

RESOLUTION

Denouncing Killing of George Floyd and Outlining Next Steps for Dismantling Systemic Racism in Town Government and Establishing Community Accountability for Police Department

WHEREAS, on May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a black man alleged to have a counterfeit \$20 bill in his possession was dragged from his car by a Minneapolis police officer, handcuffed, placed face down on the street with the officer's knee on his neck as he called out "I can't breathe" and then also cried out for his mother as his neck and back sustained pressure over 8 minutes and 46 seconds, the last 2 minutes and 53 seconds of which he was unresponsive and oxygen was cut off to his brain as he slowly asphyxiated; and

WHEREAS, in the days since his senseless and cruel death, protests and demonstrations against police violence and the widespread systemic racism experienced by black people in every facet of American life have taken place across the United States, in large cities and small towns, including the Town of Hillsborough; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Hillsborough was founded in 1754, was the site in 1788 for North Carolina's first Constitutional Convention when North Carolina delegates refused to ratify a U.S. constitution without a bill of rights, and takes special pride in our long history in which this state agreed to ratify the U.S. Constitution only after that Bill of Rights was added in which Article 1 iterates the rights to free speech, free press and assembly; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement have been documented acting with undue aggression and violence on protestors and members of the press in images and videos in localities across the country during the current demonstrations; and

WHEREAS, the long history of Hillsborough includes moments of pride and moments of shame, including the colonization of indigenous land and the practice of enslaving black people; and part of that history and legacy is land loss, which in turn results in lack of accumulated generational wealth and is exacerbated in this time by gentrification, which has a disproportionate impact upon our historically black neighborhoods and streets; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Ruffin, Hillsborough lawyer, North Carolina Supreme Court Justice, and owner of people as property, authored the decision in *State v. Mann* that "the power of the master must be absolute"; and that decision played a profound role in the abuse of enslaved people in Hillsborough and the generational trauma of their descendants; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of de jure segregation in housing, public and private buildings, schools, and more still leaves behind de facto segregation in our community; and despite long ago changes in law, there remains little change in outcome, with black people faring disproportionately worse in income, homeownership, unemployment, incarceration, college attainment, and health outcomes, with the health disparities especially illuminated during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

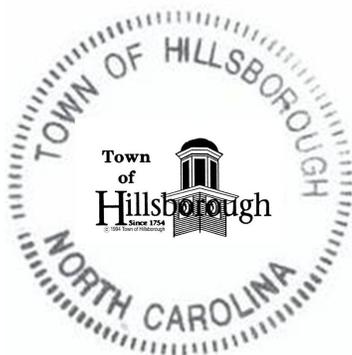
WHEREAS, our society and government are imbued with systemic racism that has gone

unrepaired in the 50 plus years since the civil rights movement.

NOW, we, the Hillsborough Board of Commissioners resolve to do the following:

1. Publicly denounce the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota; of Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky, who was killed shortly before him when officers wrongly barged into her apartment; and a painful list of innocent black people killed doing ordinary things, such as playing in a park, walking down the street, or reaching for their license at a traffic stop.
2. Publicly emphasize the right of the people to assemble in protest, including protest of their government, and emphasize the importance of a free press.
3. Direct the town manager to identify additional funding for the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget cycle for an organizational assessment of diversity, equity, and inclusion; for strategic planning; and for training services so the Town of Hillsborough can continue to engage in dismantling structural racism within our own organization in a methodical, targeted fashion.
4. Prioritize the inclusion of residents and business owners of color for the upcoming Comprehensive and Sustainability Plan review to prioritize the inclusion of residents and business owners of color who have not been proportionally represented in previous town-wide planning initiatives and for that plan to consider all tools available at the town level to mitigate gentrification in historically minority neighborhoods and to build stronger ties among the many neighborhoods and peoples that make our community so loved.
5. Commend the Hillsborough Police Department for its emphasis on de-escalation, community policing, anti-bias training, and implementation of best practices to reduce police violence, but direct that there is still work to be done regarding accountability and to ensure that the lived experiences of Hillsborough's indigenous people and people of color are heard.
6. Direct the town manager and chief of police to propose multiple opportunities for public input from residents to share experiences, incidents, and examples of interactions with Hillsborough police to inform our understanding of the role of race in local law enforcement.
7. Direct the town manager and chief of police to continue to reflect on the Town of Hillsborough's role in eliminating systemic racism and to propose meaningful options to engage the board and Hillsborough residents in reviewing our policies, procedures, limitations, and opportunities to ensure Hillsborough is owning its responsibility to combat racism.
8. Direct the town manager and chief of police to present options to the board for implementation of a community policing review board to provide a tool for accountability to the community at a date to be determined.

Approved this 8th day of June 2020.



Jenn Weaver, Mayor
Town of Hillsborough