

City of Bowie



Hate Crime

And

Bias Incident

Response Policy

Adopted by the
Bowie City Council
December 2005

November 2005

Bowie City Council
2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, MD 20716

Dear Councilmembers.

On behalf of the City of Bowie's Diversity Committee ("Committee"), we write to update you on our activities during our first year of operation and to submit for Council's consideration, a Hate Crime and Bias Incident Response Policy for the City. This policy was first presented to Council in June 2005. At your request, it has been slightly revised to incorporate suggestions made at the public hearing in June.

Since the Diversity Committee members were installed in early fall of 2004, we have met monthly, established sub-committees to address the Committee's mission and goals, including recommending the City's policy for response to bias and hate related crimes. We have hosted several speakers reviewing the County's response policy when such incidents occur, and have consulted with several state and national organizations and agencies on the subject. The policy is intended to provide guidance to City Council and City staff on how to respond to hate crimes and bias incidents when they occur in our community. The Committee recommends the attached Hate Crimes and Bias Incident Response Policy and informational brochure be adopted by the City Council.

On behalf of the Committee, we look forward to working with you and the Council in the future as we address these important issues. Should you have any questions or need additional information regarding the Committee, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Elveeda H Dixon
Chair

CITY'S DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Chair

Elveeda H. Dixon

Members

Vincent Gay

Jennie Guilbaud

Stephen Irving

Erica Kennedy

Barbara Ryan

Brenda Thompson

2 vacancies

Council Liaison

Hon. Dennis Brady

Staff Liaison

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The nine-member Diversity Committee was created by an act of the Bowie City Council in September 2003 to advise and make recommendations to the Council on the City's long-term diversity goals, to improve communications between the diverse groups and communities of the City, and to investigate and address diversity issues that may arise

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INTRODUCTION

“In our commitment to the welfare of all our citizens, the City of Bowie seeks a climate that welcomes, celebrates, and promotes respect for the entire variety of human experience. By working together, we can maintain a community and a work environment where all citizens have the opportunity to develop their potential and contribute fully to Bowie’s future growth, development and unity “

*City of Bowie Diversity Statement
Adopted by the City Council,
June 16, 2003*

The recent hate crimes and incidents of vandalism in our community have underscored the importance of coming together in a positive manner not only to celebrate our diversity, but also to recognize those things that bind us together as a community. The Bowie City Council and other elected leaders have denounced these incidents in very strong terms and have offered their assistance to the police and to the hate crime victims.

The City’s Diversity Committee offers the following recommendations to the Bowie City Council to provide a consistent and uniform policy for responding to incidents based on hate, prejudice or bias within our community.

EXISTING LAW - HATE CRIME DEFINITION

Under Maryland law (Md. Code Ann , Crim Law Art., § 10-301 et seq), a hate crime is a criminal act or acts, motivated or perceived by a victim to be motivated by race, color, religion, ethnic background, or sexual orientation *

It is illegal in Maryland, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment, for any person to vandalize or attempt to vandalize any religious property or to interfere by force or threat of force with any person in the exercise of their religious beliefs.

In addition, it is also forbidden to damage, destroy, burn or otherwise vandalize the property of a person or an institution because of their race or beliefs, or to harass or commit a crime against any person because of their "race, color, religious beliefs, national origin or sexual orientation " The statute also provides an extra sentencing enhancement for those crimes motivated by hate

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. ZERO TOLERANCE STATEMENT

The Committee recommends that the City Council adopt the following statement of zero tolerance

The City of Bowie supports a zero-tolerance policy for those who commit acts based on hate, prejudice and bias, and will support full justice and prosecution, under state and federal law, for those involved in such crimes, to the extent permissible by law

In addition to publicly denouncing those hate crimes addressed by state law, the Committee recommends that the City Council publicly denounce acts committed in the Bowie community which are motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against any of the protected classes of individuals in State law or against an individual because of his or her age, disability or gender

* The General Assembly passed legislation in 4/05 to include "sexual orientation" in the definition of a hate crime. The law took effect on October 1, 2005

B. PRE-RESPONSE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The Committee recommends that the City, through its staff and volunteer City committees, undertake a public education campaign to promote the City's Zero Tolerance statement, provide an understanding of what constitutes a hate crime or bias-related incident, and provide resources to individuals.

These activities could include the following

- An information line for reporting incidents and/or obtaining information
- Publication of an informational brochure (draft attached in Appendix) - *"What To Do If It Were To Happen To You."*
- Offer information regarding County mediation services to address issues prior to conflicts resulting in a potential incident.
- Offer referrals for intervention services for those identified as being at-risk to commit hate or bias incidents
- Effectively utilize community, civic and religious resources and partners to provide education and outreach efforts.

C CITY RESPONSE AND REWARD

The Committee recommends that the City publicly respond to each suspected hate crime and/or bias incident within the City of Bowie municipal limits or its immediate vicinity. This should include a City Council press release denouncing the act and requesting community assistance and information regarding the incident.

In addition, the Committee recommends that a reward of up to \$2,500 be offered for information leading to the arrest or prosecution of a person or persons involved in commission of a hate crime occurring within the City of Bowie. We should encourage cooperation with the Prince George's County Police Crime Solvers or other interested parties for increasing amount of reward offered, as appropriate.

D INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The Committee recommends that the City coordinate with Prince George's County and State of Maryland agencies, where appropriate, on education, outreach, information sharing and response efforts. This coordination would provide for a comprehensive approach for the investigation and response to hate crime and bias related incidents.

These agencies may include

Prince George's County (www.co.pg.md.us)

- Prince George's County Police Department – District II Station
- Prince George's County Human Relations Commission
- Prince George's County Community Relations Office
- Prince George's County Department of Social Services
- Office of the State's Attorney
- Prince George's County School System

State

- State Police
- State Commission on Human Relations

The Committee would also encourage the County Police Department to notify the City Manager when an incident in the Bowie area is classified as a suspected hate crime

E. VICTIM AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE

The Committee recommends that the City adopt the following procedures and policy in response to a hate crime or bias incident.

For Victim

- Establish personal contact as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours after City notification of incident.
- Offer assistance and resources, as may be needed, including any referrals
- Establish liaison with County Police, State's Attorney and/or victim advocate organizations if appropriate
- Conduct follow up with victim at 30 and 60 days after an incident.

For Community

- Involve City contract officers in investigating incident.
- Contact the neighborhood surrounding where the incident occurred requesting assistance and information to aid police in solving the crime, and provide informational brochure and contact information
- Host public meetings and community forums in the area surrounding the location of the incident, when appropriate, to bring awareness of the issue

For City Council

Provide annual report and assessment to City Council on hate crimes or bias incidents in the community

CONCLUSION

We are convinced that a united policy of zero tolerance from the police, our elected officials and our community, is essential in addressing hate crimes and bias incidents. Through discussion and education, and by setting a positive example, we hope to foster an environment where, not only will these types of crimes not be tolerated, but they will not even be contemplated

APPENDIX

CITY OF BOWIE'S COMMITMENT

In our commitment to the welfare of all our citizens, the City of Bowie seeks a climate that welcomes, celebrates, and promotes respect for the entire variety of human experience.

By working together, we can maintain a community and a work environment where all citizens have the opportunity to develop their potential and contribute fully to Bowie's future growth, development and unity

*City of Bowie Diversity Statement
Adopted by the Bowie City Council,
June 16, 2003*

In the state of Maryland, hate crimes are defined as those committed against a person because of their race, color, religious beliefs, national origin, or sexual orientation.

The City of Bowie supports a zero-tolerance policy for those who commit acts based on hate, prejudice and bias and will support full justice and prosecution, under state and federal law, for those involved in such crimes, to the extent permissible by law. In addition the City Council shall denounce incidents which are motivated by an offender's bias against any of the protected classes of individuals in state law or against an individual because of his or her age, disability, or gender

CITY'S DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Chair

Elveeda H Dixon

Members

Jennie Guilbaud
Mark Ibrahim
Erica Kennedy
Lauren-Jei McCarthy
Brenda Thompson

Council Liaisons

Hon. Dennis Brady &
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CITY OF BOWIE



HATE BIAS PREJUDICE

What To Do If It Were To Happen To You

WHAT IS A HATE CRIME?

In Maryland a hate crime is a criminal act or acts, motivated or perceived by a victim to be motivated by race, color, religious beliefs, national origin, and sexual orientation

Annotated Code of MD, Criminal Law Article, § 10-301

WHAT TO DO IF IT HAPPENS TO ME?

- Report the incident to the Police
- Preserve evidence Do not alter crime scene until police respond
- Ask for help – you are not alone
- Contact the City of Bowie (301-809-3032)to report incident and seek assistance and referrals

THE CITY OF BOWIE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

The Diversity Committee, made up of nine appointed community volunteers, was created by an act of the Bowie City Council in September 2003 to advise and make recommendations to the Council on the City's long-term diversity goals, to improve communications between the diverse groups and communities of the City and to investigate and address diversity issues that may arise

WHAT CAN I DO IF IT HAPPENS IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD? *

- 1 **Act & Do Something** – provide information to Police and City of Bowie
- 2 **Unite & Organize** – with neighbors, friends, churches civic groups and schools
- 3 **Support the Victims** – let them know you are concerned and that they are not alone
- 4 **Let Your Voice Be Heard** – voice your objection to hate and bias Write a letter to the editor sign a petition, or become involved with the City's Diversity Committee
- 5 **Teach Tolerance** – bias and prejudice are learned behavior – teach and practice tolerance in your life at home and in your community

* Adapted from *Ten Ways to Fight Hate, A Community Response Guide*, Southern Poverty Law Center, © 2000
www.splcenter.org.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

Local & County

City of Bowie Government

- City Manager's Office 301-809-3032.
- Bowie Police Dept. 301-575-2480
- Youth & Family Services 301-809-3033.

Prince George's County Government

- Police Department – District II Station 301 390-2100
- Human Relations Commission 301-883-6170
- Office of Community Relations 301 952-4266

NAACP –

Prince George's County Chapter
301-883-4941

National

Anti-Defamation League

- www.adl.org.

Southern Poverty Law Center

- www.teachingtolerance.org.

American-Arab

Anti-Discrimination Committee

- www.adc.org.

Human Rights Campaign

- www.hrc.org.

*This is a partial list of resources.
For further assistance, call 301-809-3032.*