutes of the closed meeting of the Mayor's Special Committee November 1, 1967.

⁸Tulsa World, December 26, 1967.

⁹From the National Catholic Reporter, quoted in the Tulsa World, January 9, 1968.

priests played in North Tulsa, they seemed to have greater influence and respect among the Negro community than any other religious organization. The priests were the center of activity which attracted many of the younger and more militant Negroes, not because of their religious philosophy, but because of their social and political philosophy.

The Jewish community was numerically small, comprising only 0.69 per cent of the total population of Tulsa.¹⁰ Yet, they tended to have greater influence than the size of the community indicated. Although Jewish organizations in Tulsa were active in the civil rights movement, it was individual action which was most effective. One of the most active in the open housing controversy was Rabbi Norbert Rosenthal. Rabbi Rosenthal was a leading figure in the Reform Judaism movement, which was a non-orthodox sect of Judaism concerned with social action. The rabbi became involved with the issue of open housing because of his long time identification "with the civil rights movement" and, as he put it, this (open housing) is one of the basic issues effecting the fundamental rights of men."¹¹ According to Rabbi Rosenthal, there was a wide acceptance of open housing by the Jewish community for

¹⁰According to the Baptist survey in footnote 5.

¹¹From an interview with Rabbi Rosenthal, November 29, 1967.

"all Jews deep down in their hearts are in favor of open housing even though they might not say so. They know the scars that discrimination can leave on the soul."¹²

The involvement of the Negro churches in the open housing issue developed as a natural consequence of their position in the community. The Negro churches have long been one of the major social organizations in the community, a place where Negroes could gather and discuss the various problems that confronted them. Thus, they were a major focal point of community activity. However, the Negro ministers as a group, at least in Tulsa, were not community leaders, nor did they seem to have the ability to lead. With one or two exceptions, no member of the Negro ministry had any community-wide following. One of the exceptions was Reverend B. S. Roberts, minister of an African Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1966, Roberts won the largest number of votes in a local school board election although he subsequently lost in a run-off election. He had helped sponsor a hundred-unit housing project for the elderly. Reverend Roberts also was the sponsor of the local NAACP Youth Council, and presented their proposal to the Mayor. Roberts was selected as a member of the Mayor's Special Committee and was the only Negro minister on any local committee to study the problem of open housing. However, Roberts was the exception. The rule

¹²Ibid.

was that the Negro ministers exhibited very little effective leadership role-taking outside of church affairs.

Negro Groups

The Negro community in Tulsa seemingly had an infinite capacity for organizing committees. In relation to the size of the Negro community (24,000), they were highly organized, yet at the same time they were highly disorganized. This paradox was because the committees and associations were often only names. The local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was a typical example. The local chapter often publicly endorsed certain positions of an issue; however, it was well known among Negroes that the chapter had been dissolved for some time. The views expressed by the local chapter were those of Shirlie Scoggins, a member of the national CORE.

There were only a few organizations that were really active and effective, yet even among these groups, the competition for publicity and popular support seemingly resulted in their total effort in improving the position of the Negro being a great deal less than their potential. The Greater Tulsa Community Coordinating Council was formed in August of 1967 to coordinate the activities of the various groups interested in "furthering employment opportunity and improving environmental conditions."¹³

¹³From an interview with Mrs. Johnnie Thornton, November 28, 1967.

The council was composed of the NAACP, Urban League, CORE, Citizens for Progress,¹⁴ Postal Alliance,¹⁵ Young Afro-American Women's Christian Association (YAWCA),¹⁶ New Day Inc.,¹⁷ Tulsa Employer's Association for Merit Employment (TEAM),¹⁸ Oklahoma Equal Employment Agency, and the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce.

The first major problem that confronted the community council was open housing. At the very start of the controversy, the members voted to support an open housing proposal. All of the member groups voted to endorse the principal of an open housing ordinance except TEAM, who abstained because of a desire not to antagonize some of the business community. The council held forums to develop support of open housing, however, unlike the Council of Churches' forums, only speakers favorable to open housing were invited. The largest meeting was held on November 9, 1967. The purpose of the program was to discuss the need for open housing with the leaders of the major organizations in Tulsa. The main speaker was Richard Young, the President of the Fair Housing Center in Denver, Colorado,

¹⁴A Negro civic improvement group.

¹⁵An association of Negro postal workers.

¹⁶A Negro social group.

¹⁷A group that sponsors Vista.

¹⁸A group designed to promote Negro employment in business

who was highly favorable toward a Colorado open-housing law, commenting that it "worked like a charm."¹⁹

The coordinating council also circulated petitions, to be submitted to the Mayor, endorsing open housing. The wording of the petition was simply stated:

We favor the immediate passage of the open housing ordinance in Tulsa, so that all persons regardless of race, creed, or color may enjoy their God-given equal right to housing.²⁰

The number of signatures obtained was small and generally confined to Negroes. This is mainly due to the composition of the council which was composed exclusively of Negro groups whose influence and support were primarily in the Negro community.

The activities of the council viewed in the total perspective of the open housing campaign were minimal. The council acted as a clearing house for the proponents of open housing. Even this role was not always performed, for there tended to be a considerable lag in the flow of communications. There were several reasons for the minor and often ineffective role of the council. First, the recent establishment of the council prevented it from operating as smoothly as it might have. Secondly, Johnnie Thornton's position as deputy director of the Economic Opportunity Task Force curtailed her activities as chairman of the council. Although the office of the Economic

¹⁹Tulsa World, November 10, 1967.

²⁰Ibid.

Opportunity Task Force was established by the local government, the salary of Mrs. Thornton was paid by the federal government; consequently, she was covered under the Hatch Act, which prohibited federal employees from engaging in political activities. Because of being "hatched," as she described it, she had to limit her political activities. Being "hatched" was often cited as a major reason for the lack of Negro leadership in Tulsa. Many of the educated and qualified Negroes, once they became vocal, were given government jobs placing them under the Hatch Act, thus silencing them. The final reason for the limited lack of success was the still present competition of the Negro groups to improve their own prestige with respect to each other.

The major civil rights organization in Tulsa was the NAACP. The president of the local chapter was Amos Hall, a long time Tulsa Negro lawyer. He was well known in both the white and Negro communities for his activities. Hall played a major part in the Sipuel Case, and the decision resulted in the admission of Negroes to state colleges and universities. He also argued and won a lawsuit equalizing salaries between Negro and white teachers in Oklahoma. Hall led a successful movement to get the Urban League in Tulsa added as a recipient of money from the Community Chest. In January of 1967, Hall became the first Negro to be appointed to Tulsa's Civil Service Commission; he was also on the advisory board of the Tulsa Board of

Education. Hall had, for a long time, served as a link between the Negro and white community. He had expressed the complaints of the Negroes to the whites, yet at the same time had to modify these complaints and demands to maintain his position in the white community. This gave tremendous power to Hall, and until about ten years ago, a Negro had to be accepted by Hall and E. A. Goodwin, publisher of a weekly Tulsa Negro newspaper, The Oklahoma Eagle, before he could do anything in Tulsa. Since then Hall's complete control had diminished so that many younger, usually educated Negroes often referred to him as an "Uncle Tom" or commented that he had outlived his usefulness. However, if because of nothing other than his access to the white power structure, he remained a powerful force in the Negro community.

Since the Youth Council of the NAACP proposed an open housing ordinance, it was assumed that the regular NAACP was behind the Youth Council. However, the regular NAACP at first did not publicly support the proposal, causing an incident at the beginning of the controversy. During the previous summer there had been a fear among the white population of Tulsa of a Negro riot. Hall, using the possibility of a riot as a goad, organized a committee of white businessmen to raise operating funds for the NAACP with Johnson D. Hill, an insurance man, as the chairman. The committee raised two to three thousand dollars which allowed the NAACP to rent an office to counsel Negroes

and to prevent unrest. In the first week of October, Hill, implying that he spoke for the NAACP, commented that the "city has no need for a housing law because 'fair housing' already is in effect."²¹ Hill's statement was sharply denied by Hall, who emphasized that Hill was speaking as a private individual and not as a member of the NAACP. Except for this, the NAACP was unusually quiet during the open housing controversy.

