



City of Spartanburg

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

TO: Chris Story, Manager
FROM: Robert Coler, Attorney
SUBJECT: Racial equity, healing, reconciling and unity
DATE: September 24, 2020

BACKGROUND: The City Council of Spartanburg recognizes that communities of color have borne the burdens of inequitable social, environmental, economic, and criminal justice policies, practices, and investments. Consistent with its deep resolve to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity in all aspects of city government, City Council desires to make a formal statement regarding its demonstrated efforts to further the aforementioned principles, unequivocally reject racism and racial inequities, commit to creating a community where all are welcome and treated with respect, fairness, trust and empathy, and to pursue meaningful paths to a future of hope for all.

ACTION REQUESTED: City Council to approve the attached resolution titled “Healing, Reconciling, and Unity. A Pathway to a More Equitable Spartanburg.”

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL DATA: N/A.

A RESOLUTION

HEALING, RECONCILING, AND UNITY. A PATHWAY TO A MORE EQUITABLE SPARTANBURG.

WHEREAS, the City Council of Spartanburg, SC (herein after “City Council”) acknowledges that communities of color have borne the burdens of inequitable social, environmental, economic, and criminal justice policies, practices, and investments, and understands that the legacy of these inequitable policies has caused deep disparities, harm, and mistrust, and recognizes that racial equity is realized when, and only when, race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes; and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism that is internalized or interpersonal and systemic racism that is institutional or structural; and

WHEREAS, inequities borne from racism of any kind unacceptably disadvantage specific individuals and communities, while consequently giving advantages to other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society; and

WHEREAS, the City of Spartanburg’s collective prosperity depends upon the equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin; and

WHEREAS, persistent discrimination and disparate treatment results in racial inequities in many areas of life, including housing, education, employment, health and criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, the City of Spartanburg has a deep resolve to promote racial equity, inclusion and diversity in all aspects of city government. This commitment is exemplified by our decision to be the first S.C. local government to join the Governmental Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), our implementation of a business accelerator specifically for African-American entrepreneurs (Amplify), our significant and sustained investment in empowerment-based neighborhood revitalization, the initiation of a comprehensive planning process with an innovative equity component, our engagement in the Network for Southern Economic Mobility, our efforts to establish Hello Family, our participation in the Racial Equity Institute, our partnership with the United Way of the Piedmont to address financial stability, and other strategic endeavors initiated in recent years; and

WHEREAS, the City of Spartanburg unequivocally rejects racial inequities brought on by a legacy of systemic racism and unjust practices; and

WHEREAS, the City of Spartanburg pledges to demonstrate its commitment to racial equity through equitable investment and future funding decisions for specific projects, inclusive practices, and socially just policies; and

WHEREAS, as the City Council, we recognize that the humanity and future of the residents of Spartanburg are inextricably bound to one another; and

WHEREAS, we desire Spartanburg to be a place where all are welcome and treated with empathy, respect, fairness, and trust; and

WHEREAS, The City of Spartanburg seeks a meaningful and thoughtful way to heal the wounds of our past, reconcile the differences of our present, and unify around the path forward toward a future of hope for all of our residents.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, SPARTANBURG, SC, that the City Council confirms the following steps towards a creating a more equitable Spartanburg:

1. City Council acknowledges the historical antecedents of systemic racism in our society and city and is sorry for the racial injustices and long-lasting inequities that have resulted from those policies; we realize that acknowledgement and remorse alone do not heal the painful wounds created by injustice, nor do they ensure better actions for the future; but finding solutions to the racial inequities that exist within our city as a result of this legacy requires that we are forthright about the past and work together to heal and reconcile our community.
2. We commit to the important work of creating a community that is just and fair and full of hope, promise and equitable opportunity for all our citizens.
3. We reject the politics of divisiveness and discord that have plagued many communities across our nation and commit to the residents of Spartanburg that we will endeavor to serve as a unifying force for change and equity for all.
4. We support the various efforts in Spartanburg to promote and sustain racial equity, we pledge to be an anti-racist, equitable, and justice-oriented organization; with the City Council and its staff leadership continuing to identify specific activities to further enhance diversity and to ensure anti-racist principles and practices across leadership, staffing, and contracting.
5. We will promote racial equity through all policies approved by City Council and enhance educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing, and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development, and public safety.
6. We will continue to advocate locally and nationally for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color and support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism.
7. We will continue to work to solidify alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism.

8. We will support community efforts to amplify concerns about racist policies and practices and engage actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live in the City.
9. We will promote and support policies that prioritize the health of all people, especially people of color.
10. We will continue ongoing awareness efforts regarding racial equity including training of city leadership, city staff, and City Council.
11. We will identify clear goals and objectives, including periodic reports to City Council, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity.

DONE AND RATIFIED This ____ day of _____, 2020

MAYOR

ATTEST:

City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney