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A Crisis In Housing On The Upper Eastern Shore

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A Report

by the

Maryland State Advisory Committee

to the

United States Commission on Civil Rights

January 1971

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To The

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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*New member--appointed to the Committee since the meeting

**No longer a member of the Committee

PREFACE

The United States Commission on Civil Rights

The United States Commission on Civil Rights is an independent agency of the executive branch of the Federal Government created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957. By the terms of the act, as amended by the Civil Rights Acts of 1960 and 1964, the Commission is charged with the following duties: investigation of individual discriminatory denials of right to vote; study of legal developments with respect to denials of the equal protection of the law; appraisal of the laws and policies of the United States with respect to denials of equal protection of the law; maintenance of a national clearinghouse for information respecting denials of the equal protection of the law; and investigation of patterns or practices of fraud or discrimination in the conduct of Federal elections. The Commission is also required to submit reports to the President and the Congress at such times as the Commission, the Congress, or the President shall deem desirable.

The State Advisory Committees

An Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights has been established in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 105(c) of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 as amended. The Committees are made up of responsible persons who serve without compensation. Their functions under their mandate from the Commission are to: advise the Commission of all relevant information concerning their respective States on matters within the jurisdiction of the Commission; advise the Commission upon matters of mutual concern in the preparation of reports of the Commission to the President and the Congress; receive reports, suggestions, and recommendations from individuals, public and private organizations, and public officials upon matters pertinent to inquiries conducted by the State Committee; initiate and forward advice and recommendations to the Commission in matters in which the Commission shall request the assistance of the State Committee; and attend, as observers, any open hearing or conference which the Commission may hold within the State.

This report was submitted to the United States Commission on Civil Rights by the Maryland State Advisory Committee. The conclusions and recommendations are based upon the Advisory Committee's evaluation of information received at its open meeting held in Easton on December 12-13, 1969, and on staff investigations. This report has been received by the Commission and will be considered by it in making its reports and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

INTRODUCTION

Of the multitude of frustrations experienced by Negroes in their struggle for equal treatment and total acceptance into the mainstream of American life, few are as weighted with significance as that of housing.

Housing directly affects the pattern of family living and the structure of other related institutional arrangements. Segregated and substandard housing contributes to family disorganization and breakdown. It brings in its wake segregated, substandard education and recreation and, frequently, inadequate public services. Blacks and whites who live in a segregated community are deprived of the stimulation and enrichment which result from day-to-day association with persons of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

These general demoralizing consequences of residential segregation, as well as the high percentage of substandard housing and the absence of public housing in the Upper Eastern Shore of the State, caused the Maryland State Advisory Committee to focus its attention on this situation in this vicinity.

One of the overriding concerns in Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties is the shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary housing, particularly for households with low-and moderate-incomes. An insufficient number of standard housing units for the elderly, minority groups, and low wage workers is a characteristic of these three counties.

Although legislation and assistance from the State and Federal Government are essential to the solution of housing problems, local communities must themselves implement such help if their housing supply is to be equitably increased and improved.

After a preliminary survey, the Maryland State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights decided to conduct a 2-day open meeting on housing in Easton on December 12-13, 1969. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain information about housing problems of minority and low-and moderate-income families in Talbot County (Easton and St. Michaels); Queen Anne's County (Kent Narrows); and Kent County (Chestertown). Except as noted in a few instances, developments after that date are not included in this report. Thirty-six individuals participated in the open meeting. This report summarized their statements and also incorporates data from other sources.

TALBOT COUNTY

Talbot County lies on the Eastern Shore of Maryland between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Farming and fishing, processing and distributing seafood are Talbot County's main industries.

Cities in Talbot County include Easton and St. Michaels with which this section of the report will concern itself. The 1960 census and the Maryland State Planning Projections for 1970 present the following picture:

TABLE I

Talbot County: Population, Income, and Housing

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
Total population	21,578	22,086(1970 Preliminary)
Nonwhite population	5,870	6,365
Median income, total population	\$4,331	--
Nonwhite median income	\$2,579	--
Percent of families with incomes under \$3,000	31.9%	32%
Total housing units	7,917	7,917
Percent of units substandard	34.4%	--

Easton

Easton is the largest city in Talbot County with a total population of 6,719 (1970 Preliminary Census).

In 1960, the total nonwhite population of Easton was 1,401 or 20 percent of the town's residents. Proportionately, the nonwhite population occupied three times as many rental units as owner-occupied units. Out of the total supply of 2,266 housing units, 417 were either owned or rented by nonwhites, which represented only 18 percent of the total.

Listed below is an analysis of housing conditions in Easton by Planning Areas in 1960. Negroes are concentrated in areas 2, 3, and 4:

TABLE II
Housing Conditions - 1960

Planning Area	1	2	3	4	5X	6	7	Totals
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	283	348	634	473	FUTURE PLANNING AREA	419	109	2,266
<u>Sound</u>	279	302	393	301		415	105	1,795
1. With all plumbing	276	219	350	296		415	105	1,661
2. No hot water	2	8	14	-		-	-	24
3. No private bath or toilet or bath	1	75	29	5		-	-	110
<u>Deteriorating</u>	3	45	221	125		3	3	401
1. With all plumbing	2	10	137	78		3	3	(233)
2. No hot water	1	8	16	4		-	-	(29)
3. No private bath, toilet or water	-	27	68	43		-	1	(139)
<u>Dilapidated</u>	1	1	20	47		-	1	1

Table II continued

Planning Area	1	2	3	4	5X	6	7	Totals
NONWHITE HOUSING UNITS	3	170	136	104	FUTURE PLANNING AREA	3	1	417
<u>Sound</u>	2	143	53	38		3	1	240
1. With all plumbing	2	80	36	35		3	1	157
2. Lacking facilities	-	63	17	3		-	-	83
<u>Deteriorating</u>	-	27	78	36		-	-	141
1. With all plumbing	-	2	20	4		-	-	26
2. Lacking facilities	-	25	58	32		-	-	115
<u>Dilapidated</u>	1	-	5	30		-	-	36

The following table presents the figures as of 1960 for owner and renter occupied housing for Easton by race:

TABLE III
Occupancy by Race - 1960

PLANNING AREA	1	2	3	4	5X	6	7	Totals
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	283	348	634	473		419	109	2,266
<u>Owner Occupied</u>	215	91	178	216		283	86	1,069
White	213	39	133	206		281	86	958
Nonwhite	2	52	45	10		2	0	111
<u>Renter Occupied</u>	62	206	395	236		126	22	1,050
White	61	88	304	142		121	21	744
Nonwhite	1	118	91	94		4	1	306
TOTAL POPULATION	917	901	1,452	1,528		1,198	341	6,337
White	908	307	1,042	1,153		1,186	340	4,936
Nonwhite	9	594	410	375		12	1	1,401

Housing Conditions

In a 1960 housing survey conducted by the Easton Utilities Commission, the following statement was made:

Overcrowding is a big problem in these heavily populated areas and there are some cases where a small structure may contain three or four dwelling units. Each of these dwelling units will have a small kitchen and bedroom. There will be one toilet facility shared by all the dwelling units and this is usually found on a porch.