Although the Tulsa NAACP often took action only after a problem had been initiated by others, it probably still represented the mainstream of thinking in the Negro community. There were probably "less than twenty bandana wearing 'burn, baby, burn' militants in Tulsa."²² However, the use of the term "Black Power" and the threat of violence seemed to be felt by some Negroes to be the major political resource of their community. During the open housing debates there were often intimations by Negroes that the failure to pass an ordinance would result in disturbances from the Negroes similar to those Milwaukee or Louisville experienced in the summer of 1967. An example of this was a letter from a prominent white architect to the Chamber of Commerce, pointing out the loss of business suffered by Milwaukee merchants and the damage to the city's reputation. The ultimate use of this political

²¹Tulsa World, October 5, 1967.

²²From an interview with Father O'Brien, November 14, 1967.

resource (i.e., riot) seemed to be mitigated by the fear Negroes had of a white reaction to any violence.²³

The demand for open housing by Negroes was based more on an ideal than on any widespread desire to move into white areas.²⁴ Most of the Negroes who would have been financially able to move into the white areas had already built nice homes in the Negro area from which they would have realized little of the physical value of the home by selling. The highest estimate by a civil rights leader of the number of Negro families that would have moved was ten families in a three to five year period. The idea that Negroes could not have moved into all areas of town seemed to be the primary motivating factor. As one Negro commented, "If only one Negro out of thirty million is refused or discriminated against because of color there should be an ordinance."²⁵ There were also several more tangible secondary reasons for an open housing ordinance. The first of these was a belief that fair housing would have encouraged better educated Negroes to move to Tulsa.

²³In any lengthy conversation with Negroes, the Tulsa race riot of 1922 is mentioned, even by the young Negroes, and they seem to think that such a thing could occur again.

²⁴For this discussion the white areas in Tulsa refer to the area south of Admiral Street which divides Tulsa into North and South. Although whites do live in North Tulsa, probably less than five Negro families live in South Tulsa.

²⁵From an interview with Amos Hall, November 27, 1967.

In the summer of 1967 alone, several Negro families who moved to Tulsa had not stayed because they could not find adequate housing.²⁶ Secondly, there was a belief that a strong ordinance would have reduced the harassment to Negroes who did move. Shotgun blasts, the breaking of windows, and the painting of obscene words on the house had happened to many Negro homes in white areas.²⁷ The third reason was to prevent realtors from giving Negroes the "run around" in the buying of homes. It was quite common for realtors, when they got an inquiry over the phone about a home in south Tulsa, to arrange to meet the caller in front of the home for sale. The realtor would purposely be a few minutes late, and when he did arrive, if the inquirer was Negro, he would not stop. Finally, there was a belief by Negroes that an ordinance would prevent any panic selling by whites, which resulted in resegregation. When a Negro moved into an area, the whites would remain because there would be integrated neighborhoods all over Tulsa.

News Media

In Tulsa the news media was frequently vocal on local issues, yet concerning open housing they were for the most part silent. An exception was KRMG, a popular radio

²⁶Interview with Shirlie Scoggins, November 14, 1967.

²⁷Interview with Reverend B. S. Roberts, October 31, 1967.

station, which for several days had editorials on prejudice, commenting that "open housing is much like a stop sign. It's a shame we need them ..."²⁸ KRMG believed that an ordinance was necessary in Tulsa, and that one should be adopted quickly for "cities which have put such an ordinance into effect without procrastination, great debate, or heel dragging have had few problems."²⁹ This stand by KRMG was not unusual, for it had often take a position on controversial issues. It took stands because, according to KRMG,

We would rather be criticized for standing for something we believe is morally right, than to know within ourselves that we had failed to face what we think is a moral responsibility.³⁰

There were two daily newspapers in Tulsa, the World and the Tribune.³¹ Both papers were very active in local politics, supporting political candidates for office and endorsing programs that promoted community growth. Both newspapers had been described as publishing:

largely conservative editorials and commentaries, whose cumulative effect is to make things labeled 'liberal' and 'leftist' appear reprehensible, no matter how moderate they may be, and to make things labeled 'conservative' and 'rightist'

²⁸KRMG Editorial, October 25, October 26, 1967.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰KRMG Editorial, October 25, October 26, 1967.

³¹Although both the World and Tribune are published in the same building, they are separately owned and managed.

appear laudable, no matter how far-fetched these may be.³²

The Tribune, in an editorial, described the need for open housing concluding that they could not "endorse any ordinance until we see exactly what it says. But we do endorse the principle (of open housing)." At the same time the Tribune also endorsed "the right of all Tulsans to vote yea or nay upon that principle."³³ The Tulsa World did not editorially comment on the question. The weekly Negro newspaper, The Oklahoma Eagle, vigorously supported open housing and constantly encouraged Negroes not only to be in favor of open housing, but also to actively support efforts to bring it about.

Most of the other news media did not assume an official position. The reason for not taking a position was explained by one manager of a local television station. The owner felt that because of his activity in community and civic affairs, any stand taken by the station would affect his position, for the issue was "too hot to handle."

Trade Associations

The trade associations concerned with open housing included the home builders, real estate brokers, mortgage and loan companies, and apartment owners. The home

³²Hanson, p. 220.

³³Tulsa Tribune, October 9, 1967.

builders and realtors were generally considered as opposed to any effective ordinance. This view was strengthened by the disclosure of the minutes of a closed meeting attended by both realtors and home builders at Lake Eufaula during the first part of October. The highlight of this meeting was a speech by Mr. Cook, a real estate lobbyist from Illinois. Cook emphatically told the audience that open housing "invites riots, it encourages slums, ghettos, rats." Cook cautioned against a negative program opposing open housing. Instead, he advised the realtor and home builder that they should be an active part in the drafting because "Its far, far easier to block it here than to tear into it after its already down in black and white."

Cook then proceeded to outline certain provisions that should be in an ordinance:

1. "If faced with an ordinance insist on it being submitted to a referendum." Because according to Cook no referendum had ever passed, "it even lost in Berkeley, California, and if it couldn't pass in Berkeley, it couldn't pass anywhere."
2. Include "An anti-testing law whereby each complaint will have to be a bonafide complaint," not a test case.
3. Provide that complaintants post a bond, and "If they lose, they also lose their bond. You lose your bond, why not them?"

4. To prevent "inciting and exciting people," provide for an anti-panic provision to make the "solicitation of non-white buyers for white areas," illegal.
5. Demand an anti-panic clause to prevent people from being forced to sell. "It's in ours (Illinois) and Nebraska took it from us. It is now referred to as the Nebraska law ..."
6. Prevent any "prohibitive clause on advertising for sale on the grounds of loss of value." For with a prohibitive clause, a person cannot imply a preference for a certain group of people in advertising their home for sale.
7. Insist that the ordinance not work through a Human Rights Commission, but have it court enforced. Then complaintants would have to hire lawyers at their own expense.

Whether this outline provided a guide for the actions of the Real Estate Board and the Home Builders Association is questionable. However, within a month after the closed meeting, the Tulsa Real Estate Board publicly stated that segregated housing does exist in Tulsa and for the first time called for the adoption of a compromise ordinance.³⁴

³⁴Tulsa World, November 15, 1967.

The compromise ordinance was the Nebraska law which states that:

Whoever, by threats, intimidation, coercion, extortion or conspiracy induces or attempts to induce any person owning an interest in real property in the State of Nebraska to sell, rent, or lease or not to sell, rent, or lease such real property to any because of such person's race, religion, color, creed, or national origin or ancestry, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Violation of the proposed ordinance would be punishable by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars or a thirty day jail term or both.

Whether the compromise proposal was a part of an organized program, similar to Cook's outline, was not known. What was known was that certain realtors had been working to solve the open housing question well before the Eufaula meeting. One realtor, Jim Kirkpatrick, was extremely active in this area. Kirkpatrick headed one of Tulsa's largest real estate firms, and during 1967, served as president of the Tulsa Real Estate Association. He was an active member of the Associated Committee and the Mayor's Special Committee. Early in the summer of 1967, Kirkpatrick publicly stated that Tulsa was "not going to lick this whole proposition (racial segregation) until we get open housing."³⁵ Kirkpatrick maintained a definite preference to the voluntary approach. However, if it did not work, Kirkpatrick thought "we will probably end up with an

³⁵Tulsa Tribune, June 24, 1967.

ordinance making open housing a matter of law, rather than choice."³⁶

The Home Builders Association was less active in this issue than the realtors, but they were also committed to a voluntary approach. The president of the Tulsa Home Builders Association, Don Herrington, did not believe an ordinance was necessary, since "we have open housing in Tulsa under federal law, with housing available from sixty-five dollars to four hundred dollars a month in all sections of Tulsa."³⁷ Both the home builders and the realtors took an active role in the issue. They, for the most part, took the position that they were representing the private home owners. As early as June of 1967, they suggested an ordinance to integrate the rental market, but they maintained a solid opposition to any ordinance concerning the sale of property. Although the realtors participated in numerous public forums, they did not try to organize public opinion against an open housing ordinance. Instead, they concentrated on making any ordinance that would be passed acceptable to them.

The involvement of the mortgage companies was a peripheral one. During a closed meeting of the special committee, representatives of mortgage companies laid out

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷From a panel discussion of the women's division of the Tulsa branch of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

the factors they consider in financing a home. In essence, they considered only risk -- not race -- in granting a loan. Turning away a Negro was turning away a potential customer. There was no presumption of a bad investment until there was a pattern to indicate one. The general feeling of the mortgage companies was that there should be open housing as soon as possible. "We want the fastest vehicle that will secure an effective and proper solution."³⁸ A voluntary approach was thought to be that vehicle. The desire of the mortgage companies for a voluntary ordinance was not that a compulsory ordinance would adversely effect them, but because of a feeling of maintaining the inviolability of private property, their role was mainly as an outsider offering advice rather than an active participant.

The large apartment owners in Tulsa offered a sharp contrast to the above mentioned groups. Representing the apartment owners on the Mayor's Special Committee was Jimmy Jones, the largest apartment owner in Tulsa. Jones, in a closed session, came out in favor of a strong ordinance to protect the apartment owners.³⁹ This would lessen the possibility of whites moving out of apartment units when a Negro moved in. As far as this writer was able to

³⁸From an interview with Don Dorchester, January 10, 1968.

³⁹Minutes of closed meeting of the Mayor's Special Committee, November 15, 1967.

determine, no apartment owner publicly came out in favor of an ordinance. The only public statements by apartment owners were made by small owners acting as individuals. These individuals launched many of the bitter attacks at the open meetings against an ordinance, and against Negroes in general.

Citizens for Tulsa

Almost all controversial questions prompt the appearance of a radical fringe. The open housing issue was no exception. The creation and organization of this element was done by Mrs. Emma Lee Morris. Mrs. Morris was a retired school teacher who had devoted her retirement to working for conservative causes such as the John Birch Society. She viewed the demand for open housing as a smaller part of "a plot to destroy our nation."⁴⁰ According to Mrs. Morris, "the intent of open housing is to force Negroes and whites to amalgamate, forcing the protoplasmic nature of the two into molds which would be inferior."⁴¹

Mrs. Morris' plans to defeat open housing had only one point, to have any ordinance submitted to a vote of the people. In her zeal to insure this, she and a friend purchased a large space in both daily newspapers costing

⁴⁰From an interview with Mrs. Emma Morris, November 23, 1967.

⁴¹Ibid.

three hundred and thirty-five dollars. Mrs. Morris paid two hundred dollars of the cost out of a small pension she received. In this space she published what she thought was an initiative petition to be clipped out and signed by people interested in having any ordinance submitted to a vote of the people. This informal petition received limited response. A small number of people met and formed a committee, Citizens For Tulsa, which continued the effort to bring an open housing ordinance to a vote of the people. Mrs. Morris was elected the temporary president, Roy James Brown and Albert Golden were elected treasurer and parliamentarian, respectively. The purpose of Citizens For Tulsa was to complement the newspaper petition by individually circulating petitions. Their goal was to obtain 15,000 signatures by November 15, demanding a city-wide vote of the people on the open housing question. Mrs. Morris later split away from Citizens For Tulsa forming another group, Citizens For Greater Tulsa. The division occurred because of a general disillusionment of Mrs. Morris with both Brown and Golden. Both men arrived in Tulsa only a week before the first open meeting and, according to Mrs. Morris, they seemed to be interested only in the raising and handling of the money.

The effect of both groups in changing opinions was slight, if any. The size of both groups probably never exceeded twenty members. Although the demand for a vote was a widespread feeling, their bitter attack on Negroes

at the open committee meetings alienated all but the most conservative Tulsans. Even their initiative petition campaign was discovered not to be legally binding. They then used the campaign for signatures as a means of persuasion. They said the Mayor "is a creature of politics ... he doesn't understand anything but votes."⁴² Yet even this effort fell far short of what they had hoped. Two months after they had started, they presented to the Mayor a petition with 4,452 signatures.

All of these interest groups exerted pressure upon the city commission to make its decision favorable to their respective views. In attempting to persuade the commissioners, each group had certain strengths as well as weaknesses. The ultra-conservative groups probably had the least strength in that their membership was small and their views too extreme. The trade associations probably had the greatest strength of the various pressure groups. They achieved their strength by appearing as a moderating and compromising force between the conservative and the civil rights groups. The proponents of a strong ordinance were not as effective as the trade associations. This ineffectiveness was mainly due to the limited political power of the Negro in Tulsa which will be discussed in Chapter IV.

⁴²Albert Golden quoted in Tulsa World, October 17, 1967.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND OPEN HOUSING

This chapter will be an examination of why the political institutions in Tulsa responded to pressures by interest groups and committee reports as they did. The political institutions under consideration will be the political party system and the Board of City Commissioners. This will include a discussion of the structure of Tulsa political parties and the political climate in which they operate. It will also include an analysis of the structure of the Board of City Commissioners, and a closer view of their response to the issue.

The passage of the voluntary open housing ordinance by the City Commission was not received by proponents of open housing as a solution. A Negro professional man commented that

The voluntary approach in the last fifty years in Tulsa has resulted in a city within a city. Those who profess the voluntary approach do not have to live with the grim reality of a ghetto or slum.¹

The decision of the City Commission was especially embittering to the supporters of open housing because of

¹Dr. Christopher at a forum at the All Souls Unitarian Church quoted in the Tulsa World, October 1, 1967.

the unfavorable response to the various pressures that they had brought to bear in favor of open housing. These pressures were applied by important elements of the society including religious, civic, and civil rights groups. However, probably the most important factor embittering the proponents of open housing was the failure of the Mayor and City Commission to accept the conclusions of community committees set up to study the question. More specifically, the Associated Committee on Housing's report, which came out in September of 1967, in favor of a strong ordinance, was rejected as not factual enough. More important, however, to the supporters of open housing, was the refusal of the Commissioners to adopt the majority report of the Mayor's Special Committee.

Political Parties

During the open housing controversy, both of Tulsa's major political parties were careful in avoiding the issue. The reasons for this inaction lay in the nature of the political parties and in the political system in which they operated. In analyzing these two factors, one should note that the city of Tulsa has no separate political party organization. This was primarily due to the enactment of a merit system eliminating patronage which had been an important means of control. With the disappearance of patronage at the local level, both party "organizations were disbanded and their functions assumed by the county

organizations."² However, because of the large size of the city of Tulsa in relation to the county, members living in Tulsa easily controlled the county organization. For this reason the discussion of the political parties, although technically county organizations, is highly applicable to city politics.

