



Agenda Item Summary

File #: RES 19-144, **Version:** 1

Submitted By

Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager

Reviewed By

LKS

Agenda Item Title

A Resolution Adopting the Diversity Statement

Overview

It is a tradition in Oak Park for the Village Board of Trustees to reaffirm the diversity statement after each election. This is done at the first meeting in which the newly elected are sworn into office.

Recommendation

Approval.

Staff Recommendation

N/A

Fiscal Impact

N/A

Background

Oak Park was one of the first municipalities in the country to make diversity a matter of public policy. Following each two-year election cycle since a Diversity Statement was first adopted in 1973, the Village Board demonstrates its support of the high ideals embodied in the statement by reaffirming its content via a formal resolution. With a focus on differences defining much of the current dialogue in the United States and the world, residents are invited to read the words that have helped define Oak Park and consider their broader intent.

The Oak Park Diversity Statement: “The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life. Oak Park has committed itself to equality not only because it is legal, but because it is right; not only because equality is ethical, but because it is desirable for us and our children. Ours is a dynamic community that encourages the contributions of all citizens, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital and/or familial status, mental and/or physical impairment and/or disability, military status, economic class, political affiliation, or any of the other distinguishing characteristics that all too often divide people in society.

Oak Park’s proud tradition of citizen involvement and accessible local government challenge us to show others

how such a community can embrace change while still respecting and preserving the best of the past. Creating a mutually respectful, multicultural environment does not happen on its own; it must be intentional. Our goal is for people of widely differing backgrounds to do more than live next to one another. Through interaction, we believe we can reconcile the apparent paradox of appreciating and even celebrating our differences while at the same time developing consensus on a shared vision for the future. Oak Park recognizes that a free, open, and inclusive community is achieved through full and broad participation of all its citizenry. We believe the best decisions are made when everyone is represented in decision-making and power is shared collectively.

Oak Park is uniquely equipped to accomplish these objectives, because we affirm all people as members of the human family. We reject the notion of race as a barrier dividing us and we reject prejudicial behavior towards any group of people. We believe residence in this Village should be open to anyone interested in sharing our benefits and responsibilities.

To achieve our goals, the Village of Oak Park must continue to support the Board's fair housing philosophy that has allowed us to live side-by-side and actively seek to foster unity in our community. We believe that mutual understanding among individuals of diverse backgrounds can best be attained with an attitude of reciprocal good will and increased association. The Village of Oak Park commits itself to a future ensuring equal access, full participation in all of the Village's institutions and programs, and equality of opportunity in all Village operating policies. The success of this endeavor prepares us to live and work in the twenty-first century.

It is our intention that such principles will be a basis for policy and decision making in Oak Park. The President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park reaffirm their dedication and commitment to these precepts."
- Adopted in 1973

Alternatives

N/A.

Previous Board Action

On May 1, 2017 the Village Board adopted the Diversity Statement.

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

The Community Relations Commission met April 17, 2019 and recommended revisions to the current Diversity Statement which will be reviewed by the Village Board in the future.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

N/A.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

N/A.