

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM**

Meeting Date: July 7, 2020
To: City Councilmembers
From: Mayor Slayter
Subject: Resolution Committing the City of Sebastopol to promote racial equity in City relationships, programs, services and policies
Recommendation City Council adopt the proposed resolution
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No X N/A
Net General Fund Cost:
If Cost to Other Fund(s),
Fund:

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) AK (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION:

This item is to request that the City Council Approve and Adopt the Resolution Committing the City of Sebastopol to Promote Racial Equity in City Relationships, Programs, Services and Policies.

BACKGROUND:

On May 25, 2020, the City of Sebastopol, as well as the nation, witnessed the actions of individuals who did not respect the life and welfare of others resulting in the loss of life. These actions in no way represent our community, our City staff or our City Council.

The City of Sebastopol takes pride in its community and stands against racial injustice, supporting racial equality for all. We recognize that racism and prejudice are not distant memories and that together, we all must dissent from indifference, apathy, fear, hatred, and mistrust and we must recognize that we have to do better.

DISCUSSION:

It has been just over a month since the unjust killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis set in motion a groundswell of global protests, including here in Sebastopol. We have seen a community that is engaged, committed, passionate, and right to demand not only our community, but also our nation, create a culture where each person is seen, heard, and supported and where we respect and celebrate our differences and commonalities.

As seen by recent emails, phone calls, and public comment at City Council meetings, the time is now for City leadership to implement policies that reflect our City’s values of inclusiveness, neighborliness, equity, justice, fairness, and climate protection. We must commit to proactive measures towards demonstrating these values.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, staff anticipates receiving public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report. Such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the meeting for this item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with the action proposed to be taken tonight.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council Approve and Adopt the Resolution Committing the City of Sebastopol to promote racial equity in City relationships, programs, services and policies.

Attachment(s):

Resolution

RESOLUTION XXXX-2020

A RESOLUTION COMMITTING THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL TO PROMOTE RACIAL EQUITY IN CITY RELATIONSHIPS, PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND POLICIES.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere - Martin Luther King

The City of Sebastopol recognizes and honors the Indigenous Peoples of California, specifically the Miwok and Pomo tribes, who are the first human inhabitants of the area that would become Sonoma County and Sebastopol. The Sebastopol community has benefited from the beautiful natural surroundings that were home to these peaceful people.

The City of Sebastopol also recognizes the injustices brought by non-native European settlers. There is a long history of racially-based injustice, subjugation and land theft brought upon the Indigenous Peoples of California by non-native settlers.

The Bodega Miwok (aka, Olamentko) traditionally lived in the area of Bodega Bay. The neighboring Southern Pomo Sebastopol group lived just north and east of the Miwok. The town of Sebastopol is located about one mile midway between the north boundary of Miwok territory and the southern edge of Southern Pomo territory.

The earliest recorded account of the Coast Miwok people made by Europeans was found in a diary aboard Sir Francis Drake's ship, which landed in Marin County in 1579.

California was under the control of Mexico from 1821 to 1846 and the California mission system was established during this time. Many Native Americans perished from measles, diphtheria, smallpox, syphilis and other diseases brought by non-native people. Native people were commonly enslaved; a practice that continued until the mid-1860s when California changed its laws to conform to the 14th Amendment.

In the 1850s, the first non-native settlers established a post office and a small center of trade that grew to become the City of Sebastopol. In 1861 the United States Congress enacted legislation which effectively extinguished Indian title to almost all land in California, leaving most tribes, including the Miwok and the Pomo, entirely landless.

Non-native immigrants of European descent continued to arrive from the eastern part of the United States during the Gold Rush and the following years. Many farms and ranches were established in the greater Sebastopol area by these settlers.

Between 1905 and 1936 reports by scholars and by the Bureau of Indian Affairs indicate that Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo continued to live in Marin and Sonoma Counties even though deprived of a land base by non-Indians. In 1920, the Bureau of Indian Affairs purchased a 15.45 acre tract of land in Graton, CA for the 'village home' of the Marshall, Bodega, Tomales, and Sebastopol Indians. Through the purchase of this land, which was put into federal trust, the

federal government consolidated these neighboring, traditionally interactive groups into one recognized entity, Graton Rancheria, thus establishing them as a federally recognized tribe of American Indians.

Starting in the 1850s, Chinese immigrants began arriving in the Sebastopol area, and established a sizeable community on the east side of Main Street between present-day Bodega Avenue and McKinley Streets as well as near the intersection of Bodega Avenue and Petaluma Avenue.

In 1926 the Enmanji Buddhist Temple was established and in 1933 construction of the temple building was commenced, being completed in 1934. During World War II, during the internment of Americans of Japanese descent, the temple was protected against fire and other damage by local farmers who greatly valued their neighbors who had been unlawfully relocated by the United States government.

The history of California, and Sebastopol, including racial injustice, disease, slavery, economic disparity and theft, cannot be changed, but must be acknowledged. Our society is the product of this history.

The City of Sebastopol recognizes and celebrates the richness that comes from the mixing of cultures, colors, religions, races, orientations, identities, ideas and ideologies while honoring those who came before every non-native settler from every other nation.

Over the years, the City of Sebastopol has attempted to identify, as individuals and groups, what diversity, equity and inclusion mean to our organization and our community. Despite these efforts and intentions, this work has failed to achieve racial equity.

The City intends to understand its relationship with race and must strive to gain a deeper understanding of actions and impacts. The efficacy of this work; to identify and track outcomes of racial equity work, must be reported to our community. Difficult questions must be considered, directed conversations must be engaged in, learning must continue and an unwavering commitment by all members of our community is needed. The perpetual weight of addressing neglecting systemic racism over centuries has led us to this moment. The time is now; we must continue to work on equality as if lives depend on it - because they do.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL, CALIFORNIA, FINDS THAT:

A. The Sebastopol City Council believes every person has the freedom to feel valued and respected and anyone who threatens the freedom of one individual threatens freedom for all of us.

B. The City Council recognizes the history of systemic racism in our country and how it has led to many current-day disparities in education, job attainment, power and the ability to participate in the creation of policy, income and wealth, housing, healthcare, disproportionate incarceration rates for people of color, and other pernicious systems of injustice.

C. The City Council recognizes that despite our City's best intentions, systemic racism has occurred, and continues to occur, locally, regionally and nationally; and that systemic racism cannot be defeated through good intentions and the avoidance of personal racism alone.

D. The City Council recognizes the existence of white privilege, meaning the systemic advantages that white people have relative to non-white people.

E. The City of Sebastopol recognizes that across the United States a person's race remains a key predictor of access, opportunity, power, safety and well-being. People of white European descent have benefited from the oppression, enslavement and subjugation of others. Sebastopol is no exception to this either historically or in the present day. For example, according to the American Community Survey, in 2018 the overall poverty rate in Sebastopol was 9.7% for white individuals, the rate jumps to an average of 21.8% for Latinx residents. Similar disparities exist in education levels, home ownership, and other significant data sets.

F. The City Council recognizes that racial inequities have become institutionalized in the policies and practices of many agencies, governmental and otherwise. Policies have been enacted by those with privilege to the detriment of those without. People who have been victimized or marginalized by institutional racism must be actively recruited to fill positions of power.

G. The City Council recognizes the issues of racial equity must be addressed proactively and deliberately in the course of decision making.

H. The City Council recognizes the need to meet people who are actively working to understand oppression and bias where they are in their learning journeys while approaching them with compassion and kindness to support their growth, education and abilities.

I. The City Council recognizes that life experiences inform each of us differently. What may seem a benign policy to one individual may be incendiary for another.

J. The City Council recognizes the need to examine seemingly neutral policies and practices to determine whether they are contributing to racial inequity and, where needed, change or eliminate the policy or practice. There is a long history of intentional, and unintentional, decision and policy making in both government and private industry that has resulted in classist and racist outcomes.

K. The City Council and City staff must engage in active community listening sessions. Sharing of personal stories by people from a variety of races, ethnicities, identities,

orientations, as well as perspectives of individuals of mixed race allow experiences brought about by racial, and other, differences to be understood. The City Council encourages all individuals to take part in these activities.

L. The City Council recognizes there is a general lack of awareness of the discrimination and exclusion that many individuals experience, as well as a lack of racial and socioeconomic diversity. For many people, this has led to a negative impact on the experiences of belonging to, and being a part of, our community. The general lack of awareness of inequalities must be addressed proactively.

M. The City strives to partner with other community partners to learn about and address issues of racial equity including, but not limited to, Black Lives Matter, 100 Black Men of Sonoma County, the NAACP, Los Cien, the Japanese-American Citizen League, the Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights and other community organizations representing people of color and other groups otherwise discriminated against.