In Tulsa the Democratic party was by far the largest political party. About sixty-eight per cent of the city voters were registered as Democrats, yet only about forty-five per cent of the voters consistently supported the party.³ The results of the local elections in the last twenty years showed alternating periods of Democratic and Republican dominance. The local Democratic organization had for several years been divided into two major factions. One of the factions was controlled by conservative upper middle class businessmen. The members of this faction were generally well-to-do lawyers, successful businessmen, and executives. From this faction came much of the large contributions to the Democratic party. It was noteworthy, although not surprising, that the Democratic candidates for local offices were usually recruited from this element. Illustrative of this point were the two Democratic City Commissioners elected in 1966. One was an executive of a local soft drink firm; the other was a retired treasurer

²Hanson, p. 206.

³Hanson, p. 202.

of a large utility company.

Although the business faction usually won the party nominations, another faction of the Democratic party was often in control of the organization.⁴ This faction was composed of what was referred to as the "gritty element of Tulsa Democrats."⁵ The components of this gritty element were mainly union men, intellectuals, and Negroes, and was typified by twice county chairman Tommy Frasier. Frasier, because of his outspoken liberal views⁶, was often bitterly condemned, and on one occasion the more conservative elements of the party tried to have him removed from the position of county chairman. Yet Frasier played an important role in the party, for under his direction the gritty element often worked hard to produce Democratic votes. However, this drive for Democratic votes varied according to the candidates and issues. In district, state, and national elections, where the candidates frequently represented liberal views, this faction had worked hard in securing votes. When it came to local elections, however, this liberal coalition tended not to exert itself in gathering votes because of the conservative views of the party candidates.

⁴This paradox is explained by the use of a direct primary to select candidates which will be explained later.

⁵Hanson.

⁶For a fuller discussion of Frasier's views see Hanson, pps. 206-208.

The liberal views of Frasier, which alienated many Democratic financial supporters, and the failure of the liberal coalition to work hard for local candidates created bitter arguments within the party. In 1967, in an effort to reunite these two factions, Maynard Ungerman was elected county chairman. Ungerman seemed to span both worlds of the Tulsa Democratic party. On one hand he was a successful lawyer and highly active in civic and religious activities which made him highly attractive to the businessmen. At the same time he was well known for his liberal views especially on civil rights and among this faction was a feeling that he was Frasier's "man in the race."⁷

The Republican party in Tulsa was also divided into two factions, although the division was not as bitter as the Democrats. The party division was between a moderately conservative wing and an ultra-conservative one. The moderates are usually businessmen and as in the Democratic party these businessmen won their party nomination for local offices. The petroleum industry was a very important element in this faction. In fact, in 1967, the three leading Tulsa Republicans were or had been connected with the petroleum industry. Mayor Hewgley, before his entrance into politics, was an independent oil man; Street Commissioner Robert LaFortune was the son of a prominent

⁷Tulsa World, February 9, 1967.

oil man; and the Republican County Chairman, Edward Lawson, was the president of an independent oil company.

The other faction of Tulsa Republicans could be aptly described as ultra-conservatives. Members of this faction seldom won public office, but when they did they tended to become much more moderate in their views. This ultra-conservative faction was active in the party organization especially at the precinct meetings and county conventions. The members of this faction were staunch Republicans but they seemed to have been more interested in promoting their own ideology than the goals of the Republican party. Indicative of their views and of their strength was the passage at the 1968 county convention, over the opposition of the Republican leadership, a resolution calling for the impeachment of Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren.

This brief analysis of the structure of Tulsa's political parties was not intended to be extensive, but to be a basis upon which to understand the factors influencing their action with regard to the open housing issue. From any analysis of the political parties one could not fail to see the dominance of conservative thought. This was not generally a reactionary ideology, but essentially a reluctance to change. The split in the parties also limited their actions as none of the factions was powerful enough to play an effective role, independently of the others, even if it had wanted. Although these were important factors working on the political parties, they

were not the most important. The most important factor involved is generally considered the most important goal of a political party, that is the winning of elections. In the reality of elections, political figures had to balance the advantages and disadvantages of supporting an open housing ordinance. There were various reasons why the support of open housing would have been a liability for the political parties.

One of the reasons why support of open housing would have been a liability was the structure of the electoral system. The city officials were all nominated by city-wide direct primaries and were also elected by at-large elections. These at-large elections tended to eliminate candidates expressing minority views. The candidates then tended to reflect the mainstream of Tulsa's political thinking. Even in elections where one party totally dominated, the election of a candidate with divergent views riding into office was slight, as the candidate would probably have been eliminated by his own party in the direct primary. Since the electoral system usually produced stereotype candidates expressing similar views, the elections were usually centered around the personalities of the candidates. The emphasis on personalities rather than issues put a premium on potential candidates not taking positions that would have antagonized voters. The actions of one candidate for a city office provided an example of this. The candidate had served on a

committee to study open housing. While on the committee, he was a proponent of an effective open housing ordinance during closed sessions. Later, when he ran for a city office, he came out in favor of the voluntary approach as a solution to open housing.

Thus, in Tulsa, for various reasons, the people elected to public office tended to represent the mainstream of political thought. But, what was the mainstream of thinking on the open housing issue? Although the determination of public thinking can often be difficult, most observers were of the opinion that if an open housing ordinance were put to a vote it would be defeated. Probably a better indicator of public opinion on open housing was the telephone poll taken by a local television station. The television station had a nightly feature of asking a question and allowing people to voice their approval or disapproval by telephoning. On October 6, 1967, they asked the question, "Should Tulsa have a fair housing ordinance?" Seventy-five per cent (748 calls) of the people calling replied that one was not needed, while the remaining twenty-five per cent (248 calls) replied affirmatively to the question. Two months later, on December 7, 1967, the same question was repeated. This time, sixty-eight per cent (3,424 calls) responded negatively, while thirty-two per cent (1,628 calls)

responded positively.⁸ This telephone vote may not have reflected an exact representation of the opinions of Tulsans on this issue, but it did agree with private estimations.

Opposition in Tulsa to open housing was mainly based upon a feeling that traditionally cherished beliefs would be violated. Many Tulsans felt that an open housing ordinance was an unreasonable encroachment of government into the area of private property. The right of private property was interpreted as the right to sell property to whomever a person wished. As a speaker at a forum discussion commented, "If this is passed the only thing a person can do with his property is pay taxes on it and keep it up."⁹ Another reason for opposition was a widespread feeling that the passage of an open housing ordinance would have resulted in the white neighborhoods being "deluged" by Negroes. This mass migration of Negroes would have decreased the value of property, lowered the standards of the schools, and in general turned Tulsa into

⁸The difference in the number of calls can be attributed to the fact that secretaries had to answer each call individually at the time the first question was posed. By the time the question was repeated, an answering service had been installed which allowed more calls to be received.

⁹Minutes from an open meeting of the Mayor's Special Committee, November 1, 1967.

into one large slum area.¹⁰

Many people felt the majority of Tulsans were opposed to open housing. This opposition was more toward an ordinance enforcing open housing rather than the principle. Even individuals holding highly conservative opinions of Negroes often said that they felt Negroes should be allowed to move into a white neighborhood if they could purchase a home.

Another reason for the limited role of political parties in the open housing issue was the limited role Negroes played in Tulsa political parties. The Negroes in Tulsa were predominately Democrats, yet they were a limited factor in Democratic politics. This was because Negroes were essentially a part of the liberal coalition of the Democratic party, and as pointed out, this coalition was not a potent factor in city elections. The Negroes impotence in city politics was illustrated by the fact that the only elected Negro official in Tulsa was a Democrat. He was Curtis Lawson, who was elected as a State Representative from legislative district number 73, which was mainly a Negro populated district. In the last two years the Republicans had tried to attract Negroes away from the Democratic party. In April of 1967, Shirlie Scoggins, a Negro civil rights worker, was moved into the

¹⁰This writer found that even people living in twenty-five to fifty thousand dollar homes expressed the fear that this would happen to their neighborhoods.

