



Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION NO. 220380

RESOLUTION - Directing the City Manager to update the Quality of Urban Life Report; and report back to Council in six months.

WHEREAS, on May 4, 1968, Mayor, Ilus W. Davis, commissioned a study to provide recommendations to address civil discord, prevent civil disorder and ensure harmonious relations among the people in Kansas City; and

WHEREAS, on August 15, 1968 the Commission published a final report with recommendations to improve the economic conditions, education and police-African American relations; and

WHEREAS, the report detailed:

- Seventeen recommendations for the Kansas City Police Department including returning to local control, increasing diversity, improving pay, addressing complaints, improved public communications and community policing;
- Twelve recommendations for the Kansas City School District including racial integration, expanding community services, vocational training and improving counseling services;
- Nine recommendations for the City of Kansas City including fortifying the Human Rights Commission, neighborhood stabilization, fully staffing Human relations functions, improved communications, sanitation and increased recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, racism was explored and the "necessity for all citizens to recognize the concept of human dignity for all people regardless of skin color or ethnic background." The final report acknowledged that "white superiority must be recognized, understood and corrected before meaningful long-term progress in the community's race relations can be expected"; and

WHEREAS, on February 26, 1969 the Commission on Human Relations, staffed by Alvin Brooks, was tasked by the Mayor Charles B. Wheeler, Jr, to provide a report to follow up on the recommendations issued in 1968. Three conclusions were noted in the interim report:

- a. Administrators agreed with the majority of the recommendations;
- b. Administrators perceived evidence of progress in implementation;
- c. Favorable actions regarding implementation of the recommendations were related generally to those which did not involve major financial or structural change; and

WHEREAS, in 1971 a Three Year Report: The Quality of Urban Life was issued to provide new guidelines for action in aggressively pursuing justice, freedom, equality, dignity, peace and respect; and

WHEREAS, the report detailed the following:

- Nineteen recommendations for the Police Department including the creation of a Citizen Advisory Council, expanding community relations, increased cooperation from the Board of Police Commissioners and Human Relations Commission, fair promotional system for African American officers and community conflict resolution programming;
- Fourteen recommendations for education including racial integration, increasing public school funding, after-school programming, job placement, improved community relations and drop-out prevention;
- Eleven recommendations for City government functions including strengthening the Fair Housing, Public Accommodations, EEO ordinances, neighborhood stabilization, youth services, discrimination in the workplace, Zero/low fare, consumer protection and improved community relations;
- Eight recommendations for Housing including establishing housing goals with an emphasis on low-moderate income housing, housing subsidies, integration, stronger Federal advocacy and empowering residents to be a part of the decision-making processes;
- Nine recommendations for Employment including equal employment opportunities, diversity inclusion, coalition building, efforts to increase opportunities for minority contractors and improved communications between academia and business;
- Four recommendations for Health including supporting the "Health Resources Institute", increasing comprehensive neighborhood health centers, improved local, state and federal coordination and social determinates of health;
- Ten recommendations for Mass Media including improved human relations academic curriculum for journalism and mass media students, training for members of the media, intensive recruitment for minority employees and increased resident awareness of Federal regulations (FCC); and

WHEREAS, the report concluded the following:

- a. Systemic change is imperative for the eradication of racism in our institutions;
- b. Federal funds should act as a catalyst for local change, not an end itself;
- c. Sometimes the shallow excuse of insufficient local funds is a poor defense against the failure to reorder local priorities and initiate improvements that can be made with no increase in budgetary allocations; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the murder of George Floyd and the racial health inequities witnessed during the

pandemic requires the City Council to examine the harmful impacts of racism and develop solutions to address racial disparities; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF KANSAS CITY:

Section 1. That the City Manager is directed to update the Quality of Urban Life report and present recommendations to address racial inequities and dismantle systemic racism in the public and private sectors.

Section 2. That the City Manager is directed to report back to the Council in six months.