N. The City of Sebastopol should consider becoming a member of, and collaborate with, the Government Alliance on Race and Equity to advance racial equity through mindful governance practices, recognizing racial inequities are embedded into government and that racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive.

O. The City Council recognizes other groups of people are also marginalized based on gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, and age, among other factors. Focusing on racial equity provides the opportunity for government to create frameworks, tools and resources that can, and must, also be applied to all marginalized people.

P. The City Council encourages everyone to openly speak out against intolerant acts of bigotry and to stand up for others who are unjustly disparaged, discredited and abused because of their race, ethnic identity or beliefs. The City Council encourages people to speak out and take a stand so that it is known that we are a community united in our effort to eliminate ethnic and racial intimidation.

Q. The City of Sebastopol and the Sebastopol City Council must be actively anti-racist. Institutions can be racist even when the people who create them and run them are not. It must be recognized that institutional racism can arise or be exaggerated by simple accidental preservation of existing inequities. The City of Sebastopol shall actively work to guard against this.

R. The City of Sebastopol recognizes climate change disproportionality affects people of color, amplifying the need to increase climate protection efforts.

S. The City Council commits to demonstrating respect in words, actions, and approaching all decisions with open-mindedness. The ability to consider differing opinions, and the safe expression of those opinions, is a tenet of democracy.

T. The City Council acknowledges language differences exist, creating difficulty in participation and access to processes and power. The City shall undertake a process to provide language translation services to non-English-language speakers and people with hearing disabilities.

U. The City shall issue a request for proposal for bias and microaggression training for all City staff, City Council members, boards and commissions. Participation in these trainings shall be mandatory.

V. The City Council is exploring and instituting methods that have worked in cities around the country to update, eliminate or create government policies, practices and programs specifically to dismantle existing racial disparities.

W. The City will seek out and support ways to honor, acknowledge and memorialize the lives, deaths, struggles and contributions of people of color from Sebastopol, and beyond. The goal is justice, equity and parity in Sebastopol, and beyond.

X. The City Council acknowledges potential difficulties in assessing the impact of decisions on racial equity, but is committed to applying a racial equity lens in a systematic way in its decision-making processes with the goal of continuing to build an inclusive, equitable community and ensure a vibrant and healthy community for all Sebastopol residents and visitors.

DRAFT

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL,
CALIFORNIA:**

That the Sebastopol City Council:

1. Commits itself to systematically and deliberately using racial equity in its decision making henceforth. The goal is an equitable and healthy community for all Sebastopol residents and visitors. Council acknowledges community values may be in conflict against each other and diligence will be needed to ensure meaningful decisions are made.
2. Commits to Ibram X. Kendi's words that racial inequity is most often the problem of bad policy, not bad people, and as such commits to identifying racial inequity and all its intersections and manifestations while monitoring outcomes to ensure anti-racist policies that reduce and eliminate racial inequity. When policies fail, the City of Sebastopol commits itself to renewed efforts to seek out better and more effective anti-racist actions. This process cannot ever be considered complete.
3. Commits to on-going race relations training, including being among the first groups, along with other city boards and commissions, to participate in bias and microaggression training as swiftly as possible.
4. Will take part in, and provide opportunities for residents to take part in, further explorations, trainings, coaching, and conversations focused on systemic racism, white privilege and other disparities that exist in our society.
5. Commits to systemic solutions to systemic problems. Piecemeal reforms and eliminating singular specific actions are inadequate.
6. Directs the City Manager, together with the City Council and the community, to develop a plan for delivering City services in a manner that promotes racial equity. The plan will direct strategic actions to advance opportunities and achieve equity that includes:
 - a. intentional collective leadership;
 - b. community engagement;
 - c. equity tools and infrastructure to support and sustain systemic changes;
 - d. and shared accountability.
7. Commits to participating in racial equity efforts with partner institutions and organizations, including Black Lives Matter, 100 Black Men of Sonoma County, the NAACP, Los Cien, the Japanese-American Citizen League, the Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights and other community organizations representing people of color and other groups otherwise discriminated against.
8. Be it further resolved, there will be future race and equity resolutions to demonstrate the City's continued intention and commitment to racial equality.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved, and adopted at a meeting by the City Council on the 7th day of July, 2020, by the following vote:

VOTE:

Ayes:

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor Patrick Slayter

ATTEST: _____
Mary Gourley, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____
Larry McLaughlin, City Manager/Attorney

DRAFT