Republican parties executive committee. Although Mrs. Scoggins had been a Democrat, she changed parties because "I don't think the Negro should be tied to just one political party and because I am a firm believer in the two party system."¹¹ Even with this development, the role of the Negro in both political parties was one of producing votes rather than making policies.

In the gathering of votes, Negroes had done their job admirably. It was a generally accepted fact that a solid "bloc of 8,000 or so Negro votes could be harvested by a systematic effort."¹² Even this use of block voting by Negroes was a limited political resource, for this was not done to promote Negro causes, but done to promote the goals of individuals outside the Negro community. Efforts to capture this bloc vote were made by the parties to promote the candidacy of one of their members or by the city to promote a bond issue. The Negroes role was to gather votes and not to participate in the policy making circles.

However, during the open housing controversey there was an indication of a shift in the Negro voting pattern. This occurred in a bond election held on November 28, 1967, dealing with increasing Tulsa's water and sewage facilities. Passage of the bond issue was supported by the

¹¹Interview with Shirlie Scoggins, November 14, 1967.

¹²Hanson, p. 219.

daily newspapers, civic groups, Chamber of Commerce, and leading members of both political parties. Unlike previous bond issues which had been heavily supported by Negro leaders, individuals within the Negro community worked actively against the proposal. Subsequently, the Negro precincts voted as much as fifteen to one against the proposal. Within the bond issue there were many projects aimed to help the Negro community, but not one of the twenty-five predominately Negro precincts voted approval. Whereas, the previous summer in a bond election in which no benefits directly accrued to the Negro community, twenty-three of the predominately Negro precincts voted their approval. Many observers attributed the large "No" vote by Negroes as a reaction to the city administration's handling of the housing issue. According to Father O'Brien, it was "a repudiation of City Hall because the officials didn't recognize the human, personal needs of north side residents. It is our hope that now such needs will be recognized."¹³

Although bloc voting may have meant the difference in the passage of bond issues, in the elections of city officials the effectiveness of bloc voting by Negroes was limited. In city elections, there was little difference between the candidates as far as the Negro was concerned. This was clearly shown in the 1968 mayoralty race. In

¹³Tulsa World, November 29, 1967.

this election many Negroes voted for the Republican candidate, Mayor Hewgley, because he had an open door to Negroes, although Negroes generally agreed that there was little difference between the two candidates. However, the Negro vote could not be used effectively as a swing vote; that is, swinging their vote depending on the issue or what the political parties offer, mainly because parties can win elections without their votes.

The structure of political parties, the electoral system, the attitudes of Tulsans, and the limited political power of Negroes help explain why the political parties responded as they did to the issue. These factors have also served to prevent the election of individuals representing minority views to city offices. These factors, while effecting the political parties, also shaped the action of the policy making body for the city of Tulsa.

The Board of City Commissioners

The policy making body for the city of Tulsa was the Board of City Commissioners. The Board consisted of the Mayor and four commissioners¹⁴ each with one vote and serving a two year term. During the open housing controversy, the Mayor and two commissioners were Republicans.

¹⁴The Commissioners are: (1) Water and Sewage, (2) Police and Fire, (3) Streets and Public Property, (4) Finance and Revenue. There is also an elected city auditor but he does not have a vote and does not participate in policy making so will not be discussed here.

On the open housing controversy Mayor Hewgley was the dominate figure in developing the policy of the city administration. Early in the summer of 1967, Mayor Hewgley had his aides working with leading Negroes on the open housing question. Out of these meetings the Mayor's aides observed that the Negro community would consider as adequate progress by the city administration the adoption of a resolution stating that the City of Tulsa supported open housing and the establishment of a "broad based committee of community leaders to meet and advise the City Commission of the best course to be taken."¹⁵

Many Negro leaders felt that quick action by the city administration in the summer of 1967 would have prevented or diminished the subsequent demands for an open housing ordinance. More important, quick action would have created a feeling that negotiation could be an effective instrument. However, this action was not taken and instead of the Mayor controlling the issue, the issue became a rallying point for all groups interested in promoting civil rights. Only after considerable agitation had built up did the Mayor take action by appointing a committee to study the question.

This committee, known as the Mayor's Special Committee,¹⁵ met with considerable criticism. The main criticism was over the establishment of a new committee

¹⁵Notes by Aides to the Mayor (Mayor's file).

instead of utilizing the existing Community Relations Commission. KOTV, the CBS television affiliate in Tulsa, stated in an editorial "that in this case it would be shoddy planning ... not to place the fact finding job in the hands of the Community Relations Commission."¹⁶

Curtis Lawson, Negro state representative from Tulsa, believed that the purpose of the new committee was to do again what the Associated Committee¹⁷ had already done.¹⁸

Exactly why the Mayor created a new committee was not clear. The Mayor stated that the reason for creating a new committee was because the Community Relations Commission was not designed to function in this capacity. This may have been correct, but other explanations were possible. The reason for the Mayor's action may have been because the Community Relations Commission had already publicly announced that it favored an ordinance approach and the Mayor believed the matter was still an open question. However, this would not seem consistent with the Mayor's appointing to the Mayor's Special Committee many members whom he must have known were privately and in many cases publicly committed to the ordinance approach. The Mayor also may have been critical about the speed with

¹⁶The activities of the Mayor's Special Committee have been discussed in Chapter II.

¹⁷A KOTV Editorial Report, August 30, 1967.

¹⁸Private interview with Curtis Lawson, November 14, 1967.

which the Associated Committee's report was drawn up and adopted by the Community Relations Commission. The committee had reportedly done very little work on the question prior to the summer of 1967. Only after other groups had pushed the question of open housing did the Associated Committee develop its report. This resulted in a report which the Mayor felt lacked the documentation necessary to substantiate their findings and views.¹⁹ Probably the most important reason for the Mayor's action was a feeling that the role of the Community Relations Commission was to have been that of an impartial board, but because of its recommendations of policy the commission had forfeited that role; therefore, it became necessary to appoint a new board that did not have prior actions to restrain its movements.

The work of the Special Committee was divided into two broad phases. The first phase was the open committee meetings covering the eight questions.²⁰ The main goal of the open meetings was to gather data relevant to the eight questions under consideration. With the gathering of data as a criteria for success, the open meetings were a failure for several reasons. The first reason for the failure of the open meetings lay in the very nature of the issue. The discussion of open housing evoked numerous real and unreal fears. The speakers tended to comment more on the

¹⁹Tulsa World, September 28, 1967.

²⁰The eight questions used as a basis for the committee are found in Chapter II.

general place that the Negro should have in American society rather than on open housing. Although the meetings drew large numbers of people, they tended to be the same people each time until by the second or third meetings one could identify the speakers and their position. The most important reason for the failure of the open meetings was that the people who attended were committed; that is, they were so sure of the rightness of their views they were unwilling to compromise. The confluence of people highly committed for and against open housing often produced sparks, such as in the fourth open meeting. There, one of the speakers began using the word "nigger" which almost led to physical violence. There were a few people who had done a great deal of work to secure facts; however, these people were by far the minority. Most of the speakers seemed to believe so strongly in their position that they felt facts were not necessary to support their views.

With the failure of the open meetings to secure facts, the special committee members were divided into subcommittees to answer the questions. All the questions were well answered and documented, save one. The main conclusion reached was that racial segregation in housing existed and that open housing was essential for the future of Tulsa. The only real dissension on the committee was over the question of the best "vehicle" to achieve open housing. This resulted in the submission by the special committee of two reports to the Mayor. Although the

majority of the committee members favored a strong ordinance, the submission of a minority report favoring a voluntary approach gave the Mayor and commissioners an alternative. The Board of Commissioners took this option and accepted the minority report as their position.

