

REPORT TO: MEMBERS OF KCIRC
FROM: PAUL R. GREEN, CHAIRMAN
JUNE 22, 1956

Laurelhurst Beach Club Admission Policy

Reports on the Laurelhurst Beach Club

Annual Meeting may be summarized as follows:

The Club met on the evening of May 28. The meeting was held at the Laurelhurst Public School rather than at the Community Club because a large attendance was expected. The President of the Club, in calling the meeting, announced that at a recent Board meeting the Trustees of the Beach Club had amended the Club's by laws. He requested that the club members study the change carefully and to "COME TO THE MEETING AND EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS". His letter quoted from the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting referred to as follows:

"A general discussion followed of various problems of administration of the Beach Club affairs, with observations and comments coming to the Board from the membership. One of the problems involved in the discussion was that of discrimination, and it was pointed out that the present by laws do not in any way provide for or allow any discrimination. It was the consensus of the Board, however, that to preclude any further question the by laws should probably be affirmatively amended to specifically reflect the thinking of the Board that there should be no discrimination because of race, creed or color in connection with passing on application for membership in the Club. After further discussion, it was unanimously:

"RESOLVED, that Article 5 of the by laws of the Club be amended by adding the following paragraph at the end thereof:

"Nondiscrimination. Membership in the Laurelhurst Beach Club, Inc. shall be nondiscriminatory, and no prospective member otherwise approved by the Board of Trustees shall be barred from membership because of race, religion, creed or color."

More than 500 club members attended the meeting - the largest attendance in the history of the Club. Under "new business" the President urged discussion. An old resident of Laurelhurst brought up the question of past discrimination against Jewish residents in connection with membership in the Club. Dr. George Neff Stevens, Dean of the University of Washington Law School and a club member, then reported on a conference which he and Mr. John Rupp (at that time President-elect of the Seattle Bar Association and also a club member) had had with the Board of Trustees. He told the membership that the Board had informed them at that time that at a recent meeting they had made the change in the by laws which the President announced in his letter to club members.

Reverend David L. Cowie, of the University Presbyterian Church, and a club member, thanked the Board for this action indicating that it was in keeping with the increasingly democratic spirit of the times and the spirit of Laurelhurst residents in general. He put this expression of appreciation in the form of a motion which was duly presented to the membership and passed without a dissenting vote.

Thus the community has reached a solution to a club and community problem which has been a deep concern of many in and out of Laurelhurst for a long time. The action taken by the Beach Club Board is generally accepted as a sincere effort to end discriminatory practices in connection with club membership. This sincerity can be finally judged, of course, only by action taken on a number of applications over a period of time both from Jewish and Christian residents.

Laurelhurst Beach Club Admission Policy cont'd.
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On hearing of the Board's action - before the Annual Meeting - Mrs. R. B. Jones of Laurelhurst, who, with a nucleus of Laurelhurst Beach Club members, was largely responsible for the specific action by the Board, had personally contacted Dean Stevens and John Rupp to assure them that those most involved in the effort to effect the change were concerned now only to see that no factions develop at the meeting - or in the community following the meeting - due to the work that had taken place to involve members in the effort.

As chairman of this King County Intergroup Relations Committee I should like to express for the Committee appreciation to the Anti-Defamation League for bringing this matter to the fore; to the American Jewish Committee, Christian Friends for Racial Equality, Anti-Defamation League and Civic Unity Committee for the cooperative work involved in reaching Laurelhurst Beach Club members and informing them of the local effort being made by Beach Club members to eliminate the discriminatory practices. Mrs. R. B. Jones of Laurelhurst and the nucleus of Laurelhurst Beach Club members working with her are to be commended for their courage in undertaking so difficult a task and for the success achieved.