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May 27, 2003

**TO: Joyce Beck
Councilmember, Ward II**

SUBJECT: Comments at Town Meeting on Wednesday, May 21, 2003

As a recently elected member of the Forest Heights Town Council, I welcome you to the Council. However, your acceptance speech contained language that I personally found to be an unfortunate choice of words that was perceived by some as racist and divisive.

You stated that you did not campaign for your position because you did not have time. That whatever campaigning done on your behalf was done by your neighbors without your assistance because you frankly had not given much thought to winning or losing. This showed indifference toward the very office you chose to run for. I hope now that you have won the position, you will give it more thought.

You also stated that you found it "disturbing that the room was all Black." You went on to advise each person in attendance to "go home and say to their White, Hispanic and Filipino neighbors that it is time for them to get back involved in the town of Forest Heights." A few of the people in attendance at the meeting told me personally that they found your comments offensive. I even approached you after the meeting and mentioned it to you. You shrugged it off and simply said "I meant it."

Forest Heights is a mixed race community. We, as elected town officials, must be mindful of all our constituents, regardless of their race and should not single out any ethnic group as being less involved than another. We should encourage everyone to stay involved in town matters.

I am writing this memo not to be unjustly critical, but to let you know how very careful we must be when we convey our feeling and thoughts.

Cc: Mayor McGinnis and Town Councilmembers

Sharon C. McInnis

Comments of Joyce Beck, Councilwoman Ward II, at the Forest Heights Town Meeting on Wednesday, May 21, 2003. *

Mayor McGinnis: And now audience, now you know I just have to ask this, you know I have to ask this. How do we look? And now we gonna have our guest speaker and right after our guest speaker, dinner will be served. Is that alright council members? Is that alright?

Joyce Beck: No not quite alright with me. I'd like to... I don't know who it was that hollered oh oh, I did hear that. I just want to apologize to you for not having gotten here last month. I think Wilhelmina you must have inserted my name twenty times in those minutes. I did have a previously accepted engagement in Lanham with the Whitfield Chapter Civic Association to talk with them about the very same thing that Sue, Mayor McGinnis had asked me to come here and talk to you about, which is livable communities. The County Executive's new initiative in fulfillment of his promise to us to clean Prince George's County up and make it safer, healthier, and just a much better place to live in.

Now, notwithstanding my involvement with the town at this level, I still would like to work with you as a community on that, but we do have a municipality sub-committee working with various municipalities on development and implementation of their plan.

I would also like to say that it is my pleasure after many years of having served you in a non-official capacity as your representative and for the many years that Warren Adams was here as our mayor most of you thought that I was your mayor because he entrusted to me a large sum of his duties and responsibilities to you.

When I filed for this office I filed and I went on back to work. I didn't do the campaigning, didn't have time to do the campaigning and frankly was not giving a whole lot of thought as to whether I would win or loose. Some of my neighbors did hear about it and some of my neighbors did mount whatever campaign did go on, on behalf of Joyce Beck. But I want to thank Ann Reifsneider for the campaign that she put forth. And I do want to say that had Ann not campaigned the way that she did, the number of people that came out to vote would not have come out. So it is important that people do mount strong campaigns.

I'd like each of you to go home and say to your White neighbors, and your Hispanic and Filipino neighbors that it is time to get back involved in the town of Forest Heights. When I look out and see that this room is all Black, that's disturbing to me. Every bit as disturbing as it was twenty years ago when I came here and I looked out and the room was all White. This is a mixed community and it has to be mixed when we come together to work on our duties and responsibilities to this town. Please carry that message on my behalf. Thank You

* as transcribed from the official recording of the meeting