An example of this is 115 Port Street. This structure contains three Negro dwelling units, two on the first floor and one on the second floor. One of these dwelling units on the first floor consisted of one small room that contained a small sink, and an oil stove where meals were cooked.

Ten years after this housing survey, overcrowding is still a major problem in Easton.

At the open meeting on December 12, 1969, the Reverend William Revely, a local Baptist minister, made the following statement about housing for Easton's Negroes:

Negroes are asked to live far below standards that I would recommend for anybody. There are few people who are interested in doing anything about substandard housing conditions. City officials are very apathetic about alleviating these obvious conditions.

Rev. Revely and Miss Diane Sampson, a Negro resident of Easton, described the town's substandard housing conditions in detail: windows, thin partitions, the absence of closets and shelves, small rooms, poor plumbing and heating facilities, the prevalence of rodents, and housing with tile laid on cement for flooring. They submitted photographs illustrating these conditions.

Graham Street is a typical ghetto street in Easton. It contains a cluster of apartments which are cold and drafty and whose walls are so thin that conversations in one apartment can be heard in the next. The two bedroom units are very small, and they lack clothes closets, space savers, or utility shelves. The bedrooms and living rooms are approximately 9 x 12 feet and the kitchen is much smaller.

Rental Housing

According to Miss Sampson, the average Negro family income is around \$3,500 a year, and most Negro men are employed as unskilled laborers. The average rent in Easton is \$11 per week for substandard housing, exclusive of utilities or repairs. Stoves and refrigerators are not included in the apartments, although they are part of the equipment of apartments available for rent in predominantly white communities. Rents in newer, but still inadequate units, are \$21 to \$25 a week.

Very little rental housing is available in Easton in any price range, which gives landlords great power over the tenants.

Rev. Revely expressed it this way:

The landlord knows he has a monopoly. ... Consequently ... if you speak too loudly about substandard housing, you are asked to move. ... A poor person moves in at his own risk. The landlords say if you want it, take it like it is ... and the city does not force the landlord to repair his substandard housing.

Housing and Health Codes

Waller S. Hairston, chairman of the Easton Planning and Zoning Commission, told the Committee that there have never been any proceedings against an owner because of violations of the housing code. He also suggested that poor people did not want housing codes enforced, because they realize that upgrading rental housing would increase rents and condemnation would leave them homeless.

Mr. Hairston said the city building inspector considers condemnation the only effective means of eliminating substandard housing. He added that the State of Maryland has health standards that permit it to condemn a substandard house, but has failed to take this course of action in Easton.

Rev. Revely stated:

There is a Negro lady who wanted to add a porch to her house. It almost took a congressional hearing to build a porch on a good house. Suddenly the building code became effective. If you have a house and you want to add to that property then the code affects you, especially if you are a Negro in Easton.

Mr. Hairston pointed out to the Committee that plans are underway for a uniform building and housing code. He also said the town has an ordinance regulating sanitation facilities, ventilation, light, and heating in housing but it has not been enforced. Another reason given for lack of enforcement of existing laws, Mr. Hairston said, was the absence of a full-time building inspector.

Easton's Housing Commission

In April 1969, the Easton Housing Commission was established with J. Gordon Firstman as its chairman. The housing commission's purposes, according to Mr. Firstman, were to develop provision for housing for

the elderly and to develop ways of providing home ownership for low-and moderate-income groups. Mr. Firstman said that he had had discussions with members of housing authorities on the Eastern Shore and had come to the conclusion that public housing took too long to build.

Anthony Mama, production representative from the Housing Assistance Administration of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Philadelphia office denied this conclusion and suggested that delays were caused by indifference on the part of city and county officials who had no interest in building public housing for low-income groups.

Talbot Action Group (TAG)

In 1968, the Talbot Action Group (TAG) was formed, a biracial group of concerned citizens, who sought to assist the Poor People's Campaign, to study poverty in their neighborhoods, and to explore means of alleviating it.

Recognizing the acute need for adequate housing, the group attempted to start a movement toward an appropriate housing project. Three members met with the housing committee, and all reported painfully slow progress.

TAG realizes that it does not have the financial resources to serve the people at the very bottom of the economic scale. One of the committee members, Mrs. Doris Reid, said: "The need is greater than we can accommodate ... there is a real need for a housing authority so we can have public housing in Easton."

The group claimed that there has been encouraging public support for the project but complained that there has been no tangible movement toward its achievement.

TAG member, Mrs. Dorothy Black, spoke for them all when she said: "There is no end to the meetings. You go to one meeting after another, and I think it is time for Talbot to move."

Mr. Firstman argued that "density" is one of the problems to be considered in building housing. TAG must have approval of the zoning appeals board for special exceptions to build multiple housing near Talbot Village [a predominantly white area] because the local zoning board does not permit multiple housing.

Obtaining Housing in Easton

Two Realtors and a banker met with the Committee at the open meeting: John Porter, president of the Talbot County Real Estate Board, James Lathan, vice chairman of the Maryland Real Estate Board, and William Wolcott, assistance vice president of the Easton office of the Maryland National Bank. All three stated that as far as they were aware, no discrimination existed in selling housing to Negroes or in lending them money to finance their purchases.

However, during the previous evening session, Rev. Revely told the Committee:

There was an instance in which a local real estate man showed a house to a black doctor and his wife. They were made to believe they could purchase a home in the predominantly white section of Easton and upon the discovery that they were Negroes, they suddenly could not get the house, the owner took the house off the market. They, in turn, built a house in Easton and they had to build it in a Negro community, and now they can't sell it. No one can afford to buy it. When a white Relator finds that a Negro can afford to buy a house, they find ways of saying that the house is not available, it has been sold, etc.

Mr. Latham said that the reason the couple had had trouble finding a suitable house was because they had wanted a place where the doctor could combine his office with his living quarters.

This group agreed that trying to get money for loans to clients insured by Government agencies such as the Federal Housing Administration or the Veterans Administration was so time-consuming and cumbersome that they preferred to use private financing.

The real estate men said they were aware of a great need for low-cost housing in Talbot County and admitted that public housing would fill that need.

Mr. Wolcott added that the only alternative for poor people is to fit into a program of subsidizing the poor funded by public money.