There are various reasons why the Board of Commissioners adopted the minority report. Many of the factors discussed earlier that influenced the political parties also effected the Commissioners. These were the structure of the parties, the attitudes of Tulsans, and the limited political power of Negroes. These factors were accentuated by the nearness of the city elections.²¹ While considering the special committee reports, Mayor Hewgley had lengthy discussion with his aids on the repercussion of a voluntary approach. His aides summarized the political consequence of such action as:

1. The Negroes and preachers will raise hell.
2. Hopefully they will attack you strongly verbally.
3. Then they along with the County Chairman of the Democratic party will urge the Democratic candidates to take a position for a compulsory ordinance.
4. If the Democratic candidate takes a position for the ordinance he will be defeated.
5. If he refuses to take a position for the open housing, they will be angry at him last and vent their scorn on him much more strongly than on you.²²

²¹The open housing controversy developed in the fall and winter of 1967 with the general elections of city officers scheduled for the second of April, 1968.

²²From Mayor Hewgley's files on open housing.

Thus, the pressure of elections every two years influenced the actions of the Mayor and the Republican Commissioners. However, one could be too cynical in analyzing the open housing decision strictly on partisan political factors, since there seemed to be an overwhelming acceptance by the commissioners of the voluntary approach as shown by the unanimous bipartisan acceptance of the Mayor's views. In fact, the only commissioner who favored a strong ordinance was Republican Robert LaFortune. There appeared to have been a sincere feeling among both Democratic and Republican commissioners that they could not legislate morality, and that housing should be a matter of choice, not law.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis of this study was that the Negroes in Tulsa have limited means to achieve their goals through the political structure. The issue approach was used to test the validity of this hypothesis. Although the verification of a hypothesis could often be highly subjective, this writer believes that any objective analysis of the political process in Tulsa would find that the political power of the Negro was limited. Some reasons for this limited power have been shown in this study to be the electoral system, the political party structure, and the commission form of government.

These factors that limited the political power of Negroes in Tulsa were similar to the factors limiting the political power of Negroes in some northern cities. James Wilson, in a study of six large northern cities¹ found that:

Where various factors have weakened the city organization and produced a situation of factional rivalry and imperfect solidarity, the Negro political organization will be similarly gripped by internecine warfare and

¹The cities studied were Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York.

competing leaders.²

A similar situation was found in Tulsa where the Negro politics reflected the general political system of the city. The factionalization of the political party leadership was also found within the Negro community. This was clearly illustrated in the open housing controversy where the Negro community was united emotionally for an ordinance, but each Negro group tried to achieve an ordinance independently.

Another of Wilson's findings was that:

Other things being equal, Negro political strength in city organizations tends to be directly proportional to the size and density of the Negro population and inversely proportional to the size of the basic political unit.³

While the Negro population in Tulsa was small there was a concentration of Negroes which might have given a certain degree of political influence. However, this potential political resource was offset by two structural factors present in Tulsa. One of the factors was the structure of the city government, Tulsa's commission form of government was felt by students of government to be an anachronism. The commission form of government was not only deleterious to the efficiency of government, but also inadequate in representing the views of the citizens. The

²Harry A. Bailey Jr. (ed.), Negro Politics in America (Columbus, Ohio, 1967), p. 316.

³Ibid, p. 319.

commissioners were primarily administrators and on the formation of policy, especially on social problems, one often found it hard to pinpoint the responsibility for such action.

The second factor was the structure of the electoral system. With an at-large system of elections, there was little possibility of Negroes being elected to a city office. The large size of the basic political unit dilutes the potential influence of Negro concentration. Instead of small basic units, such as wards, where there could be a predominance of Negroes, there was only one large political unit in which Negroes were a relatively small and voiceless minority. Since the Negro did not have a voice in the city government the possibility of Negro demands being successfully considered was lessened.

Due to the nature of this study, there were limitations in making generalizations concerning the political power of Negroes. Probably, the most important factor limiting the validity of any generalization was the size of the study. Using only one issue, to a degree, limits the accuracy in proposing general principles that would be valid in all attempts by Tulsa Negroes to influence governmental decisions. Factors that were presented in the open housing controversy, and which influenced the outcome of it may not be constant factors in other policy-making issues. To have more accurately evaluated the political power of the Negro in Tulsa one could have

utilized several issues. By taking three or four issues and eliminating extraneous factors in the various issues a higher degree of accuracy in making generalizations could have been obtained. This greater accuracy would have also allowed for a more in depth analysis of future interreactions between Negroes and the city government. However, even taking this limitation into account, it seems unlikely that the results of a broader study would have conflicted with the basic conclusion of this study.

In the beginning of the study, this writer raised a basic question, is the political power of Negroes in Tulsa limited. In answering this question, many other questions that could not be answered by this study also emerged. One of the first questions to arise was a logical extension of this study. This question could be stated as: What factors must be present to cause outbreaks of racial violence? If demands are not met through legitimate means, and this study has shown that sometimes they are not, the illegitimate or violent means might be used. A study of the effect of this inability to influence governmental decisions would not only be a valuable study in minority group politics, but it also might be valuable in determining how to avoid this type of frustration. More importantly though, this might allow for a much more basic hypothesis. This hypothesis might be: "If demands cannot be met through the use of legitimate means, then other, including violent means, might be used."

A second possible area of future study might be an evaluation of the Negro leadership in Tulsa. This writer often found that during the course of the study Negro "leaders" were by and large ineffective in controlling the destiny of the Negro community. The white power structure did things for the Negroes, to the Negroes or because of the Negroes, but things were not done by the Negro community. However, during this study there were indications, by the actions of younger leaders, that Negroes would rely less on outside aid and instead concentrate on pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. A careful evaluation of this shift in emphasis by Negro leaders and its effectiveness would contribute to the study of Negro politics.

Since case studies are really only applicable to the unit under consideration, this writer sees the need for a large scale study in the area of Negro politics. Although there have been many studies of Northern and Southern cities, there has been no comparative studies of Negro politics in Southwestern cities. This would be of value since:

The portent is for continued activism, and not all of the organized or controlled sort, in Negro ghettos in cities everywhere. There is nothing to suggest that the cities of the Southwest will be spared this agony eternally. And it is equally evident from most of these

studies that only nominal attention is being given to this problem.⁴

These are only a few avenues of possible future studies to add to any contribution this study has made. It is this writers opinion that these studies and others are needed to fill the vacuum that presently exists in the area of Negro politics in the Southwest.

⁴Robert W. Glasgow, "Urban Politics in the Southwest: An Analysis," Urban Politics in the Southwest, ed. Leonard E. Goodall (Tempe: Arizona State University Press, 1967), p. 348.

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APPENDIX B

THE NAACP YOUTH COUNCIL'S PROPOSED FAIR HOUSING ORDINANCE CITY OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA

SECTION I. POLICY

- A. Discrimination in the social and economic life of the City of Tulsa against any person because of race, religion, color, ancestry, national origin or place of birth is contrary to American principles.
- B. The harmful effects produced by discrimination in the City of Tulsa, particularly in the area of housing, increase the cost of government and reduce public revenues by increased mortality, disease, crime, vice and juvenile delinquency, fires and the risk of fire, inter group tensions and other evils, thereby resulting in great injury to the public safety, health, welfare and morals of the community.

SECTION II. DEFINITIONS

- A. The term "discrimination" means any difference in treatment based on race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin or place of birth and includes segregation.
- B. The term "person" includes an association, partnership or corporation as well as a natural person. The term "person" as applied to partnerships or other associations includes their members, and as applied to corporations, includes their officers and directors. The term "person" also includes individual action in a fiduciary capacity whether appointed by a court or not.
- C. The term "owner" includes the lessee, sublessee, assignee managing agent or other person having the right of ownership or possession, or the right to sell, rent, or lease any real property.
- D. The term "financial institution" means any person as defined herein regularly engaged in the business of lending money or guaranteeing loans.

