



CITY OF BELMONT

Matter of Council Interest

FROM: Davina Hurt, Councilwoman and Former Mayor of the City of Belmont, and Julia Julia Mates

RE: Reaffirming Civil Rights, Safety and Dignity for All in the Wake of Global Protests of Countless Deaths of African Americans by Law Enforcement with the Establishment of a Subcommittee for Policy Review

Description of Issue/Request

The killing of George Floyd on May 25 has returned the spotlight on racist policing and the dehumanization of African Americans in the criminal legal system. George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police officers while in their custody, joining a horrifically long list of Americans who have suffered similar fates. Most recently, their names are George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Oscar Grant, Stephon Clark, Mario Woods, Jessica Williams, Steven Talor, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Amadou Diallo, and on and on and on.

As people witnessed the unfiltered murder at the hands of police, Americans nationwide are justifiably angry and frustrated. They have shown their solidarity in large numbers all over the world even in the midst of the Covid-19 global pandemic that has disparate impact on the black community. Belmont community members and City Council share in the outrage and join with protesters globally in their calls for justice.

At the City Council Meeting on March 28, 2017, the Council adopted a resolution expressing Belmont's support for Civil Rights. Subsequently, at the City Council Meeting on May 26, 2020, the Council adopted a resolution affirming Belmont's commitment to safeguard the Civil Rights, Safety and Dignity of All Community Members. The resolution expressed a level of community support that is consistent with the City of Belmont's Vision Statement and General Plan. The vision for our City is to be a city that works for everyone, and show Belmont's commitment to safeguarding the civil rights, safety, and dignity of all community members, while denouncing stigmatization, racism, and xenophobia. A community where all people are writing the next chapters of Belmont's history. We look forward to writing the next chapter of our story in a way that reflects our mutual and strong desire for justice for all, equality, respect, and peace.

Furthermore, public safety is paramount in our city. Interactions with law enforcement can affect our daily lives. We are grateful for the women and men, who put their life on the line to protect the people who live, work and play in Belmont. Today, the public is at a place of wanting to know more and understand law enforcements interactions. We should endeavor to provide a forum to allay their fears and concerns through review and education. Our sincere hope is that there will be

no issues of concern. Together, we can work to redefine public safety so that it recognizes the humanity and dignity of every person.

Therefore, we are asking the City Council to

- (1) Reaffirm our commitment to safeguard the Civil Rights, Safety and Dignity of All Community Members with additional statements of support to join the community in condemning acts of violence by law enforcement against black people. Recognizing the expression of public concern is the essence of democracy and a caring populace. To reiterate our continued support for peaceful and meaningful demonstrations in our community; for the community to come together, to listen to one another, and love each other, and to write justice, equality, respect, and peace into the future of the City and our region; and
- (2) Create a subcommittee of the council in partnership with our police department to review protocol, support police officer mental health, explore experiences of the public and work with the police department to understand the health impacts of law enforcement on the community. Subsequently, we can move on actions necessary to support all community members that will result in a resolution of values and findings. Establishing this metric will reassure the public that we have a professional upstanding police department that is accountable and transparent.

The Belmont City Council calls upon the community to exercise patience, understanding, and to show compassion to one another at this time. We must listen to each other. We are one community. We are in this together and must move forward with empathy to prepare for the hard work of change for true liberty and justice for all.

Approximately how much staff involvement will this item take?

Minimal

Financial Implications?

Minimal

How time sensitive is this issue?

As soon as possible

General Plan/Vision Statement

The resolution expressed a level of community support that is consistent with the City of Belmont's Vision Statement and General Plan. The vision for our City is to be a city that works for everyone, and show Belmont's commitment to safeguarding the civil rights, safety, and dignity of all community members, while denouncing stigmatization, racism, and xenophobia.