According to Mr. Latham: "There is a feeling on the part of some people that public housing brings in people who are not as good ... I don't know whether this is so or not. I rather doubt it, but there is a need for public housing." He emphasized that the city has a fear of public housing as it fears anything involving the Federal Government. The city fears mismanagement, yet it is coming to realize that adequate housing is necessary and all people are entitled to a decent place to live.

William H. Adkins, III, chairman of the Maryland Human Relations Commission and a resident of Easton, said that the basic problem that exists throughout the Eastern Shore is its unwillingness to assume responsibility for making the changes that face a community today. He said some influential citizens of Easton want to "preserve the character of Easton, and they visualize that character as being a community of essentially single family, individually owned homes in a very low-density arrangement."

Mr. Adkins told the Committee and Easton:

If you really want to provide better homes for poor people and Negroes, if you really want to solve housing problems, you may have to make your community something else than one just of individually-owned low density homes. Easton cannot solve housing problems, unless density is increased Those who want to preserve the character of Easton are preserving the slums as a part of that character.

Mr. Adkins said that the problem is one of efficient construction of appropriate units and it is wrong to think that the moment relatively high density housing is built, slums are created. He contended that well-constructed, well-built, well-maintained high-density housing does not have to be a slum.

He concluded by telling the Committee that Easton must re-examine its institutions and desires.

Following the open meeting, the Committee learned that TAG's efforts to build nonprofit housing had failed, but renewed interest in public housing had been stimulated.

On April 20, by unanimous vote, the Easton Town Council approved the adoption of a resolution directing Mayor Sherwood M. Hubbard to appoint a housing authority. The following week, members of the Maryland State Advisory Committee met with Mayor Hubbard and the Easton Town Council. Walter Barnes, president of the council, said that the council had studied many ways of solving the housing problem in the city of Easton and had come to the conclusion that a local housing authority was necessary.

He stated that the Easton Housing Authority would not be a do-nothing authority, and concluded the meeting by affirming that:

The town council of Easton will push as hard and as fast as possible to help the poor. Public housing will be built. The mayor and all town council members are sincere and we have every intention of building good communications between whites and blacks of Easton. ...

St. Michaels

St. Michaels is located in the western portion of Talbot County in the Central Delmarva Peninsula. Situated between the Miles River and San Domingo Creek on a peninsula in the Chesapeake Bay, St. Michaels has an excellent natural harbor affording convenient access to the bay.

The town's resources have traditionally been tied to the water. In its early history, St. Michaels enjoyed importance as a shipbuilding center and claims to be the originator of the "Baltimore Clipper". The seafood industry has also played an important role in the development of St. Michaels, and until recently has been the center of the town's economic activity.

The 1970 Preliminary Census shows a population of 1,429 for St. Michaels, with a nonwhite population of approximately 30 percent.

More than 96 percent of the residential land in St. Michaels is occupied by single family housing. Only 3.4 acres are devoted to multifamily housing units. Although these multifamily units are scattered throughout the town, most of them are within a block of Talbot Street. They are also fairly well concentrated in the southern portion of the town near the industrial area along Talbot and Marengo Streets.

It is noteworthy that more land area is devoted to single family use outside the corporate limits in the one mile planning area than within St. Michaels. Single family land use takes up approximately 86 acres within the town and 130 acres outside of the town.

St. Michaels Housing Characteristics -- 1960*

	<u>Number of Housing Units</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
<u>Characteristics of Housing Units:</u>		
Owner Occupied	311	54
Renter Occupied	195	34
Vacant Available	33	6
Unknown	32	6
 <u>Racial Occupancy of Housing Units:</u>		
Occupied by white	335	59
Occupied by nonwhite	171	30
Unknown	65	11
 <u>Condition of Housing Units:</u>		
Sound	394	69
Deteriorating	147	26
Dilapidated	30	5
TOTAL, EACH UNIT	571	

*Source: U.S. Census 1960

Two of St. Michaels' biggest problems are substandard housing and insufficient employment. In the northwestern section of the town, which is predominantly Negro, paved streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and street lights are lacking. In this section, public improvements are, for the most part, nonexistent. Many roads in this area are in very poor condition. The residents are financially unable to move to another area or to rehabilitate the homes in which they now live.

Very few Negro professionals live in St. Michaels; most Negroes are employed in the seafood industry at low wages.

The Reverend C. R. Bryant of St. Michaels told the Committee that most housing for Negroes is undesirable, with poor plumbing and no hot water. Some homes do not even have plumbing or running water. Overcrowded, dilapidated shacks are common sights in the Negro community.

Public Housing

The Reverend Roland Dennis alleged that St. Michaels' city officials had not considered building public housing until demonstrations and burnings had taken place in Dorchester County in 1966-67. In order to avoid a similar situation, St. Michaels established a housing authority "to pacify" Negroes in St. Michaels' ghettos.

Guy W. Parks, president of the Town Council of St. Michaels, denied the allegation that public housing is being built to pacify ghetto Negroes. He said it will be built because there is a need for public housing in St. Michaels.

James E. Thomas told the Committee that there was no communication between Negroes and the members of the public housing authority of St. Michaels. It transpired that there had been no Negro on the St. Michaels' Housing Authority Board when it was formed and when one was appointed, the appointment was made so quietly that not only was the black community not consulted but was unaware of his identity.

Rev. Bryant stated that there were no black people on the St. Michaels' Housing Authority Board a year ago and when he asked board members if they would appoint a Negro, he was told that one member had said he would resign before a Negro would go on the board. Another member warned: "We have to travel to Washington, Philadelphia, and what not and we have to take money out of our pockets, and pay when we go to some of those places."

Negro community leaders also contended that public housing built in the black community of St. Michaels would create a larger ghetto and concentrate all Negroes in one area. If public housing is built in the Negro ghetto, they pointed out, whites would be reluctant to move there. Negroes feel that they should have been consulted about the type of public housing they prefer and are entitled to control of the project. But, representatives of the black community pointed out, they have not tried to prevent the construction of public housing in their community because it has been the consensus that any housing was better than no housing.

As anticipated by the black community, the proposed site for the public housing project is located in the center of St. Michaels, adjoining the ghetto.

When St. Michaels was ready to obtain money for the beginning phase of its public housing project, its workable program was found to be inadequate. Mr. Spencer blamed the HUD Philadelphia office for the 4-year delay. He said that the Philadelphia office had been picayune, and had prevented St. Michaels from moving forward.

Asked if the Philadelphia Regional Office of HUD exhibited something less than vigor when it came to public housing projects in rural areas like St. Michaels, Mrs. Edith B. Schulz, secretary of the housing authority, stated: "Yes, I think our experience would have to show that."

During the summer months, 36 low-income housing units were begun on 2.7 acres. Of the 36 units, there will be six one-bedroom, eight two-bedroom, 16 three-bedroom, and two four-bedroom units. There will also be four efficiencies for the aged. Average rent for the units will be approximately \$50 a month.

