

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 20-5078, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROCLAIMING FEBRUARY 1 THROUGH FEBRUARY 29, 2020 BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Date: January 27, 2020
Department: Council Office
Meeting Date: February 6, 2020

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ISSUE STATEMENT

The Metro Council has an opportunity to stand with residents, community partners and local jurisdictions in our region by adopting Resolution No. 20-5078, proclaiming the month of February Black History Month.

ACTION REQUESTED

Consideration and vote on Resolution No. 20-5078.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Advancing the Metro Council's proclamation for Black History month from February 1 to February 29 and joining other jurisdictions in the region in doing so.

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Council adoption of this resolution will further Metro's commitment to the goals stated in the Strategic Plan to advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, in particular:

- a) Metro meaningfully engages communities of color
- b) Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce
- c) Metro creates safe and welcoming programs, spaces and destinations

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the Metro Council adopt Resolution No. 20-5078.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

1. Known Opposition/support/community feedback

No opposition known at this time. Several jurisdictions in the region have also adopted resolutions proclamations honoring Black History month.

2. Legal Antecedents

None. This is the first year that the Metro Council is considering adoption of a resolution honoring Black History month.

3. Anticipated effects

None.

4. Financial implications

None.

BACKGROUND

The Black American experience in Greater Portland and Oregon is a story of perseverance under two centuries of oppressive and exclusionary acts. The first black exclusion law in Oregon, adopted in 1844 was the first of many aimed at deterring potential black settlement into the state, by deeming it as hostile to Black Americans. Subsequent discriminatory policies and practices over the next several decades attempted to break the will of Black Americans by taking away certain rights and opportunities including voting, receiving quality education, holding public office and achieving economic success.

During World War II, the Black population in Greater Portland increased due to the need for wartime labor. Black communities in Portland thrived momentarily during the postwar but would experience continued bouts of disruption that would displace many Black community members over time.

Today, Black community members make up just under 2% of the population in Oregon and under 4% of the population in Greater Portland according to the latest Census data.

This proclamation is intended to highlight the tremendous contributions made by Black Americans, past and present, to Greater Portland and Oregon, while acknowledging that systemic barriers to advancement continue. It is also a time to act; by ensuring that our efforts not only recognize past and present injustices but also work towards removing barriers and creating opportunities for the Black community to thrive.

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by Black Americans originally founded by scholar and son of former slaves, Carter G Woodson who initiated the first Black History Week in February 1926, choosing the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. Since, 1976, every US President has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month.

ATTACHMENTS

None.