- E. The term "real estate broker and/or salesman" means any person or persons as defined herein who for a fee or other valuable consideration sells, purchases, exchanges or rents or negotiates, or offers or attempts to negotiate the sale, purchase, exchange or rental of the real property or housing unit or commercial unit of another or holds himself out as engaged in the business of selling, purchasing, exchanging or renting the real property, housing unit or commercial unit of another, or collects rental for the use of such property of another.
- F. The term "real property" means any parcel or parcels of land, or lot or lots, whether or not contiguous, available for the building of one or more housing units or commercial units, owned or otherwise subject to the control of one or more persons as herein defined and includes such housing units and commercial units as herein defined.
- G. The term "housing unit" shall mean any single family dwelling, or multiple family dwelling, including mobile house trailers used for permanent living, which is designed to be used or occupied, as the home, homesite, residence or sleeping place of one or more human beings located in the City of Tulsa.
- H. The term "commercial unit" shall mean any office, store or business establishment which is designed for the purpose of carrying on of any trade, profession or business.

SECTION III. PROHIBITED ACTS

- A. It shall be unlawful for any owner, real estate broker or real estate salesman, or any other person having the right to sell, rent, lease, sub-lease, assign, offer for inspection or to otherwise deal with real property to deny or to refuse to negotiate for the sale, rent, lease, sublease or assignment or other transfer of the title, leasehold or other interest in real property or to refuse to permit an inspection of such real property or to represent that such real property is not available for inspection because of or on account of any person's race, religion, color, ancestry or national origin.
- B. It shall be unlawful to publish, circulate, display or cause to be published, circulated, issued or displayed, any communication, notice, advertisement, lease or sublease, assignment, transfer or listing of real property which indicates any preference, limitation, specification or discrimination based on race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin.

- C. It shall be unlawful to discriminate in lending money, guaranteeing loans, accepting mortgages or otherwise making available funds, terms or conditions for the purchase, acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, repair or maintenance of real property because of race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin.
- D. It shall be unlawful to solicit or induce any person to sell, lease, list for sale, assign or to encourage the transfer of real property on the ground of loss of value, increase in crime, or decline of the quality of schools, due to the present or prospective entry into the neighborhood of a person or persons of another race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin.

SECTION IV. ENFORCEMENT

- A. Any person claiming to be aggrieved by a discriminatory act or practice prohibited by this ordinance may make, sign and file a written complaint under oath which shall state the name and address of the person and/or place at which the alleged discriminatory act or practice occurred and which shall set forth the particulars thereof and contain such other information as may be required. Such complaints shall be filed with the City Auditor within thirty days after the alleged discriminatory act or practice has been committed and shall be transmitted to the office of the City Attorney.
- B. Upon receipt of a complaint as herein provided, the office of the City Attorney shall promptly conduct or cause to be conducted an investigation of the allegations contained in said complaint. If at the conclusion of such investigation the office of the City Attorney determines that the person against whom the complaint has been made has committed a discriminatory act or practice as defined herein it shall prosecute said person in the Municipal Court of the City of Tulsa.
- C. The person against whom such complaint has been made shall be notified of the complaint made against him and served with a copy of the complaint and notified of the time and location of the proceedings.
- D. If the Office of City Attorney determines at any state in the proceedings that a discriminatory act or practice has not been committed as alleged, it shall enter an order dismissing the complaint and send copies thereof to all interested parties.

SECTION V. PENALTY

Any person or persons as defined in this ordinance violating any of the provisions of this ordinance shall be guilty of an offense against the City of Tulsa and upon being found guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$100 nor less than \$50 and including costs for each offense. Each day that any violation of the provisions of this ordinance continues shall constitute a separate offense.

SECTION VI. SEVERABILITY

The provisions of this ordinance are severable and if any provisions, sentence, clause of part thereof is held illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional or inapplicable to any person or circumstance, such illegality, invalidity, unconstitutionality or inapplicability shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions, sentences, clauses, or parts of ordinance in their application to other persons or circumstances.

APPENDIX C

PROPOSED FAIR HOUSING ORDINANCE

CITY OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA

PLAN A

SECTION I. DECLARATION OF POLICY

It is hereby declared to be the public policy of the City of Tulsa to bring about, through fair and lawful adjustment procedures and infliction of lawful punishment upon recalcitrant violators, the opportunity for each natural person to enjoy, as far as his individual capacity and ability permits, good, wholesome, and decent housing accommodations, without regard for his race, religion, national origin or ancestry.

It is further declared that this policy is grounded upon a recognition of the inalienable right of each natural person to provide for himself and his family, a place of abode according to his own choosing and as sufficient as his individual talents, industry, and circumstances permit and respecting the identical right of other natural persons; and, further, that the denial of such right through considerations solely based upon race, religion, national origin or ancestry is detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Tulsa and constitutes an unjust denial or deprivation of such inalienable right which is properly within the power of government to prevent.

This act is applicable to any and all individuals, firms, partnerships, corporations and other entities, associations and organizations of every kind whatsoever directly or indirectly committing or attempting to commit discrimination based on race, religion, national origin or ancestry in order to deny, inhibit, or otherwise interfere with the lawful acquisition, enjoyment of use or a housing accommodation within the territorial limits of the City of Tulsa.

SECTION II. DEFINITIONS

- A. The term "discrimination" means any difference in treatment based on race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin or place of birth and includes segregation.
- B. The term "person" includes an association, partnership or corporation as well as a natural person. The term "person" as applied to partnerships or other associations includes their members, and as applied to corporation, includes their officers and directors. The term "person" also includes individual action in a fiduciary capacity whether appointed by a court or not.
- C. The term "owner" includes the leasee, subleasee, assignee managing agent or other person having the right of ownership or possession, or the right to sell, rent, or lease any real property.
- D. The term "financial institution" means any person as defined herein regularly engaged in the business of lending money or guaranteeing loans.
- E. The term "real estate broker and/or salesman" means any person or persons as defined herein who for a fee or other valuable consideration sells, purchases, exchanges or rents or negotiates, or offers or attempts to negotiate the sale, purchase, exchange or rental of the real property or housing unit or commercial unit of another or holds himself out as engaged in the business of selling, purchasing, exchanging or renting the real property, housing unit or commercial unit of another, or collects rental for the use of such property of another.
- F. The term "real property" means any parcel or parcels of land, or lot or lots, whether or not contiguous, available for the building of one or more housing units or commercial units, owned or other wise subject to the control of one or more persons as herein defined and includes such housing units and commercial units as herein defined.
- G. The term "housing unit" shall mean any single family dwelling, or multiple family dwelling, including mobile house trailers used for permanent living, which is designed to be used or occupied, as the home, homesite, residence or sleeping place of one or more human beings located in the City of Tulsa.

- H. The term "commercial unit" shall mean any office, store or business establishment which is designed for the purpose of carrying on of any trade, profession or business.
- I. The term "chairman" shall mean the Chairman of the Fair Housing Committee.

SECTION III. PROHIBITED ACTS

- A. It shall be unlawful for any owner, real estate broker or real estate salesman, or any other person having the right to sell, rent, lease, sub-lease, assign, offer for inspection or to other wise deal with real property to deny or to refuse to negotiate for the sale, rent, lease, sub-lease or assignment or other transfer of the title, leasehold or other interest in real property or to refuse to permit an inspection of such real property or to represent that such real property is not available for inspection because of or on account of any person's race, religion, color, ancestry or national origin.
- B. It shall be unlawful to publish, circulate, display or cause to be published, circulated, issued or displayed, any communication, notice, advertisement, lease or sublease, assignment, transfer or listing of real property which indicates any preference, limitation, specification or discrimination based on race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin.
- C. It shall be unlawful to discriminate in lending money, guaranteeing loans, accepting mortgages or other wise making available funds, terms or conditions for the purchase, acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, repair or maintenance of real property because of race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin.
- D. It shall be unlawful to solicit or induce any person to sell, lease, list for sale, assign or to encourage the transfer of real property on the ground of loss of value, increase in crime, or decline of the quality of schools, due to the present or prospective entry into the neighborhood of a person or persons of another race, color, religion, ancestry, or national origin.
- E. It shall be unlawful to engage in any economic reprisal against any other person because that person has opposed any practice forbidden under the terms of this ordinance, or has filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing under the terms of this ordinance.

- F. It shall be unlawful to intentionally aid, abet, incite, compel, or coerce any other person to engage in any of the practices forbidden by this ordinance.
- G. It shall be unlawful to willfully obstruct or prevent any person from complying with the provisions of this ordinance, or to resist, prevent, impede, or interfere with the Commission, or any of its members or representatives in the performance of duty under this ordinance.

SECTION IV. FAIR HOUSING BOARD

There is hereby created a Fair Housing Board which shall consist of seven (7) members, and which shall be appointed by the Mayor, subject to the approval of the City Commission. The Mayor shall designate one of the members of the Board to be its Chairman. Any four members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. The term of office of each member of the Board shall be for three years, and until his successor is qualified; provided, however, that of the members first appointed, two shall be appointed for a term of two years, and four, including the Chairman, shall be appointed for a term of three years. Thereafter, each member shall serve for a term of three years.

SECTION V. DUTIES OF THE FAIR HOUSING BOARD

It shall be the duty of the Fair Housing Board to:

- A. Initiate or receive and investigate complaints charging unlawful housing practices;
- B. Seek conciliation of such complaints, hold hearings, make findings of fact, issue orders and publish its findings of fact and orders in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance.
- C. Render from time to time, but not less than once a year, a written report of its activities and recommendations with respect to fair housing practices to the Mayor and the City Commission; and
- D. Adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes and provisions of this ordinance.

SECTION VI. PROCEDURES

Any person aggrieved in any manner by a violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall file a written complaint setting forth his grievance with the Fair Housing

Board. Said complaint shall state the name and address of the complainant and of the persons against whom the complaint is brought and shall also state the alleged facts surrounding the alleged violations of this ordinance.

After the filing of any complaint, the Chairman of the Board shall designate two of the members to make a prompt investigation in connection therewith; and if such members shall determine after such investigation, that probable cause exists for crediting the allegations of the complaint, they shall immediately endeavor to eliminate the unlawful discriminatory practice complained of by conference, conciliation and persuasion. In case of failure so to eliminate such practice, or in advance thereof, if in their judgment circumstances so warrant, they shall cause to be issued and served in the name of the Board, a written notice together with a copy of such complaint, to all parties, of a full hearing of the complaint, at a time and place to be specified in such notice. The respondent charged with having engaged in or engaged in the unfair housing practice shall have the right to file an answer to the complaint, to appear at the hearing in person or to be represented by counsel, and to submit testimony. The complainant shall be allowed to present testimony in person or by counsel.

Such hearing shall be conducted by the Board. The Board shall not be bound by the strict rules of evidence prevailing in courts of law or equity. At the conclusion of the hearings, the Board shall render a written report and recommendations, which shall be served by mail upon the parties. No report shall be delayed more than sixty days after the date of the issuance of notice for commencement of the first hearing.

The Board, in the event of failure to secure voluntary compliance with the requirements of this ordinance, shall cause the Chairman thereof to certify in writing in the City Attorney that all reasonable efforts of the Board to secure conciliation are concluded in the matter and the Board shall with each certification transmit the Board file, the transcript of the hearing, if any, and in all other respects cooperate with the City Attorney.

Upon certification by the Board the City Attorney may, if in his judgment the violation appears clear and the proof thereof available, institute a charge in the City Courts against the alleged violator and prosecute the same to final conclusion.

SECTION VII. FILING A FALSE COMPLAINT

- A. The willful filing of a false complaint alleging a violation of the ordinance shall be deemed a

misdemeanor and subject to the penalty provided by this ordinance.

- B. The dismissal of a complaint by the Fair Housing Board will not be taken as "ipso facto" proof of malicious or willful filing of a false complaint.

SECTION VIII. PENALTY

Any person or persons as defined in this ordinance violating any of the provisions of this ordinance shall be guilty of an offense against the City of Tulsa and upon being found guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$100. nor less than \$20. and including costs for each offense. Each day that any violation of the provisions of this ordinance continues shall constitute a separate offense.

SECTION IX. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

In order to eliminate prejudice among the various racial, religious and nationality groups in this City and to further good will among such groups, the Commission is authorized to prepare a comprehensive educational program for all residents thereof, in order to eliminate prejudice against such groups.

SECTION X. SEVERABILITY

The provisions of this ordinance are severable and if any provisions, sentence, clause or part thereof is held illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional or inapplicable to any person or circumstance, such illegality, invalidity, unconstitutionality or inapplicability shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions, sentences, clauses, or parts of the ordinance in their application to other persons or circumstances.

APPENDIX D

PLAN B

It is the opinion of the Committee that the community effort in Tulsa to accomplish full and equal housing opportunities has been inadequate, unorganized and ineffective to this date.

We therefore recommend and strongly exhort the Board of Commissioners of the City of Tulsa to undertake immediately positive action and assume aggressive leadership to eliminate racial discrimination in housing within the City of Tulsa by initiating and vigorously implementing the following program:

1. Adopt an ordinance declaring that it is contrary to the public policy of the City of Tulsa for any person to be denied or refused the opportunity to purchase or rent real property on the basis of that person's race, creed or color.
2. Call upon the citizens of the City of Tulsa, with the aid and assistance of their religious, educational, cultural, professional, business, financial and civic organizations to accomplish through voluntary action, negotiation, persuasion, education and conciliation, the

elimination of discriminatory practices in housing on the basis of a person's race, creed, or color.

3. That the ordinance create and establish a Fair Housing Authority of the City of Tulsa composed of seven (7) members appointed by the Mayor subject to confirmation by the Commission. Grant to such commission authority to investigate any act or practice of discrimination in housing, and directing the Fair Housing Authority to exert efforts through persuasion and conciliation to effect the adopted policy of the City.
4. That the position of Fair Housing Coordinator be authorized by the Board of Commissioners with the sole responsibility of developing and implementing community programs to effect the community policy of nondiscrimination in housing. Such position should be full-time and offer sufficient compensation to attract a person experienced in housing and human relations. It should be adequately funded to provide additional staff assistance as necessary to carry out the programs recommended herein.
5. That a Housing Information Bureau be established to list and make available to all

prospective purchasers and tenants housing which is available and to report to the Fair Housing Authority any instances of discrimination in housing encountered.

6. That the Housing Coordinator and City Attorney be directed to assist the Federal agencies, and any persons alleging discrimination in housing in the enforcement of existing Federal regulations and local agreements guaranteeing non-discrimination in housing.
7. That an educational program be undertaken to advise members of minority groups of their rights under existing programs, and those to be established, procedures for securing to them the full protection of the Constitution, Federal laws, and local policies, as herein recommended.
8. That local organizations, business, religious, educational and labor be called upon to forthwith endorse the policy of the City and to participate actively in the programs to eliminate discriminatory practices in housing in Tulsa.
9. That this committee remain in existence as constituted to assist in the implementation of the policy programs herein recommended and to review, assess and report to the Mayor

periodically upon the progress of such programs, and to make recommendations for any improvements thereof or other programs which might be deemed advisable, including the adoption of a penal ordinance if the citizens of Tulsa do not respond willingly to eliminate discrimination in this community.

APPENDIX E

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: ORDINANCE

NO. 11015

An ordinance creating and establishing the Fair Housing Commission of the City of Tulsa with the responsibility and duty to implement the public policy of the City of Tulsa that all citizens shall have an equal opportunity to obtain housing without regard to race, religion, color, ancestry or national origin; providing for reports and recommendations by the Commission to the Mayor and Board of Commissioners; providing for the jurisdiction of complaints of persons aggrieved by reason of discriminatory practices in housing; providing for the receiving and filing of such complaints, the investigation, consideration and determination of such complaints; providing for negotiation and conciliation to eliminate discriminatory practices in housing; providing for necessary officers and regular meetings of the commission; providing for the assistance of municipal personnel and agencies to accomplish the objectives and declaring an emergency.

VITA

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George Edward Gawf

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: NEGRO INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC POLICY IN TULSA,
OKLAHOMA

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