In describing the area for the proposed site, Mr. Thomas said that it consists of tenant housing, a garage, an abandoned church on one street and an open lot and ditches on a dead end street. Alex Spencer, chairman of the housing authority, agreed that it was not the most desirable part of St. Michaels, but, he added, of the three locations selected by the city, the proposed site had been found to have the necessary utilities, water, sewage, and electricity. St. Michaels felt it was the only site it could afford, and it was approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Philadelphia Regional Office.

KENT COUNTY

Kent County, in the Delmarva Peninsula, is bordered on the west by Chesapeake Bay, on the east by the Delaware State line, on the north by the Sassafrass River and Cheapeake Bay and on the south by the Chester River. Kent County, with 284 square miles, is one of the smaller counties in the State.

Since the Second World War, Kent County has grown and according to the 1970 preliminary census, it has a population of 15,661. This increase is due in part to the location of industry in the county. The development of the highway network and advances in food preservation and transportation contributed to industries' decisions to locate there.

The exodus of blacks as contrasted with the influx of whites suggests that the economic changes which spurred these movements affected the races differently. The decline in employment of agricultural and other unskilled labor would account for the apparent outmigration of Negroes while the increase in other employment opportunities, plus the increase in enrollment at Washington College, would account for outmigration of whites.

Income

In Kent County, black citizens receive incomes considerably below those of whites. Listed below is the percent of white and nonwhite families with gross family incomes (including taxes) under \$3,000 and over \$10,000 in Kent County.

TABLE V

Kent County: Gross Family Incomes, By Race

	<u>White Families</u>	<u>Negro Families</u>
Percent of Total Population	74.9	25.1
Percent Under \$3,000	28.9	49.2
Percent Over \$10,000	10.1	1.6

Industry

The industries located in Kent County are related chiefly to the processing of seafood and farm produce.

TABLE VI

Kent County: Major Employers

<u>Company</u>	<u>Products</u>	<u>No. of Employees</u>
Campbell Soup Company	Chicken soups and bouillions	617
Vita Foods Company	Seafood, pickles and peppers canning	550
Rock Hall Mfg. Company	Mens and boys knit shirts	72
Eastern Business Forms	Printed Business Forms	70
Lehigh Chemicals	Platicizers, lubricating, oils and greases	48
Rock Hall Clam and Oyster Company, Inc.	Oyster and clam processing	45
LaMottee Chemical Products Company	Blood, chemical, soil and water testing equipment	35
Chestertown Brick Company	Face bricks	33

The Kent County School Board (400 full-time employees) and Washington College (198 employees) are major educational, service-related employers.

Listed below are the 1960 census statistics and the Maryland State Planning Projections for 1970.

TABLE VII

Kent County: Population, Income, and Housing

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
Total population	15,481	15,667 (1970 Preliminary)
Nonwhite population	3,887	4,475
Median Income	\$4,036	--
Nonwhite median income	\$3,041	--
Percent of families with incomes under \$3,000	33%	33%
Total housing units	5,996	5,996
Percent of units substandard	38.9%	--

Housing

In 1960, 20.3 percent of all Kent County housing units were considered dilapidated or deteriorating, with few standard facilities. In Kent County, 18.8 percent of the housing units had no piped water. One-fifth of the housing in this county is now in poor condition.

In December 1969, Kent County had a higher proportion of older houses than is found in any other county in the State of Maryland. Between 1950 and 1960, 1,221 or 21 percent of the total 1960 inventory of housing units were erected, and from 1960 to 1969 only 718 units were built in Kent County. The county has a high proportion of poor people (50 percent had average net disposable incomes per household below \$5,000 in 1968) and most of these individuals cannot afford to purchase even a moderately priced new home. These families are considered a high risk by most lending institutions in the area and find it difficult to obtain mortgage funds.

Chestertown

Chestertown, the county seat of Kent County located on the Chester River, is one of Maryland's oldest ports. It is also the location of Washington College, Maryland's first institution of higher learning.

The population of Chestertown, according to the 1970 Preliminary Census, shows the population as 3,358 with approximately 25.1 percent black.

Complainants at the open meeting from Chestertown gave vivid portrayals of life in the town. The mood of alienation, bitterness, discouragement, and hopelessness that permeates their community was clearly evident in their remarks. The Committee was told by black residents of their continuing struggle against poverty and prejudice. It was also alleged that town and county officials have made no attempt to find out how Negroes live, nor do they feel there is a need for public housing in Chestertown.

Chestertown has a high percentage of housing that is deteriorating or dilapidated. Many of these houses lack toilet and sewage facilities. Others do not have adequate heating units.

Of the dwelling units inside the corporate limits of Chestertown, in 1965, 16.2 percent were either deteriorating or dilapidated. This is significantly higher than the national level of 11 percent. A four and one-half block area north of College Avenue, traditionally known as "Santiago", contained, in 1965, a total of 129 dwelling units, 74 percent of which were substandard. Another area called "Scotts Point", contained 38 units in a block and a half, 61 percent of which were substandard.

A smaller substandard neighborhood is located on Cannon Street west of the central business district. All three areas are occupied largely by blacks, generally with low-incomes.

A number of factors have combined over many years to produce these problem housing areas. Many of the structures are of frame construction and quite old; some are detached, others are semi-detached, but the worst are dilapidated frame row housing. Most of these units are renter-occupied and maintenance is minimal.

Initial Steps Toward Better Housing

Public officials in Chestertown met 2 years ago with Farmers' Home Administration and Federal Housing Administration personnel to discuss housing problems. It was hoped that a concrete plan for housing would develop from this meeting.

To assist in the process, four Washington College staff members, including Dr. Howard Grumpelt, agreed to review current Federal regulations to determine what funds might be available for developing rental and sale housing and to present this review to the county and town officials. The officials agreed that this group would write a proposal in order to help them establish a housing authority and to develop the kinds of grant applications that might be necessary.

The group decided that it would be unwise to offer their services unless a promise of aid from the county commissioners and town government was offered. The town and county officials were informed that if they would authorize the group to write the proposal and provide them with \$249 for supplies, they would be willing to contribute their time. County and city

officials authorized the Washington College group to go ahead, but said the county had no money. The group felt that without the modest sum of \$249 for supplies as a sign of good faith, it would be worthless for them to work on a proposal for a housing authority.

One of the problems in Kent County was that poor people could not obtain low cost housing loans. Local banks were frequently reluctant to aid poor families and the Farmers Home Administration, because of a very small staff, was unable to process loans rapidly.

During the spring of 1969, the Washington College group organized a meeting in Washington, D.C. attended by approximately 50 persons, including representatives of community groups, from the Eastern Shore. As a result of this meeting, the office staff of the local Farmers Home Administration was increased.

The Committee was told that Washington Park, a Negro residential area outside Chestertown's city limits, built originally for the low wage earner, has become too expensive for low-income families. Lots are given free to an applicant selected by a three-man board, but houses that originally cost \$9,000 are now \$13,000. Incomes in Washington Park range from \$4,500 to \$15,000 per year.

Residential Discrimination

Dr. Grumpelt told the Committee that when he moved to Chestertown a few years ago, he was informed by several white apartment managers that Negroes were not welcome and would never be permitted to rent in their apartment buildings. Some of the same persons allegedly told Dr. Grumpelt that although Federal laws were changing, there were ways of getting around them. It was also allegedly said that there are many sections of Chestertown and Kent County in which Negroes cannot purchase a house even if they are financially able to do so.

The Reverend Kenneth Green alleged that his Methodist Church Conference was financially able to buy a parsonage in a white neighborhood but, because of racial discrimination, was unable to do so. When his church's board members approached some white owners about purchasing their property, they were told that the church could not afford it. One of the houses the church wanted to buy was valued at \$35,000; when the members went to inquire about buying it, the price rose to \$50,000.

The minister cited the case of a Negro manager at the Campbell's Soup Company who was unable to buy a house in a white section of Chestertown even though the company was willing to finance part of the down payment.

When Negroes answer advertisements for houses for sale in Chestertown, the excuse heard most often is that the house has been sold or taken off the market, said Rev. Green. He added that Negroes live in fear in Chestertown. He said that when he first came to Chestertown, he had spoken out against various discriminatory practices and Negroes would say to him: "It is better now than it has ever been." "It's improved a great deal." "It takes time." He contended that his church board was afraid to go to the U.S. attorney to file a racial discrimination complaint when they could not buy the parsonage in a white neighborhood.

P. M. Brooks, Jr., Mayor of Chestertown; R. Clayton Mitchell, Jr., president of the county commissioners; and Allen Grimes, president of Kent-Queen Anne Board of Realtors, met with the Committee on the following day. They indicated that local officials in Kent County and Chestertown are aware of housing conditions but that corrective steps are costly and time-consuming.

The mayor consulted with Housing and Urban Development officials and, upon their advice, the town has instituted zoning laws, subdivision regulations, a fire code, electric, plumbing, building, and housing regulations.

Mayor Brooks said that Chestertown has attempted to solve the housing problems of the poor and cited Washington Park as a good example of private citizens, white and black, local officials and banks, working together to provide housing for low-income families. (Residents had stated the previous evening that Washington Park was a housing development for Negroes, too expensive for low-income families.)

The mayor indicated that one of Chestertown's greatest housing problems is the existence of privately owned slum housing over which the town has no jurisdiction and, therefore, cannot force the owners to keep them in adequate repair.

Mr. Mitchell stated that public apathy is the culprit for the lack of progress in the housing area. When asked if a public housing authority would be created, Mr. Mitchell said:

Hopefully, yes. It takes time. Appearing at the public hearing last Monday, there was only one person in the county that showed up. Can we go out and lead them in? I don't know how to get them to. ... We can't do all the work ourselves, believe me. We ask for suggestions, but we don't get it. We get the blame.

The hearing referred to was on zoning regulations.

Dr. Grumpelt felt that public officials are not sufficiently moved by poor housing conditions to feel the need for immediate action:

The existence of bad housing in both Chestertown and the surrounding county is well documented, and this information has been presented to the public through newspaper articles, reports, statistics, and studies. The documentation, however, has not had much effect so far.

He also said there has been an attempt to provide community services but these have been services that Kent County and Chestertown's white upper middle class residents had requested such as parks, libraries, boat docks, and roads.

Mr. Mitchell spoke of a number of community improvements including a new lagoon system; paving of streets; growth of areas such as Quaker Estates, Washington Park, Foxley Manor, College Heights, Buford Heights, and Heather Heights; demolition of slum buildings; and construction of the first town houses on Calvert Street as examples of growth and change.

According to him, the county government has done considerable work, including the adoption of new zoning ordinances and the construction of roads in Washington Park and other areas with low-income housing.

Allen Grimes denied that racial discrimination existed in the sale or rental of houses or apartments in Chestertown or Kent County. He stated emphatically that he knew of no instances of racial discrimination by Realtors in the area and claimed that economic considerations were the only criterion which influences the type of housing shown a client. However, he knew of no Negro purchases of houses in predominantly white neighborhoods although he said a few Negro families were renting in white neighborhoods.

Discrimination in the sale of property is forbidden by law and the local real estate board has adopted a policy to conform with these laws, said Mr. Grimes. He added that any Realtor so accused can lose his right to sell property and faces legal penalties. He suggested that if anyone felt he was being discriminated against, he had recourse through law and should take advantage of it.

Mr. Grimes told the Committee that most of the problems that exist stem from the same source:

Poor or low-income people have some problems. It doesn't matter if they are white or colored. The source of the problem in Kent County is an economic one, not a racial one. Lack of money is the one thing in common they all have. Inflation, high cost of construction, lack of financing from both local and Federal sources, high interest, these are the things that have made truly low cost housing virtually impossible to obtain.

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

Queen Anne's County, in which Kent Narrows and Grasonville are located, comprises 408 square miles, located between the Delaware State line and Chesapeake Bay. It lies between Kent County on the north and Caroline and Talbot Counties on the south. The population of Queen Anne's County in 1967 was 17,800-- only two of the 23 counties in the State have smaller populations.

Grasonville is a market center for a population of less than 1,000 persons. It is a community located near Kent Narrows. A few Negro workers from Kent Narrows have moved to this area, which has slightly better housing. The economy of Grasonville is based primarily on agriculture and the fishing and seafood industries.

Since it is extremely difficult to build houses in Kent Narrows, the Kent-Queen Anne's-Talbot area council (the area's anti-poverty agency) has located a site for housing in Grasonville.

According to the 1960 census, 11.1 percent (652) of all housing units (5,901) in the county were dilapidated. Another 21.3 percent (1,256) were classified as deteriorating. Therefore, approximately one-third of the houses in the county were in a condition either warranting more repair than would be provided in the course of regular maintenance or in a condition endangering the health and safety of the occupants.

Serious concentrations of bad housing are found mainly at some of the seafood packing centers such as Kent Narrows, Little Creek, and Cox Neck, and bad housing is scattered throughout the countryside, and in Centreville as well. Some of the worst housing consists of abandoned farms.

The availability of any housing for low-income families, regardless of condition, is extremely limited. For example, 1,473 families or 35.8 percent of all families in Queen Anne's County earn less than \$3,000 per year. These families should not be expected to pay more than 25 percent of gross income, or \$62.50 per month, for housing. In the county in 1960, there were only 587 units being rented at this price. However, some families earning less than \$3,000 occupied virtually rent-free dwellings.

