

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-08-181
RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM IS A
PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biological basis; and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism is internalized or interpersonal; and systemic racism is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks, that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment and criminal justice; and emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, more than 100 research studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations declared a decade (2015-2024) focused on the people of African descent for recognition, justice and development to ensure human rights and fight against structural racism; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Health Equity Roadmap states that, “Racial and ethnic minority populations experience poorer health outcomes than the general population for almost every health and social condition”; and

WHEREAS, in Michigan, the highest excess death rates exist for African Americans for infant mortality, maternal mortality, and pediatric asthma; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities formed by Executive Order No. 2020-55 to address the “disproportionately impacted communities of color” as African Americans represent 13.6% of Michigan’s population, but 40% of deaths from COVID-19.

WHEREAS, public health’s responsibilities to address racism include reshaping our discourse and agenda so that we all actively engage in racial justice work; and

WHEREAS, while there is no epidemiologic definition of “crisis,” the health impact of racism clearly rises to the definition of crisis being any situation that is going to lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting a group, community or whole society.

WHEREAS, the City has adopted ordinances prohibiting discrimination based in whole or in part on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, height, weight, condition of pregnancy, marital status, physical or mental limitation, source of income, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status of another person, that person's relatives, or that person's associates.

WHEREAS, the City has adopted ordinances prohibiting discrimination in housing practices, public accommodations, employment practice and other matters.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Westland City Council that:

- Racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire society;
- The City Council directs the Mayor to form a commission to implement this Resolution within ninety (90) days from the Resolution being passed;
- The commission will conduct an assessment of internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of the organization, led by the commission in collaboration with other relevant parties, communicates results of assessments, and determines the appropriate interval for reassessment;
- The commission is to work to create an equity and justice oriented organization, with the commission identifying specific activities to increase diversity and to incorporate anti-racism principles across membership, leadership, staffing and contracting;
- The City Council, Administration, and Commission shall seek to identify specific activities to increase diversity and to incorporate anti-racism principles across the City, its leadership, staffing and contracting and shall review internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of the organization;
- The City Council and Administration shall incorporate into the organization educational efforts to address and dismantle racism, expand understanding of racism, and how racism affects individual and population health and provide tools to assist members to engage actively and authentically with communities of color;
- The City Council and Administration shall advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and supports local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice, while also encouraging individual member advocacy to dismantle systemic racism;
- Finally, the City Council and Administration shall work to build alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourages other local, state and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

ROLL CALL:

AYE Godbout

Green

Herzberg

Londeau

McDermott

Rutkowski

Hart

NAY None

ABSENT None

CERTIFICATION

I, Richard LeBlanc, Clerk for the City of Westland, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of a Resolution adopted by the City Council for the City of Westland at a regular meeting held on the 3rd day of August, 2020, and that said meeting was conducted and public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act, being Act 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, and that the minutes of said meeting were kept and will be or have been available as required by said Act.



RICHARD LEBLANC, City Clerk