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HISTORICALLY-SIGNIFICANT MOUNT LAUREL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TO BE DEDICATED

***100-unit Ethel R. Lawrence Homes development is product of
over thirty years of advocacy by civil rights activists.***

Julian Bond, National Chairman of the NAACP, to Speak

When: Saturday, August 17, 2002 at 11:00 a.m. (rescheduled from September 2001 after being cancelled following the September 11 tragedies)

Where: Mount Laurel, New Jersey (directions below)

OVERVIEW

-- Ethel R. Lawrence Homes is an affordable-housing development in Mount Laurel, New Jersey that is the direct result of the historic, nationally-recognized Mount Laurel litigation. The 100-unit affordable housing development is part of the legal remedy the public interest plaintiffs obtained through their thirty-years of litigation.

-- The dedication will honor the life of Ethel R. Lawrence, lead plaintiff in Mount Laurel I (1975) and Mount Laurel II (1983), for her courageous struggle from 1967-1994 to open New Jersey's suburbs to low- and moderate-income families through the development of affordable housing.

-- Julian Bond is the Dedication Speaker. Mr. Bond is the National Chairman of NAACP, the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. He has been involved in the civil rights movement since the 1960s.

-- Fair Share Housing Development, Inc., the non-profit developer of Ethel R. Lawrence Homes, and Southern Burlington County NAACP and Camden County NAACP, plaintiffs in the historic lawsuit, are hosting the dedication.

ETHEL R. LAWRENCE HOME DETAILS

Ethel R. Lawrence Homes is a 100-unit (140-unit in 2003) townhouse development that offers supportive services to low- and moderate-income families. As part of a thirty-year effort to deconcentrate the poverty and racial segregation of places like Camden, New Jersey through the development of affordable housing throughout the region, Ethel R. Lawrence Homes uniquely responds to the needs of families with children by offering a full-time education coordinator who tutors school-age residents and by offering on-site social services. The development will soon include a first-rate recreation center.

Developed on 62 acres in Mount Laurel Township, the total project includes five phases: (I) 100 units affordable rental housing for families earning \$6000-48,000; (II) 40 units affordable housing to be built in 2003; (III) Management, Maintenance and Social Services Facility, 8000 s.f., which is under construction; (IV) Outdoor Recreation Area, 2-plus acres, to be built in 2002; and (V) Indoor Recreation area, 12,000-plus s.f. Financing is available for Phases I-IV. Planning, design, and fundraising plans are underway for Phase V.

The project is named for the lead individual plaintiff in the matter, Ethel R. Lawrence. Ethel, one of nine children, was the daughter of Leslie and Mary Robinson. She was married to Thomas Lawrence, and together they had nine children. She lived in Mount Laurel for many generations as part of the Gaines, Robinson, Still, and Lawrence community of families. Ethel was a certified day care teacher and was a member of the

Burlington County Community Action Program, an anti-poverty program during the 1960s and 1970s. She founded a non-profit group in the late 1960's to build thirty-six homes for, among others, persons living in dilapidated housing in the Springville area of Mount Laurel (along Hartford Road). When she was turned down by Mount Laurel, she approached attorneys at Camden Regional Legal Services, Carl S. Bisgaier, Kenneth Meiser, and Peter J. O'Connor. Ethel attended every court proceeding throughout the decades-long litigation. Ethel, who was predeceased by her husband, passed away in 1994. Her daughter, Ethel Lawrence Halley, is the Project Administrator for Ethel R. Lawrence Homes.

MOUNT LAUREL LITIGATION DETAILS

Ethel R. Lawrence Homes is the result of a lawsuit filed on May 1, 1971 by Ethel R. Lawrence, the Southern Burlington County NAACP, the Camden County NAACP and numerous individuals against Mount Laurel Township and Mount Laurel Township Planning Board. The plaintiffs claimed that suburban Mount Laurel Township had planned and zoned for its future growth for twenty years without the inclusion of housing for low- and moderate-income families and the elderly.

The New Jersey Supreme Court in unanimous decisions known as Mount Laurel I (1975) and Mount Laurel II (1983) ruled that every municipality in New Jersey must plan, zone, and take affirmative measures to provide realistic housing opportunities for the municipality's "fair share" of its regional need for affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families. To be affordable, the housing must cost or rent for no more than 30% of a family's gross income less certain related sales costs and rental utility allowances.

In Mount Laurel II, the Court reasoned that affordable housing must be built in the suburbs because "if sound planning of an area allows the rich and middle class to live there, it must also realistically and practically allow the poor. And if the area will accommodate factories, it must also find space for workers."

The Court further reasoned as follows:

The clarity of the constitutional obligation is seen most simply by imagining what this state could be like were this claim never to be recognized and enforced: poor people forever zoned out of substantial areas of the state, not because housing could not be built for them but because they are not wanted; poor people forced to live in urban slums forever not because suburbia, developing rural areas, fully developed residential sections, seashore resorts, and other attractive locations could not accommodate them, but simply because they are not wanted. It is a vision not only at variance with the requirement that the zoning power be used for the general welfare but with all concepts of fundamental fairness and decency that underpin many constitutional obligations.

