

RESOLUTION NO. 78-2020 (PSH)

By Council Members Hart, Russell, and Ungar

A Resolution condemning the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department, declaring racism a public health crisis, and expressing support for state-wide legislation to combat racism and implement best police practices to address racial bias and improve police-community relations; and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, the senseless death of George Floyd while in the custody of the Minneapolis Police Department, which has been ruled a homicide, shocks the conscience of our community and all of us on this Council; and

WHEREAS, the killing of George Floyd has set off an explosion of protests based on pent-up anger regarding brutal murders of many unarmed Blacks across the country and including 91 in Cleveland itself; and

WHEREAS, killings by Police who are sworn to serve and protect average a total of 1,000 per year nationwide with a significantly disproportionate number of those killings being of Black citizens; and

WHEREAS, these killings are a symptom of systemic racism that has plagued this country since 1619 when the first African slave was brought to our shores; and

WHEREAS, this systemic racism infests every sector of our society – housing, employment, health care, education, politics, wealth creation and maintenance, socialization and others; and

WHEREAS, the City of Cleveland Heights recognizes the deep anguish this tragedy has caused in our community and around the country, particularly among Blacks; and

WHEREAS, racial diversity and tolerance are historically woven into the fabric of our City, yet we know much more can and must be done to make the City a more inclusive community to ensure it is a place where racism does not exist in any place or form; and

WHEREAS, Cleveland Heights has long prided itself on having a diverse population including an almost equal number of Blacks and Caucasian Americans; and

WHEREAS, this City Council is aware of the effects of racism on the residents of Cleveland Heights who are Black; and

WHEREAS, the recent killings of George Floyd in Minneapolis; Ahmad Aubrey in Georgia; Breanna Taylor in Louisville; Tamir Rice in Cleveland; Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta and others across this country and protests mounted for each of them have made it clear that the time for silence in the face of injustice is long past; and

RESOLUTION NO. 78-2020 (PSH)

WHEREAS, the Ohio State Senate and House are presently considering concurrent resolutions declaring the effects of racism a public health crisis and calling on those effects to be dealt with as a public health issue; and

WHEREAS, those concurrent resolutions call on the State to establish a commission to study the effects of racism and its structure to determine how to restructure state government and policies to combat the public health crisis caused by racism; and

WHEREAS, another bill pending in the Ohio House calls on the State to implement a system of health impact studies focusing on racial disparities to analyze every government action in light of its impact on minority communities remembering our racist past history in order to eliminate the effects of that history root and branch; and

WHEREAS, there have been multiple protests here in Cleveland Heights calling attention to local problems and asking our City government for solutions to the problem of racism in Cleveland Heights, and

WHEREAS, multiple suggestions have been made which this Council will consider enacting; and

WHEREAS, the City of Cleveland Heights supports the right of people to peaceably protest this tragedy and to call for needed change.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, that:

SECTION 1. This Council condemns the murder of George Floyd and all other racial killings and brutality by Police and demands that the perpetrators be brought to justice.

SECTION 2. This Council is dedicated to ending our complicity in the system of structural racism and to building an agenda for our city to pursue the goal of justice for all.

SECTION 3. This Council strongly supports the passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 14 and its companion, House Concurrent Resolution 31, as soon as possible so that the Commission called for in those resolutions can begin its work of determining how to combat racism on the State, County and Local levels.

SECTION 4. This Council endorses the joint efforts of The Ohio Mayors Alliance in forming a Police Reform Support Network to help cities across Ohio, including ours, assess, share and support efforts to implement best practices to address racial bias and improve police-community relations.

RESOLUTION NO. 78-2020 (PSH)

SECTION 5. We also call on the Legislature of the State of Ohio to enact HB 620 establishing that the Legislative Services Bureau shall examine each act of the State Legislature with regard to its impact on the health of minority communities and publish reports regarding that impact for each piece of legislation.

SECTION 6. This Council declares that the effects of racism in our community is a public health crisis negatively affecting our Black neighbors and that we will listen to the community to reform our city and establish our own task force to determine what we must do to combat the effects of racism in our city in honor of our diversity. Some items the task force may consider are the establishment of a community police oversight body; requiring an annual or more often accountability analysis regarding use of force by our officers; and conducting more effective training in community policing, among others.

SECTION 7. This Council is committed to a safe and healthy environment where everyone can thrive.

SECTION 8. This resolution is hereby adopted as an emergency measure immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety of the inhabitants of the City of Cleveland Heights, such emergency being the timely need to express positions on the foregoing matters. Provided it receives the affirmative vote of five (5) or more of the members elected or appointed to this Council, this ordinance shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest time allowed by law.

JASON S. STEIN, Mayor
President of the Council

AMY HIMMELEIN
Clerk of Council

PASSED: July 6, 2020