

CITY OF OBERLIN, OHIO

RESOLUTION NO. R20-06 CMS

A RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM TO BE A SOCIAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY AND COMMITTING THE CITY OF OBERLIN TO ACTION TO ADDRESS AND ERODE ITS EFFECTS AS AN EMERGENCY MEASURE

WHEREAS, the City of Oberlin, Ohio, has been a racially diverse City since near its founding in 1833; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism has led to Black Americans being more than twice as likely to be killed by police than White Americans, and to Black Americans making up 33% of incarcerations despite being only 12% of the population, practices that have been highlighted in recent months by the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and others resulting in a massive public outcry and protests; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism has led to a wealth disparity of tenfold with a median net worth of around \$17,000 for Black American families compared to nearly \$170,000 for White American families; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism persists in denying equal access to education, employment opportunities, housing, police protection, criminal justice, governmental representation, voting, health care, and environmental safety across the United States and in Oberlin; and

WHEREAS, racism has been identified as a root cause of poverty, constricted economic and social mobility, and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, racism has been declared a public health crisis by cities and counties across the nation and Ohio, including various governmental and nonprofit entities in Lorain County, in recognition of the fact that communities of color across Ohio and our nation are severely impacted by systemic racism, highlighted especially during this time of the coronavirus pandemic; and

WHEREAS, repercussions of historic and systemic racism continue to negatively affect Black people. Racism has led to a lack of access to nutritious food, lack of economic security, high Type II diabetes rates, high obesity rates, and maternal mortality rates among the Black community according to the 2016 Lorain County Local Conversations on Minority Health Report; and

WHEREAS, Oberlin values and considers essential to the town's identity its African American population, which has declined significantly as a percentage of its population in recent decades; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oberlin seeks with renewed urgency to redress systemic racism.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Oberlin, County of Lorain County, State of Ohio:

SECTION 1: That racism is hereby declared to be a social and public health emergency, affecting our city, county, state, and nation; and

SECTION 2: This Council commits to combating racism as a public health crisis by examining our City practices, tracking our progress, and forming community partnerships to enhance and provide opportunities; and

SECTION 3: This Council will review all ordinances that come before it through the lens of antiracism.

SECTION 4: This Council will develop and implement a comprehensive Social Equity Plan to address racial, social, and economic inequities in Oberlin through specific, achievable tasks; and

SECTION 5: This Council supports continued development of community policing emphasizing relationships of trust between police and citizens and commits to a review of applicable laws, practices, training, and union contracts to ensure the promotion of racial equity and accountability; and

SECTION 6: This Council will provide avenues for community dialogue and education around issues of white privilege and antiracism and support community efforts to amplify and address issues of racism in effective ways through avenues such as the Human Relations Commission; and

SECTION 7: This Council will facilitate equal access to education and job training programs; and

SECTION 8: This Council will commit to an increase in affordable housing stock in Oberlin, including an examination of the use of city-owned properties, to keep and attract a racially diverse community; and

SECTION 9: This Council will ensure equitable hiring practices in City positions and in all contractual assignments.

SECTION 10: This Council will work to progress as a racially just organization, through which Council, administration and staff will continually seek to enhance an understanding of the issues involved in city government and administration.

SECTION 11: This Council calls upon the Ohio Legislature, the Ohio House Speaker, the Ohio Senate President, and the Governor of Ohio to:

1. Join Oberlin and other communities across Ohio in declaring systemic racism a public health crisis;
2. Commit federal and state funding to fight the racism crisis and to correct racial injustices;
3. Provide local governments with resources to address racism in ways appropriate to their own communities;
4. Review each piece of legislation through the lens of antiracism.

SECTION 12: The Clerk of Council shall forward copies of this resolution to the offices of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the General Assembly, the Minority Leader of the General Assembly, the State Representative of the 56th House District, and to each member of the City's Congressional Delegation. Further, the Clerk of Council shall forward copies of this resolution to the President of Oberlin College and the Lorain County Commissioners, and make prominently available to all City staff, boards and commissions, and the public.

SECTION 13: This resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety of the citizens of the City of Oberlin, to wit: **to acknowledge the existence of racism in its various forms as a social and public health emergency and to commit to action to erode its effects without delay**, and provided that it is elevated to emergency status by the affirmative vote of at least five members of council and receives the affirmative vote of at least five members of council upon final passage, it shall go into full force and effect from and immediately after its passage; otherwise, it shall take effect at the earliest period allowed by law.

PASSED: 1st Reading: July 6, 2020 (E)
2nd Reading: _____
3rd Reading: _____


ATTEST:




BELINDA B. ANDERSON, MMC
CLERK OF COUNCIL

POSTED: 07/07/2020

EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/06/2020



Linda Slocum, President




Heather Adelman, Vice President



Ray English, Councilperson



Mary Price, Councilperson



Kelly Singleton, Councilperson



Kristin Peterson, Councilperson



Elizabeth Meadows Councilperson