


Revised to Include Library Resolution (2-14-2022)

Agenda Report Reviewed by:

City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting February 15, 2022
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Councilmember Gurney
Subject: Resolution of a Public Statement on Racism and Social Equity
Recommendation: That the City Council Approve the Resolution
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No X N/A
Net General Fund Cost: N/A
Amount: N/A

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget AK (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION /PURPOSE:

This item is to request that the Mayor and City Council Approve the Resolution of a Public Statement on Racism and Social Equity.

BACKGROUND:

Public libraries have long been known as one of the truly democratic institutions. Public libraries champion First Amendment rights, and promote free access to information for all. Public libraries offer services and educational resources that promote inclusion and diversity to all in the community.

The Sonoma County Library is a countywide system, encompassing all nine cities and the unincorporated areas. In light of recent events – including the burning of a Black Lives Matter banner at our Sebastopol branch, the Sonoma County Library at their meeting of February 7, 2022, reiterated its values of condemning these crimes; condemning any attempt to silence or intimidate free expression; not tolerate racist or hateful behavior at any of the Library facilities; and commitment to being an antiracist organization. A copy of their resolution is attached for information.

DISCUSSION:

Recent events nationally and locally remind us that prejudices, injustices, and inequalities are embedded in societies, from social structures to institutions to cultures. Like the Sonoma County Library, Sebastopol values diversity, empowerment, community, unity, kindness, connection, and equity and the City has been dedicated to reaching toward the goal of achieving racial equity and advancing opportunities for all.

Racism must not just be condemned, but its eradication must be actively pursued. Regardless of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, veteran status, or age, we must all stand with those who suffer oppression and engage against exclusion and inequality. Hate has no place in this community.

City Council reaffirms its commitment to principles of equality and freedom for all people regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, ability, national origin, and other protected classes and commits to work to use all available tools to assist in the elimination of racial and social disparities and to promote equity within the City. It is proposed that the City collaborate with the Sonoma County Library and Sebastopol Library Branch to work together in unity to promote equality through education and events in the City. It is recommended the Council approve the attached resolution and further recommended the Council Liaison to the Library,

Councilmember Gurney, City Staff, and County Library staff work together to develop ideas and actions to for racial justice, social equity, and inclusiveness and return to the Council with an outline of recommended joint actions for Council consideration.

The Sonoma County Library Commission approved its Resolution on Feb. 7 2022 meeting. A copy of the approved resolution is attached.

The Regional Library also wants to engage in a collaborative effort to support community values and address the recent acts of vandalism and is working to schedule a meeting this month.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives 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 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 ANALYSIS

There is no financial impact with the approval of the Resolution.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the City Council Approve the Resolution.

Attachments:

Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Resolution of a Public Statement on Racism and Social Equity

Whereas, In light of recent events – including the burning of a Black Lives Matter banner at our Sebastopol branch, the Sonoma County Library at their meeting of February 7, 2022, reiterated its values of condemning these crimes; condemning any attempt to silence or intimidate free expression; not tolerate racist or hateful behavior at any of the Library facilities; and commitment to being an antiracist organization; and

Whereas, the City of Sebastopol stands with the Sonoma County Library and our local Sebastopol Branch and states to those in our community who have been hurt by racism, bigotry, prejudice, misunderstanding and hate: we see you, we hear you, we stand with you, and, as we look outward to help our communities heal, we pledge to continue looking inward, and to face unflinchingly the truths in our own system; and

Whereas, Racism must not just be condemned, but its eradication must be actively pursued. Regardless of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, veteran status, or age, we must all stand with those who suffer oppression and engage against exclusion and inequality. Hate has no place in this community; and

Whereas, to achieve the change we wish to see, we must take accountability for the ways we have hurt our community by maintaining the status quo and we must commit to providing racially equitable service by eliminating practices and procedures that contribute to systemic racism; and

Whereas, City Council reaffirms its commitment to principles of equality and freedom for all people and commits to work to use all available tools to assist in the elimination of racial and social disparities and to promote equity within the City; and

Whereas, the City of Sebastopol commits to working regionally with Sonoma County Library and Sebastopol Library Branch in unity to promote equality through education and events in the City.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved, and adopted at a meeting by the City Council on the 15th day of February 2022, 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 Attorney

*Resolution of a public statement
on racism and social equity*

WHEREAS, the Sonoma County Library stands with Black Lives Matter and our community in calling for peaceful, yet powerful action to turn the tide of systemic racism and begin the transition to a just and sustainable society; and

WHEREAS, the library states to those in our community who have been hurt by racism, bigotry, prejudice, misunderstanding and hate: we see you, we hear you, we stand with you, and, as we look outward to help our communities heal, we pledge to continue looking inward, and to face unflinchingly the truths in our own system; and

WHEREAS, it is not enough to eschew racism, we must all be anti-racists; and

WHEREAS, to achieve the change we wish to see, we must take accountability for the ways we have hurt our community by maintaining the status quo and we must commit to providing racially equitable service by eliminating practices and procedures that contribute to systemic racism; and

WHEREAS, the Sonoma County Library represents the communities we serve, and we must continue working towards the creation of the equitable and inclusive library we envisioned in our 2017 Statement of Inclusivity, which reads as follows;

Public libraries have long been known as one of the truly democratic institutions. Public libraries champion First Amendment rights and promote free access to information for all. Public libraries offer services and educational resources that promote inclusion and diversity to all in the community. In light of the uncertainty many feel in our current society, we reaffirm: Sonoma County Library values diversity, empowerment, community, unity, kindness, connection, and equity. Sonoma County Library provides service to all races, all genders, all sexual orientations, all religions, all abilities, all ages, all national or ethnic origins, all languages, all citizenship statuses, all economic statuses, all political affiliations, all people. Sonoma County Library is an inclusive community hub where people intersect and thrive.

LIBRARIES ARE FOR EVERYONE

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SONOMA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION:

That the commission hereby expresses its support for the statements and values in this resolution.



Deborah Doyle, Chair

February 7, 2022



Ann Hammond, Director

February 7, 2022