The 1960 census statistics and the Maryland State Planning Projections Statistics for 1970 are listed below:

TABLE VIII

Queen Anne's County: Population, Income, and Housing

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
Total populations	16,569	18,300
Nonwhite population	4,473	4,941
Median income	\$3,906	--
Nonwhite median income	\$2,587	--
Percent of families with incomes under \$3,000	35.8%	35%
Total housing units	5,901	5,901
Percent of units substandard	49.1%	--

Employment

Approximately 56.5 percent of the Queen Anne's County employees work in industrial activity and 43 percent are engaged in agriculture. The area labor force in 1969 was 25,711.

Queen Anne's County is a low-wage area with the average hourly income ranging from \$1.60 to \$2 an hour. Most of those employed in industry in Queen Anne's County work in the seafood processing companies shucking and packing clams and oysters, and preparing fish bait and frozen seafoods.

The largest employers include Islanders Seafoods with 75 employees; United Shellfish with 75 employees, both in Grasonville; D. Thomas Swing in Price, engaged in vegetable canning and employing 128; and the Fox Canning Company of Queen Anne's, employing 125 in the canning of corn, peas, and lima beans.

Numerous contradictions were found in statements presented to the Committee by black leaders and J. Elmer Thompson, Queen Anne's County Commission attorney.

Black spokesmen stated that a fast shucker might make \$4,000 a year, but this would be by working full-time at top speed. Only a few shuckers are able to work at this speed for any length of time. An income between \$1,600 and \$2,000 a year is more common.

Mr. Thompson read a report by a Washington Planning Firm, Marcou O'Leary Associates, which stated:

Shuckers . . . are paid rates of \$1.05 per pot of one-half gallon clams . . . Records have shown that an individual shucker can earn \$14 for three hours work based on the piece rates. This would amount to \$4.70 an hour. If such a wage were pro-rated to a 40 hour week, 50 weeks per year, the annual salary would be \$9,400.

The records show, he continued, that the employees work only 20 to 30 hours a week. He suggested that many people in the county feel that if the workers were more industrious they would be able to work themselves out of poverty.

Negro leaders blamed the "lack of initiative" mentioned by Mr. Thompson on three factors:

1. The dehumanizing conditions in which the shuckers are forced to live.
2. Fear of reprisals by employers if they complain about conditions.
3. The continual frustrations of their hopes that their conditions might be improved: the numerous surveys made with no results.

TABLE IX

AVERAGE AND MEDIAN ANNUAL SALARY OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES IN THREE SEAFOOD
PACKING PLANTS IN KENT NARROWS, 1964

<u>Plant</u>	<u>No. of Employees Full-Time*</u>	<u>Average Total Hours Worked</u>	<u>Average Annual Salary</u>	<u>Median Annual Salary</u>
A	99	--	\$1,309.15	\$1,254.67
B	73	1,122	1,582.02	1,599.50
C	51	--	972.44**	940.68*

*Any worker who was on the payroll during three or more quarters of the year was considered a full-time worker. By this criterion, the minimum annual wage of a full-time worker was \$600.

**Plant in operation 7 1/2 months of the year.

The Reverend Jesse Brown, who tried unsuccessfully to rent space near the shanties where he might minister to the spiritual needs of the poor, said:

Poor people need to get away from Kent Narrows . . .
It is deteriorating just to be in that environment.

If they come to meetings and such . . . they have repercussions from the boss when they get back, and they don't have a job Monday morning.

When asked how the county health department could allow the unsanitary sewage conditions observed by the members of the Committee, Mr. Thompson stated:

Our county on a number of occasions has had their county sanitarian check the property. Also, you realize this being a seafood packing area, it is checked by the Federal officials. Apparently it can't be too bad, I guess. They still allow oysters and clams from there. I assume it must meet the health standards.

The Committee was told that the need for housing in the Kent Narrows area is an urgent and critical one. The closing statement of Rev. Brown sums up the feelings of many of the Negro community:

If you are going to do something, start turning some dirt, start putting a foundation down. We are tired of talking. In other words, they say we have been shuffling too long. Negroes need housing, not talk.

Kent Narrows

The Kent Narrows community is a small area of about 143 acres located in the western portion of Queen Anne's County. It is almost entirely surrounded by water, being bounded on the west by the Kent Narrows Strait and on the north and south by extensions of Chesapeake Bay. The community extends to the east only about a quarter of a mile from the Narrows' inlet to a line that connects the southern waters of the Chester River to the northern neck of Prospect Bay.

Kent Narrows is primarily a seafood processing center comprised of seven seafood packing plants and their employees. Its resident population consists of about 450 Negroes largely employed by the packing plants located on Kent Narrows. The physical condition of the housing is extremely poor, but similar to that of several other seafood packing centers on the Eastern Shore.

The population of Kent Narrows is characterized by low levels of income, education, and employment, and requires high level of services from county and State health, welfare, and law enforcement agencies.

The economic and land development potential of the Narrows itself has been in doubt because of a decline in the seafood industry on the Chesapeake Bay, but this appears to be reversing and there is an increasing tourist-oriented development in the area.

Over the past 5 years much attention has been focused on the Narrows but, despite this attention, little progress has been made in alleviating socioeconomic conditions there. Unemployment and welfare dependency persist.

In a study of Kent Narrows housing conditions in May 1966, the Maryland State Department of Health concluded that the housing in general in Kent Narrows was unfit for human habitation. Had Kent Narrows been eligible for classification as a migrant labor camp, the Maryland State Department of Health would have been able to enact stricter requirements, including provisions for adequate toilet facilities and structures with self-closing doors, adequate ventilation and lighting, and fly screening. These improvements have not been made to date.

Housing Conditions

Living accommodations for workers and their families in Kent Narrows consist primarily of rows of frame or cinder-block shacks located in clusters around the several packing houses where most of the dwellers are employed. The land itself was once marshland and is now filled mostly with sand. It is thus a low-lying area affording poor drainage, and is often flooded with rain and tidewater which frequently collect in the walkways and areas between the shacks and underneath some of the housing units. The level of driveways in the settlement is usually higher than that of the land under the shacks, allowing water to collect and stand beneath the dwellings. In one

section of the community, a strong stench prevails. Refuse is accumulated in many yard areas.

The majority of units have no back doors and are heated by oil or wood stoves. Deficient kitchen facilities predominate. Some of the roofs leak, and a few dwellings have floors that are not lifted above ground level--some have dirt floors. There are no indoor toilets or running water in the workers' shanties. The only dwellings with indoor plumbing are privately owned. Water for drinking, cooking, and washing is carried by workers to their houses from spigots near the packing houses or from a pump centrally located among a group of dwellings. There is no apparent method for the disposal of waste water other than throwing it outside the door onto the ground.

