

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

June 5, 2020

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Offered by: MAYOR HORRIGAN; PRESIDENT SOMMERVILLE; COUNCILWOMAN SAMPLES

RESOLUTION NO. _____-2020 declaring racism as a public health crisis; urging the Mayor to create a Special Taskforce to develop a five-year Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan; directing the Clerk of Council to send copies of this resolution to area leaders, community organizations, and the City’s representatives serving in in the legislatures of the state of Ohio and the United States; and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, disproportionately higher rates of chronic diseases, mortality, poverty, economic distress, and the adverse effects of health outcomes for African-Americans are widely recognized and documented yet continue to persist throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, the death of a child before their first birthday is the most sensitive indicator of societal health, and for the African-American society within Akron and Summit County, their children are three times less likely to survive to the age of one when compared to their Caucasian counterparts; and

WHEREAS, African Americans’ health outcomes are twice as bad as the rate for Caucasians when comparing the social determinants of health, including deaths due to chronic disease, infant mortality, home loan denial rates, percent with less than a high school diploma, low birth weight infants, child poverty rate, and unemployment rate; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has shed a bright light on the health disparities in the African-American community; and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions; and

WHEREAS, almost all of the 400 years of black America’s experiences were under slavery, Jim Crow, and discriminatory public laws and policies which allowed preferential opportunity to some while at the same time subjected people of color to hardship and disadvantage in all areas of life; and

WHEREAS, racism acts on systemic, institutional and interpersonal levels, all of which operate throughout time and across generations; and

WHEREAS, still now, racism--not race--causes disproportionality high rates of homelessness, incarceration, poor education, health outcomes, and economic hardship for African Americans; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization defines “public health” as “the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society” and those efforts that “aim to provide conditions under which people can...be healthy, improve their health”; and

WHEREAS, the City of Akron holds the responsibility to address racism which includes reshaping our discourse and agenda to enable us all to actively engage in racial justice work addressing racial disparities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Akron must address persistent disparities in health outcomes and the social, economic, educational and environmental inequities that contribute to them; and

WHEREAS, the State of Ohio must address persistent disparities in health outcomes and the social, economic, educational and environmental inequities that contribute to them.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the city of Akron:

Section 1. That the Mayor and City Council declare racism is a public health crisis, and support equitable policies and to inform our public discourse on racism in the City of Akron.

Section 2. That City Council urges the Mayor to create a Special Taskforce to be chaired by a designee of the Mayor and a designee of the Commissioner of Summit County Public Health and to develop a five-year Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan to be presented to the Mayor, Akron City Council and Summit County Board of Health by June 30, 2021.

Section 3. The Clerk of Council is directed to transmit copies of this resolution to the Summit County Executive, the NAACP Akron Branch, the Akron Urban League, Summit County Public Health, Summit County Council, Community Action Akron Summit, the United Way of Summit County, Akron Public Schools, Cleveland Clinic Akron General, Summa Health, Akron Children’s Hospital, and the City’s representatives serving in the legislatures of the state of Ohio and the United States.

Section 4. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of public peace, health, safety and welfare for the reason that the proper attention must be brought to currently-existing disparities in public health as a result of racism, to establish a Taskforce to promote racial equity and social justice in the City, and the crucial need to promote equitable policies, and provided this resolution receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members elected or appointed to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor; otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force at the earliest time allowed by law.

Passed _____, 2020

Clerk of Council

President of Council

Approved _____, 2020

MAYOR

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AKRON CITY COUNCIL