

BY THE LANSING MAYOR'S INCLUSION & DIVERSITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE LANSING MAYOR'S
HANDLING OF RACE ISSUES AND REQUESTING THE CITY COUNCIL FORMALIZE THE
INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY COUNCIL**

WHEREAS, racism and discrimination are serious problems facing the City of Lansing, both in city government and in the community; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of his term in 2018, Lansing Mayor Andy Schor created the Lansing Mayor's Inclusion & Diversity Advisory Council (MIDAC), which the Mayor said in a press release was "tasked to create and implement ways to work on the issues that divide us, as well as celebrate the great diversity we display every day here in Lansing"; and

WHEREAS, in November 2019, after numerous meetings, MIDAC submitted a letter to Mayor Andy Schor making a series of detailed recommendations to help address systemic racism in the City of Lansing, both within and outside of city government; and

WHEREAS, as of February 2020, the Mayor had not yet responded to MIDAC's recommendations, at which point MIDAC's Executive Council met with the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, in June 2020, the Mayor finally responded to MIDAC's recommendations, and only after media attention was turned to racism in the immediate aftermath of George Floyd's murder at the hands of Minneapolis police officers; and;

WHEREAS, in July 2020, the Mayor created a new panel called the "Mayor's Racial Justice and Equity Alliance (MRJEA)," filling it with 40 high-profile local political players, corporate CEOs and campaign donors; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor tasked MRJEA with developing city policies to address discrimination, despite the fact that the MIDAC had already performed this work and was ignored by the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, in July 2020, in an attempt at appeasement, the Mayor asked MIDAC to "host" a three-part virtual town hall series on racial bias, but then proceeded to exclude MIDAC from the actual creation, planning or execution of the town halls; and

WHEREAS, neither MIDAC nor the public were allowed to submit questions for the town halls, but instead the questions were all scripted ahead of time by city officials; and

WHEREAS, despite meeting and working for over two years to address discrimination issues in the city, MIDAC members, apart from the Chair, were not invited to participate in MRJEA's closed meetings;

WHEREAS, on August 13, 2020, MIDAC held a public meeting, at which a City of Lansing firefighter discussed racial discrimination within the Fire Department, and the Police Department's sole social worker described her challenges; and

WHEREAS, on September 8, one of the Mayor's staff, Nik Tate, emailed MIDAC Chair Randy Watkins, asking Watkins to cease holding monthly MIDAC meetings; and

WHEREAS, on September 13, Watkins emailed the Mayor detailing concerns MIDAC had with how the city was handling issues of racism; and

WHEREAS, on September 19, the Mayor emailed MIDAC, requesting they cease their activities, at which point several MIDAC members resigned in protest; and

WHEREAS, on September 24, the Lansing State Journal ran an article regarding six recent MIDAC resignations; within the article, Teresa Bingman, a diversity consultant hired by the Mayor who also works for a firm that handles the Mayor's political campaigns, said MIDAC members were "bitter" and "self-centered"; and

WHEREAS, on September 29, in a conversation with Watkins, the Mayor refused to apologize on behalf of Bingham, saying "she is a big girl and can do it herself." The Mayor also stated that Nik Tate, Police Chief Darrell Green and Kim Coleman "did not trust" MIDAC; and

WHEREAS, as of December 2020, MIDAC still had not been invited to attend an MRJEA meeting or workgroup or otherwise provide input or recommendations to address racism within and outside of the Schor Administration.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Lansing Mayor's Inclusion & Diversity Advisory Council expresses its deep disappointment with Lansing Mayor Andy Schor and his staff for the way his administration has addressed rampant issues of racism and discrimination, some of which has been their own creation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MIDAC requests that the Lansing City Council passes a resolution formally establishing MIDAC as a vehicle of the City of Lansing's government and appoints MIDAC's current long-serving members to the Committee.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that MIDAC requests that the Lansing City Council, as the City's legislative and lawmaking body, works with the aforementioned City committee and other citizens to create, introduce and pass resolutions and ordinances that finally address systemic racism in the City of Lansing.