Since there is no housing code, the county cannot penalize owners of buildings which do not meet minimum standards. With respect to fire hazards, the State fire marshal can only inspect outdoor premises unless a search warrant is obtained. This is because the State attorney general ruled in 1963 that the shanties are "multiple dwellings" in which only common use areas such as lobbies may be entered. Individual units may not be inspected.

The majority of housing units are owned by seafood packers. Some units are rented for a few dollars a week. Others are rent-free with \$1 to \$2 per week electricity fees. The average yearly rental costs to Kent Narrows families living in units where rent is charged are \$117 for a two-room unit, \$182 for a three-room unit, and \$234 for a four-room unit.

Francis Gray, George Gould, and Rev. Brown, all residents of the Grasonville area, emphasized the urgency for public housing in the Kent Narrows-Grasonville area. Units now available are substandard; none of the homes in Kent Narrows has indoor plumbing facilities nor piped water; and blacks cannot rent housing in Grasonville's white neighborhoods.

Rev. Brown noted that county officials recognize the need for public housing but, fearing that moving the poor would be creating another ghetto, are leaving the situation as it is.

The black community in the Kent Narrows area is bitter and disillusioned about the lack of improvements in their intolerable housing conditions, the Committee was told. It feels that the State health department and the county commissioners conspire together and then ignore the problem, hoping it will "go away" if it is not seen.

The packing house owners and the commissioners of Queen Anne's County were invited to meet with the Committee to present their views, but they did not appear. Instead, they delegated their responsibility to their attorney, J. Elmer Thompson.

Mr. Thompson voiced the disillusionment of local officials who have tried to do something about the problem, but have been frustrated by red tape and bureaucratic regulations:

They the county commissioners have had personal contact with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Federal Housing Administration, and so forth. In every one of the conferences, the . . . commissioners were dismayed . . . to find that practically all housing aids that the Government has are acclimated to urban living.

Sometime in the later fifties or early sixties, the commissioners began to feel that the answer could lie not in a public housing development as such . . . but . . . by taking the same amount of money that had been bandied about by the various Federal agencies as being from 1 to 3 million dollars interest-free \$10,000 loans to these individuals.

We have suggested this to the Federal Housing Administration and all of the various Federal agencies . . . but was told, 'That's not my program. Try somewhere else.' I gather it is like most of the Federal Government, you either fit in a niche or you don't.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the information obtained through its open meeting and investigations, the Maryland State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights reports the following conclusions:

1. Substandard Housing

There is not only an acute shortage of decent, moderately priced housing in the tri-county area, but the Committee was struck by the fact that a large percentage of housing was substandard and lacked indoor toilet facilities.

In Kent Narrows, none of the housing occupied by Negroes contains plumbing and indoor toilet facilities. Housing units in Kent Narrows also lack a second means of egress in case of a fire or emergency, have hazardous heating and wiring facilities, and lack bathing and kitchen facilities.

No effective program has been formulated for dealing with the Kent Narrows--its present population and its future role in the county's economy. Efforts to aid the Narrows community have lacked a structured set of objectives. Without this set of objectives, public and private agencies have not taken advantage of the range of funds and methods potentially available for dealing with Narrows conditions.

Throughout the area there is a lack of adequate housing and related codes. Where there are codes, they are not enforced because of a shortage of code inspectors; lack of alternative housing for families living in units requiring rehabilitation or demolition; and a shortage of funds to assist low-and moderate-income households to rehabilitate substandard units.

2. Sanitary Facilities

In May 1966, the Maryland State Department of Health concluded in a report that housing in Kent Narrows was unsuitable for human habitation. The Committee found that the Maryland State Department of Health was either unwilling or unable to enforce requirements to alleviate unsanitary conditions in Kent Narrows, Easton, St. Michaels, and Chestertown.

3. Residential Segregation

The Committee finds that a majority of black citizens are restricted to living in certain sections of Easton, St. Michaels, and Chestertown, and is unable to find housing in the predominantly white areas. The Committee was unable to find any evidence that planning for an open, desegregated community is an integral part of present or future plans for Easton, St. Michaels, or Chestertown. If anything, all indications pointed to the perpetuation of segregated housing.

4. Construction of Housing for Low-Income Families

From its observations, the Committee concludes that there is a lack of interest on the part of private developers and public officials in the three counties in utilizing Federal housing assistance programs. There is an unwillingness or inability of these local jurisdictions to undertake programs to solve housing and housing-related problems, especially for low- and moderate-income and minority group families.

The majority community appears to be unresponsive to the needs of the lower-income and minority group families, and every effort to stimulate the construction of nonprofit or public housing has been thwarted.

However, it should be noted that 36 units of public housing will be constructed in St. Michaels, after 4 years of delay, and Easton has created a local housing authority, although it killed an attempt to build nonprofit housing.

5. The Inevitability of Change

Finally, the Committee concludes that the public officials with whom it met seem oblivious to the plight of the poor and the black whom they are also supposed to represent. They apparently refuse to recognize the existence of substandard housing, inadequate sanitary facilities, segregation, and the acute shortage of housing for low-and moderate-income families, and thus refuse to take the necessary actions to change these conditions. But change will come, and the only question is whether it will come as a result of the efforts of the present public officials or despite them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The amount of substandard, unsafe, and unsanitary housing in Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties is increasing each day. Housing for the poor, and particularly for the black poor, is deteriorating, overcrowded, overpriced, and characterized by extreme neglect. It is, therefore, imperative that new housing for low-and moderate-income families be produced in the immediate future and be available to all on a nondiscriminatory basis.

The Maryland State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights makes the following recommendations as necessary for the protection of the lives and health of all persons in the tri-county area:

1. Each of the three counties should immediately create countywide public housing authorities. Each local housing authority should set time schedules for the production of all units necessary to meet the needs of low-income families requiring adequate housing. To set the time schedules and plan the size of the needed housing units, 1970 census data should be used. Close attention should be given to the size of the families involved and the schedule for completion of all needed units should be within 10 years. Every possible means of production should be utilized, and augmented by rehabilitation and leasing of existing housing, and new construction through Turnkey or conventional methods. Programs allowing for tenant purchase of public housing units so produced should be utilized.

