

RESOLUTION No.

By: Council Members melody Joy Hart, Davida Russell and Michael Ungar

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 all of us on this Council

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

WHEREAS these killings by Police who are sworn to protect and serve have numbered on average 1,000 a year nationwide showing the breadth and depth of White Supremacist thought in America; 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 African Americans; 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 African-Americans and Caucasian Americans; and

WHEREAS this City Council is aware of the effects of racism on the residents of Cleveland Heights who are African-American; 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

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 two protests here in Cleveland Heights calling attention to local problems and asking this Council for solutions to the problem of racism in Cleveland Heights, and

WHEREAS several specific suggestions have been made which this Council will consider enacting; and

WHEREAS the African-American community of Cleveland Heights frequents the City of Cleveland and deserves to be safe – including from the Cleveland Police; and

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

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

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 City 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: The City Council of Cleveland Heights 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: 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 5: Because our citizens often visit and work in Cleveland we call on the City Council of Cleveland to make the Police Commission permanent and independent in order to gain control of the violence perpetrated by the Cleveland Police Department.

Section 6: We, Cleveland heights City Council, declares that the effects of racism in our community is a public health crisis negatively affecting our African-American neighbors and that we will listen to the community to reform our municipality 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 civilian 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. 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.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest:

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Jason S. Stein, Mayor

President of Council

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Clerk of Council