



Agenda Item Summary

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Submitted By

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Agenda Item Title

A Resolution Adopting Updates to the Diversity Statement

Overview

Following the Village Board's traditional adoption of the diversity statement as part of the May 6, 2019 meeting following the Oath of Office for newly elected officials, recommended amendments to the Diversity Statement supported by the Community Relations Commission are being presented to the Village Board for consideration. The amendment incorporates racial equity as a part of the Statement.

Staff Recommendation

It is recommended the Village Board approve the inclusion of racial equity as a part the Diversity Statement.

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 Community Relations Commission met April 17, 2019 and approved a formal recommendation to the Village Board to update the Diversity Statement to be titled the *Oak Park Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement* and read as follows:

The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life and as a place to seek shelter, refuge, and acceptance. Oak Park commits itself to diversity, equity, and inclusion because these values make us a desirable and strong community for all residents and our neighbors.

We believe in diversity because our commonalities and differences are both assets. Ours is a dynamic community that welcomes, respects, and encourages the contributions of all residents, in all our rich

variety by race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital and/or familial status, language, mental and/or physical impairment and/or disability, military status, economic class, political affiliation, immigration status or any of the other characteristics that are often used to divide people. We affirm all people as members of the human family. Our goal is for people of widely differing backgrounds to do more than live next to one another. Through intentional interaction and fair treatment, we can appreciate our differences while developing a shared, intersectional vision for the future.

We believe in inclusion because we need to go beyond numerical diversity and strive for the qualitative dimensions of authentic representation, empowered participation, full access, and a true sense of belonging for all our residents. Oak Park recognizes that a free, open, and inclusive community is achieved through full and broad participation of all its residents and the ongoing commitment to active and intentional engagement across lines of difference. We believe the best decisions are made when everyone is authentically represented in decision-making and power is shared collectively.

We believe in equity, because diversity and inclusion are necessary, but not sufficient, to achieve fairness and justice. By embracing equity, we work to break down systems of oppression in order to seek fair opportunities and outcomes for all residents. We reject racial barriers that limit and divide us, and we reject bias towards any group of people.

Creating a mutually respectful, multicultural, and equitable environment does not happen on its own; it must be intentional. To achieve our goals, the Village of Oak Park must continue to support the Board's fair housing philosophy that fosters integration and unity in our community. We also understand that unity is closely related to equity, since inequity can be a source of division.

The Village of Oak Park commits itself to a future ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of local governance and community life. We strive to make these values not only aspirational, but operational, reflected in our everyday practices and priorities. This includes fair treatment, equal access, and full participation in all of the Village's institutions and programs, and equality of opportunity in all Village operating policies. Our intention is that such principles will be a basis for policy and decision making in Oak Park.

Oak Park's proud tradition of community involvement and accessible local government reflects our commitment to embrace change while honoring the best of the past. The success of this endeavor prepares us to live and work in the twenty-first century. We welcome to this Village anyone interested in sharing our benefits and responsibilities. The President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park reaffirm their dedication and commitment to these precepts.

Alternatives

N/A.

Previous Board Action

On May 1, 2017 the Village Board adopted the Diversity Statement and incorporated immigration status into the document in order to reflect amendments to the Human Rights Ordinance which were adopted in February of 2017 as part of the Welcoming Village designation.

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

The Community Relations Commission met April 17, 2019 and recommended revisions to the current Diversity Statement which are attached in a track changes format.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

N/A.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

N/A.