Unfortunately, this unpleasant "vision" is to a large extent already with us, as can be seen by comparing the poverty and decay of Newark and Camden with the prosperity of many of their suburban neighbors. For a discussion of these urban-suburban disparities in New Jersey, see "Recession in Jersey: 'Dire' or 'Mild,'" *The New York Times*, June 28, 1982, at B1, col. 3. As many commentators ranging from law review writers to national commissions have maintained, a major cause of this urban-suburban inequality has been suburban exclusionary zoning (by which we mean zoning whose purpose or effect is to keep poor people out of a community). See, e.g., Note, "Developments in the Law--Zoning," 91 *Harv.L.Rev.* 1427, 1624-35 (1978); A. Downs, *Opening up the Suburbs* (1973); Rubinowitz, *Exclusionary Zoning: A Wrong in Search of a Remedy*, 6 *U.Mich.J.L.Ref.* 625 (1973); Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1 (U.S.Gov't Printing Office, 1968) (citing suburban exclusion as one of the principal causes making America "two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal"). For a discussion of the impact of exclusionary zoning in New Jersey in particular, see M. Danielson, *The Politics of Exclusion* 40-43, 190 (1976). See also N.J. Department of Community Affairs, *State Development Guide Plan 84-85* (1980) (noting the "ultimately self-destructive division between affluent suburban areas and depressed inner cities").

As these commentators document, since World War II there has been a great movement of commerce, industry, and people out of the inner cities and into the suburbs. At the same time, however, exclusionary zoning made these suburbs largely inaccessible to lower income households. Beside depriving the urban poor of an opportunity to share in the suburban development, this exclusion also increased the relative concentration of poor in the cities and thereby hastened the flight of business and the middle class to the suburbs. A vicious cycle set in as increased business and middle class flight led to more urban decay, and more urban decay led to more flight, etc.

The provision of lower income housing in the suburbs may help to relieve cities of what has become an overwhelming fiscal and social burden. It may also make jobs more accessible for the unemployed poor.

Deconcentration of the urban poor will presumably make cities more attractive for businesses and upper income residents to return to. For an in-depth discussion of the relationship between ending exclusionary zoning and the revitalization of our inner cities, see Downs, "Why Improving the Inner City Requires Opening up the Suburbs," in A. Downs, *Opening up the Suburbs* 115-30 (1973). See also the Community Development Act of 1974, in which Congress found that a "significant" cause of our nation's urban crisis is "the concentration of persons of lower income in central cities," 42 U.S.C. 5301(a)(1) (1977), and called for the "reduction of the isolation of income groups within communities" and the "spatial deconcentration of housing opportunities for persons of lower income," 42 U.S.C. 5301(c)(6) (1977); and the 1968 Report for Action of the Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorder at 64-65.

Cities, while most directly affected, are not the sole victims of exclusionary zoning. The damage done by urban blight and decay is in no way confined to those who must remain in our cities. It affects all of us. Violent crime and drug abuse spawned in urban slums do not remain within city limits, they spread out to the suburbs and infect those living there. Efforts to combat these diseases require expenditures of public dollars that drain all taxpayers, urban and suburban alike. The continuing disintegration of our cities encourages business and industry to leave New Jersey altogether, resulting in a drain of jobs and dollars from our economy. In sum, the decline of our cities and the increasing economic segregation of our population are not just isolated problems for those left behind in the cities, but a disease threatening us all. Zoning ordinances that either encourage this process or ratify its results are not promoting our general welfare, they are destroying it.

In 1985, the New Jersey Legislature responded to the Mount Laurel court decisions and enacted the New Jersey Fair Housing Act, which created the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to monitor the implementation of affordable housing statewide.

In 1985, and as amended in 1997, the plaintiffs executed settlement agreements with Mount Laurel Township. Those agreements provide for the development of 839 units of affordable housing in Mount Laurel Township prior to 2003. Of the 839 units, 349 are being developed by Fair Share Housing Development, Inc.

The effort of the Mount Laurel plaintiffs and others to provide regional affordable housing opportunities is the subject of two books: *Our Town: Race, Housing and the Soul of Suburbia*, David L. Kirp, John P. Dwyer, Larry A. Rosenthal of the University of California at Berkeley and *Suburbs under Siege* by Charles M. Haar of Harvard Law School.

**DIRECTIONS TO ETHEL R. LAWRENCE HOMES
MOORESTOWN-MT. LAUREL ROAD
MOUNT LAUREL, NEW JERSEY
(856) 439-9901**

From Camden and the Ben Franklin Bridge:

- Take Admiral Wilson Boulevard (Route 30) out of Camden.
- Merge onto Route 38 and continue past the Cherry Hill and Moorestown Malls.
- After the Moorestown Mall, continue through several traffic lights (East Gate Drive, Pleasant Valley Avenue, Church Street).
- Prior to the next traffic light, turn right at the “jug-handle” for Moorestown-Mt. Laurel Road and make a right onto Moorestown-Mt. Laurel Road.
- Continue through two (2) traffic lights (at the Mt. Laurel Municipal Center and at Union Mill Road).
- After passing the Mount Laurel Board of Education building and the Mount Laurel Senior Citizens Center (both on the left) - SLOW DOWN - you will soon see the entrance to Ethel R. Lawrence Homes Development on your LEFT. The development is about one-quarter mile after Union Mill Road.

From Interstate 295 (North and South):

- Take I-295 to Exit 40. Exit onto Route 38 West
- Travel on Route 38 West for approximately 1 mile.
- Immediately prior to the third traffic light, exit from the right lane (onto a “jug handle”) and make a left onto Moorestown-Mount Laurel Road, thereby crossing back over Route 38.
- Continue through two (2) traffic lights (at Mt. Laurel Municipal Center and at Union Mill Road).
- After passing the Mount Laurel Board of Education building and the Mount Laurel Senior Citizens Center (both on the left) - SLOW DOWN - you will soon see the entrance to Ethel R. Lawrence Homes Development on your LEFT. The development is about one-quarter mile after Union Mill Road.