

Council Business Meeting

July 7, 2020

Agenda Item	Resolution Declaring the City of Ashland's Commitment to Social Equity and Racial Justice	
From	Adam Hanks	Interim City Administrator
Contact	adam@ashland.or.us ; (541) 552-2046	

SUMMARY

A resolution has been drafted by Councilors Graham, Slattery, and Rosenthal for the full Council's consideration establishing a formal commitment by the Council, with support from Mayor Stromberg, to recognize and take action to "move forward with purpose in order to provide immediate support for advocacy efforts while putting in place the elements necessary for long-term systemic change".

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

This resolution is a new item for Council consideration

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Councilors Graham, Slattery, and Rosenthal will provide oral background on the development of this draft resolution as part of the agenda item presentation and discussion.

FISCAL IMPACTS

No immediate financial impacts are associated with the approval of this resolution. It is acknowledged that aspects of this resolution may involve financial commitments from the current or future budgets and those costs will be developed and presented as they come before Council in future meetings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is a Council policy decision and will be supported by staff.

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

- 1) I move to approve Resolution 2020-15 Titled "A Resolution Declaring the City of Ashland's Commitment to Social Equity and Racial Justice"
- 2) I move to approve Resolution 2020-15 Titled "A Resolution Declaring the City of Ashland's Commitment to Social Equity and Racial Justice with the following amendments...."

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Draft Resolution 2020-15

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-15

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE CITY OF ASHLAND’S COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

RECITALS:

A. The Ashland City Council recognizes that the United States’ shameful history of slavery and over 150 years of systemic racism post-slavery has created a legacy of unequal opportunities and higher risk of violence for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the United States. The mere presence of this reality should be a concern and top priority for all Americans who value the goal of equality for all people; and

B. The Ashland City Council recognizes that intrinsic bias is the foundation on which systemic, institutionalized racism is built and that the work to unwrap and disassemble that bias is work that we must do both as individuals and as a community; and

C. The Ashland City Council recognizes that, in spite of the values of equality held by the majority of City of Ashland residents, Ashland has not yet reached the point where it is a comfortable place for people of color to live, work, own a business, and raise their children; and

D. The Ashland City Council recognizes that local leaders who have been advocating for racial justice and social equity on behalf of their families and communities cannot and should not be asked to shoulder this work alone. There is work to be done by all Ashland residents, including this Council; and

E. We find ourselves in a moment in time similar to, but in many ways distinct from, previous incidents of police brutality that have happened in various locations across our country. What we know from the past is that too often outrage tapers off over time, and there is strong momentum to go back to business as usual. We must use this historic moment to commit to doing the sustained work over time necessary to create a different future for Ashland – a future that is more diverse and authentically welcoming to all who live and visit here; and

F. The City of Ashland’s commitment to progress on these issues has been visible through the following efforts which are ongoing:

- 1. The Ashland Police Department (APD) is committed to engaging all members of the community in an equitable, professional, and compassionate manner. For years the

1 officers of APD have trained in implicit bias, procedural justice, de-escalation and on
2 other best practices. APD knows, however, that these are not boxes to be checked and
3 never re-visited, but rather that this work is never-ending and that it needs constant
4 attention and updating. To that end APD is dedicated to continuing its work with
5 community members and groups to move forward in collaboration, while strengthening
6 relationships and fostering mutual understanding.

7 2. The City of Ashland has also begun adapting its employment recruitment and hiring
8 processes and recognizes that more needs to be done to eliminate bias in this area.

9 3. Mayor John Stromberg has signed Ashland on to the Obama Foundation’s “Eight
10 Can’t Wait” program, and Ashland Police Chief Tighe O’Meara has completed a review
11 and revision process related to that commitment; and

12 G. While the City of Ashland has made progress, our community, values, and constitutional
13 ideals call us to be more than we have been and to move forward with purpose in order to
14 provide immediate support for advocacy efforts while putting in place the elements necessary for
15 long-term, systemic change.

16 **NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, OREGON,**
17 **RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

18 SECTION 1. The Ashland City Council commits to the following:

19 A. Designate Social Equity and Racial Justice as a Value Service in the City of
20 Ashland’s strategic planning process, which will provide an opportunity for focused and
21 sustained attention within the City’s planning, management, and policy structure.

22 B. Proclaim Juneteenth as an annual day of municipal commemoration and partner with
23 communities of color and other local organizations to celebrate African American/Black
24 culture on this day annually.

25 C. Advocate at the state and federal levels for policy reform that includes: a searchable
26 database of officers sanctioned for excessive use of force and other misconduct; a
27 national data collection program to determine the number of people killed or injured by
28 police officers tracked by race, gender, age, and other demographic characteristics;
29 limiting the transfer of military equipment to local jurisdictions; providing more
30 extensive training for police officers regarding de-escalation, intrinsic bias, and

1 procedural justice; and assisting people with mental health or addiction issues who have
2 interactions with law enforcement.

3 D. Work in the near term as a “Committee of the Whole” to move these efforts forward
4 by assigning tasks outlined in this resolution to individual staff and councilors and
5 reporting back to Council on a regular basis while a more formal process and timeline is
6 developed that includes regular progress reports to Council.

7 SECTION 2. Moving forward, the City of Ashland will:

8 A. Support the Ashland Police Department in taking a more active role in on-campus
9 conversations about racial justice at Southern Oregon University and in developing
10 engagement events to help local residents understand APD’s policies regarding use of
11 force and other relevant issues.

12 B. Strengthen our cultural competency and intrinsic bias training program for members
13 of the City Council and City Staff.

14 C. Display Black Lives Matter signs at City-owned locations to offer visible and
15 immediate support for racial justice advocates in our community.

16 D. Continue and enhance our support of the annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther
17 King, Jr.’s birthday.

18 E. Connect with Southern Oregon University and its students to better understand the
19 experience of all college students, but particularly students of color, in the City of
20 Ashland as a first step toward improving that experience. Through this process, the City
21 will help all local college students understand the City’s ideals and expectations
22 regarding respect for all people.

23 F. Work with community partners to develop training, incident response, and
24 community acknowledgement programs that help residents and business owners address
25 the long-term, systemic root causes of inequality and racial injustice and celebrate
26 progress.

27 G. Work with Jackson County and neighboring communities to develop a program that
28 will provide trained mental health professionals for instances where the Ashland Police
29 Department is called upon to serve the needs of people who are suffering from mental
30 health issues and/or addiction.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

H. Determine the feasibility of a mural project to provide a mode of artistic expression of our community’s commitment to making meaningful, visible, and ongoing progress on issues of social equity and racial justice.

I. Request a proactive review of the policies that pertain to the standard process of investigating incidents where deadly force is used in Jackson County.

J. Review recruiting/hiring practices to address implicit bias with input from leaders of local diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

K. Renew the effort with indigenous leaders in the community to find a solution to the renaming of Dead Indian Memorial Road.

SECTION 3. This resolution is effective upon adoption.

ADOPTED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2020.

ATTEST:

Melissa Huhtala, City Recorder

SIGNED and APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2020.

John Stromberg, Mayor

Reviewed as to form:

David H. Lohman, City Attorney