



STAFF REPORT
7/22/2020

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: William B. Pattison, Jr., City Manager

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 2020-45, a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Coachella, California, Stating Conviction that Systemic Racism is a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis Which Results in Disparities in Family Stability, Health and Mental Wellness, Education, Employment, Environmental Justice, Economic Development, Transportation, Public Safety, Incarceration and Housing and Reaffirming Its Commitment to Advancing Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the City.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Review, discuss, and adopt Resolution No. 2020-45 Regarding Racism as a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The unjust and tragic death of George Floyd, among many more, by law enforcement, in the midst of a pandemic that has disproportionately impacted communities of color, has revealed uncomfortable truths about the systemic racism in our society – including in the way we have planned and designed our communities. The proposed Resolution reasserts the City Council’s commitment to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the City by creating a Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice to further develop the City’s response to advancing social justice.

BACKGROUND:

Communities nationwide and across Southern California continue to express their anguish, anger, and calls for action over the senseless and violent deaths of Tony McDade, Elijah McClain, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks, among others, and the systemic injustice that their deaths, and too many more, reveal in our society. Over the course of the past six weeks we have been grieving these losses and considering how we, as a City can do more to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in our community.

The City has an opportunity to analyze and address the inequities created when government systemically drives and perpetuates societal differences along racial lines, resulting in vastly different living and social conditions and access to opportunities. More affirmative approaches

may be sought to counter the effects of historic practices, may help to overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities, and are needed to advance equity and social justice in the community.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

To further the goal of making Coachella a healthy, livable, sustainable, and economically resilient place to live, the City needs to dramatically improve outcomes for low income families and communities of color. By addressing the barriers faced by these communities, the City will improve outcomes for the community as well and strengthen the region. There is a need to address the long-standing systemic and institutional barriers that have fostered racial inequities in health, wealth, and opportunity, and created obstacles for low income families and communities of color.

To meet these objectives, the proposed Resolution would: 1) affirm the City's intent to stand side-by-side with those working toward a fair and just society, and with those calling for systemic change and for the breaking down of barriers that reduce opportunity and undermine the community's shared prosperity; and 2) outline the City's intentions to consistently incorporate equity awareness into every aspect of its work guided by a City Council policy statement on equity and social justice.

The proposed Resolution also establishes a Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice to recommend a set of policies to the City Council. The work of the committee may include, but not be limited to:

- Establishing an City-wide definition of “equity” to have a shared understanding of it.
- Providing guidance on developing internal policies to prioritize, support, and invest in equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Supporting and encouraging public participation to lift up voices of the community to ensure meaningful engagement and capacity-building opportunities for residents most impacted by racial and social injustice.
- Developing a report including existing equity-related activities throughout City departments.
- Study and analyze quantitative and qualitative indicators of existing inequities and disparities in the City, and how the community experiences the City's desired outcomes.
- Preparing a set of policies and recommended changes to City policies to promote equity and social justice.

To ensure progress, City staff would report back on the work of the Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice at regular intervals - three months, six months, and nine months, with the

expectation that a final set of recommendations shall be prepared within nine months, for consideration by the City Council in May 2021.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Resolution No. 2020-45