

City of East Lansing, Michigan

RESOLUTION TO ACKNOWLEDGE, APOLOGIZE FOR AND CONDEMN
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN EAST LANSING

February 2018

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence provides in part that “...all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”; and,

WHEREAS, the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees that no person within the jurisdiction of the United States shall be denied the equal protection of the laws of the United States; and,

WHEREAS, after 222 years of independence and 150 years after the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, the goal of equality has yet to be fully realized; and,

WHEREAS, while the City of East Lansing in September 1963 established the City’s Human Relations Commission and, on April 8, 1968 adopted the City’s first comprehensive fair housing ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, while the City of East Lansing on March 7, 1972 enacted a municipal civil rights ordinance declaring it to be contrary to the City’s public policy for any person to discriminate against another person in the exercise of his or her civil rights or to harass any person because of his or her race, color, or national origin; and,

WHEREAS, Section 22-34 of the City’s civil rights ordinance recognizes that the opportunity to purchase, lease, sell, hold, use, and convey dwelling houses or dwelling units or engage in any other type of real estate transaction is a civil right protected by the ordinance and under state and federal law; and,

WHEREAS, Section 22-34 of the City’s civil rights ordinance also prohibits discrimination against an applicant seeking financial assistance or financing in connection with a real estate transaction because of the applicant’s race, color, or national origin; and,

WHEREAS, Section 22-34 of the City’s civil rights ordinance also prohibits a person from representing, for purposes of inducing a real estate transaction from which the person may benefit financially, that a change has occurred or will or may occur in the composition with respect to race, color, or national origin of the owners or occupants in the block, neighborhood, or area in which the real property is located, or representing that a change will or may result in the lowering or property values, an

increase in criminal or antisocial behavior, or a decline in the quality of schools in the block, neighborhood, or area in which the real property is located; and,

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the above, the City of East Lansing has historically remained complicit or otherwise failed to prohibit or protect all persons from discriminatory practices in public accommodations, housing, and employment based on those individuals' race, color, or national origin; and,

WHEREAS, in 1968 and before the adoption of the City's civil rights ordinance, deed restrictions and overt discrimination by community members or persons acting on their behalf prohibited or discouraged the purchase of real property in the City by individuals because of their race, color, or national origin; and,

WHEREAS, such deed restrictions and covenants still remain in the language of some neighborhood in the City of East Lansing, despite the efforts of neighborhood residents to eradicate such language; and,

WHEREAS, acknowledgement of the City's historic complicity, and reflection upon its present and future objectives, policies and education related to the protection of all individuals against discrimination and harassment because of their race, color, or national origin is long overdue.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED: that the City Council of the City of East Lansing profoundly acknowledges, apologizes for, and condemns all racially motivated, discriminatory or exclusionary aspects of the City's history, and deeply regrets the pain or suffering such policies have caused to any person.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager, together with the Human Relations Commission and the East Lansing School District, shall commence planning for an annual community forum to educate and raise awareness about the history of, the present incidents of, and future policies that may be required regarding racism in East Lansing, with the first such forum to be held prior to June of this year and in following years during Black History Month.

Mark S. Meadows
Mayor

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

Adopted February 27, 2018