2. All unsafe and unsanitary housing, including that at Kent Narrows, should be evacuated immediately and temporary housing should be established, as is done for "disaster victims" until such time as adequate low-income housing units are constructed, leased, or purchased for the present residents by the local housing authorities.
3. The Committee is aware of the efforts to create a State housing authority. Taking these efforts into account, it nevertheless believes that if the county or local governments fail to establish the needed housing authorities or to set adequate production timetables, the State should establish a statewide housing authority to build, buy, or lease anywhere in the State. The State should then set and follow local production timetables.
4. The State of Maryland should authorize a matching supplemental subsidy to enable all low-income families in the State to rent public housing with one-fourth or less of their monthly incomes as outlined in the amendment to the 1969 housing act. The combination of Federal and State subsidies should be calculated to maintain public housing as attractive, healthy, functioning housing with needed tenant services such as day care centers.
5. The State of Maryland should establish a State-funded nonprofit housing development corporation to stimulate production of low- and moderate-income housing, including housing under federally subsidized programs.
6. Where local zoning laws or local referendums prohibit the construction of low- and moderate-income housing which meets statewide building criteria, the State should be authorized to override these local obstacles.

7. The State of Maryland should enact statewide mandatory building codes.
8. The State of Maryland should enact statewide housing regulations spelling out tenants' rights and the landlords' obligations. The landlords should not be allowed to collect rent if the State inspection department finds the premises "unsafe or unsanitary" due to landlords' negligence or neglect.
9. The State of Maryland should apply for a HUD training grant under Title VIII of the Housing Act of 1964 to employ and train local housing inspectors. Special care should be taken to employ local community personnel, as required by HUD directives.
10. The Maryland State Planning Department should initiate a series of informational programs across the State utilizing HUD funds. Its purpose would be to inform residents of their rights under the various local, State, and Federal housing laws; to familiarize public officials with the wide range of housing programs available; and to dispel myths and misinformation held by the public.
11. Each county, along with the State of Maryland, should maintain a fair housing commission with power to "test" for the existence of racial discrimination in the rental, sale, or lending of funds for sale of residential housing, and to bring suit against proven violations of the Federal fair housing law.

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF EASTON

P. O. Box 777
Easton, Maryland 21601

November 2, 1970

Commissioners:

J. Gordon Firstman
Chairman

Theodore J. Henson
Albert T. Dawkins
Allen K. Jennings
James C. Perkins

Mr. Jacob Schlitt
Director MAFO, U.S. Commission
on Civil Rights
1405 Eye St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20425

Dear Mr. Schlitt:

At the request of Mrs. Wood of the Maryland Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights I am writing this letter with respect to the activities of the Housing Authority of the Town of Easton.

The Housing Authority of the Town of Easton was duly organized on July 7, 1970.

The following Commissioners were appointed and their terms are set forth opposite their names

<u>Names</u>	<u>Term</u>
J. Gordon Firstman, Chairman	5 years
Theodore J. Henson, Vice Chairman	4 years
Albert T. Dawkins	3 years
Albert K. Jennings	2 years
James C. Perkins	1 year

All of the above Commissioners were duly sworn by the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Talbot County on July 6 and 7th. respectively.

The Housing Authority received an allocation of \$5,000 from the Mayor and Council of Easton of which \$1,000 has been deposited in the bank.

On July 14, 1970 the Housing Authority met with the Town Engineer, the Regional Director of the Maryland State Planning Commission and the Chairman of the Easton Planning and Zoning Commission to discuss the over all plans currently being prepared by the Easton Planning and Zoning Commission with respect to areas available for Multiple Housing.

As a consequence of this meeting of the Town Engineer was requested to submit a detailed map showing those areas which would be suitable for Multiple Housing and would not conflict with plans being made by the Planning and Zoning Commission. A copy of this map is enclosed herewith and marked Exhibit A.

Each of the members of the Housing Authority personally inspected all of the sites shown on Exhibit A.

The Chairman of the Housing Authority met with the Talbot Action Group on September 2, 1970. At that meeting he explained the purposes and functions of the Housing Authority of the Town of Easton and presented to the Talbot Action Group a copy of Exhibit A with the request that TAG's Building Committee make recommendation as to which if any of the sites were deemed suitable for Multiple Low-Cost Housing. At the same time he requested that TAG consider a suitable representative from the black community to serve the Housing Authority upon the expiration of the term of the Commissioner who had been appointed for a period of only 1 year.

At a meeting of the Housing Authority held on October 21, 1970 the members of the Housing Authority selected 4 sites for more detailed study. These sites are numbered 2, 7, 8 and 9 on Exhibit A. The Town Engineer has been commissioned to make detailed plats on each of these sites.

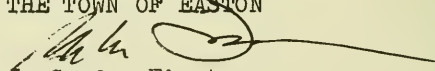
On October 22, 1970 the Chairman attended a meeting of the Maryland Association of Housing and Renewal Agencies in Rockville, Maryland at which time he consulted with various representatives of Housing and Urban Renewal Authorities with respect to procedures appropriately to be followed in dealing with the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

On October 27, 1970 the Chairman contacted the Regional Director of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and was advised that it is now appropriate for an Application for a Low-Rent Public Housing Program to be filed. The appropriate forms have been received. Counsel for the Housing Authority of the Town of Easton has recently been appointed and is in process of preparing the appropriate Application forms.

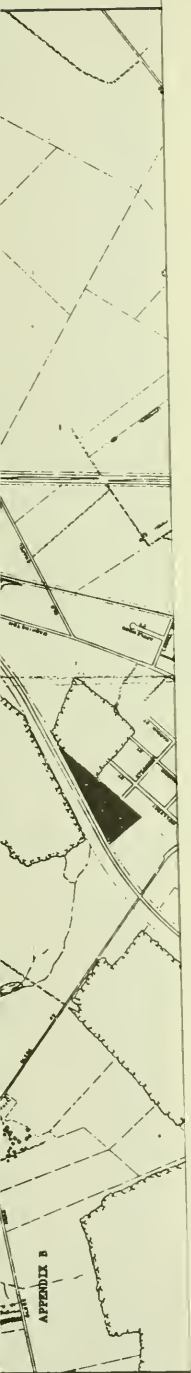
I wish to commend the members of the Authority for constancy of attendance in all of the meetings. The morale of the members of the Housing Authority is good and their enthusiasm is apparent from the work accomplished to date. I trust that this information will be of assistance to you. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF
THE TOWN OF EASTON



J. Gordon Firstman
Chairman



APPENDIX B



LEGEND:

EXHIBIT A

LOCATION	AREA ACRES	OWNER	SEWER CONST. - AVAIL. REQ'D.	WATER CONST. - AVAIL. REQ'D.
1	4.99	JONES		X
2	13.85	JONES	X	X
3	11.50	WITT	X	X
4	6.5	M&C	X	X
5	3.9	M&C	X	X
6	2.3	M&C	X	X
7	44.6	OWENS	X	X
8	16.0	VAR. OWNERS	X	X
9	100.0	JONES	X	X
10	5.2	DAWKINS	X	X

MAP
OF
TOWN OF EASTON
TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

