

EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROSEVILLE

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roseville, County of Ramsey, Minnesota, was held on the 11th day of July, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

The following Council Members were present: Willmus, Strahan, Etten, Groff, and Roe; and None were absent.

Council Member Etten introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 11921

A RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE USE OF DISCRIMINATORY COVENANTS, DISCHARGING DISCRIMINATORY COVENANTS ON CITY-OWNED PROPERTY, AND APPROVING PARTICIPATION IN THE JUST DEEDS COALITION

WHEREAS, discriminatory covenants were tools used by real estate developers to prevent BIPOC and non-Christian individuals from buying or occupying property in certain areas, and they were common throughout the United States from the early 1900s to the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of discriminatory covenants was to racially and religiously homogenize communities by excluding BIPOC and non-Christian individuals from Roseville. These tools segregated the metro area and built a hidden system of apartheid; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 the University of Minnesota founded Mapping Prejudice to expose the racist practices that shaped the landscape of the metro area. Mapping Prejudice researched restrictive covenants in Hennepin County and created the first-ever comprehensive map of racial covenants in an American city. The project has since mapped over 2,400 covenants in Ramsey County, including 289 covenants in the City of Roseville; and

WHEREAS, an example of a common covenant in Roseville declared that “The said premises shall not be sold, mortgaged, leased or occupied by any person or persons who are not members of the Caucasian race, but this shall not prevent the keeping of domestic servants who are not members of the Caucasian race”; and

WHEREAS, discriminatory covenants in Roseville are scattered throughout the City with heavier concentrations south of Highway 36 and in the southeast quadrant of the City; and

WHEREAS, the City of Roseville owns three parcels of land that contain a discriminatory covenant, including parcels located in Langton Lake Park, Ladyslipper Park, and on a parcel located near Shryer and Alameda that contains a water booster station; and

WHEREAS, it is historically understood that local leaders knew about the use of discriminatory covenants and sanctioned their use. While no specific examples could be located in City of Roseville records, such covenants were used before Roseville was incorporated as a City and even recorded against at least one entire plat known as Ridgewood, approved by Rose Township in 1946; and

WHEREAS, restrictive covenants are no longer enforceable. Legal efforts to eliminate Discriminatory Covenants include Shelley v. Kraemer, 334 U.S. 1 (1948), in which the United States

Supreme Court prohibited courts from enforcing Discriminatory Covenants and the Minnesota legislature in 1953 enacted statutes that prohibited new covenants, but existing covenants were still legal in Minnesota until 1962; and

WHEREAS, as a result of these judicial and legislative actions, today, Minnesota law and federal law prohibit discrimination in the sale or lease of housing based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, or familial status and those state and federal prohibitions extend to the refusal to sell or to circulate, post or cause to be printed, circulated, or posted, any limitation, specification, or discrimination as to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, or familial status; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Minnesota Legislature passed a law authorizing property owners to individually discharge or renounce discriminatory covenants by recording a discharge form in the county property records; and

WHEREAS, discriminatory covenants promoted and established residential racial segregation, which historically and currently has impacted property ownership, accumulation of wealth, property transfers, mortgage eligibility, rental eligibility, property values, property tax base, internet access, and more. Discriminatory covenants fortified systemic racism and compounded economic divestment in specific communities within Ramsey County; and

WHEREAS, discriminatory covenants benefitted White communities. For example, homes that were racially covenanted are still predominantly owned by White people and are valued higher than non-covenanted properties; and

WHEREAS, discriminatory covenants created demographic patterns that remain in place today. Due in part to this historical practice, the population of the City of Roseville is at least half as racially diverse as the populations of the neighboring communities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, which is typical of suburbs across the region, and has a lower percentage of minority owned businesses than many neighboring communities; and

WHEREAS, since 2018 the City has been increasingly committed to making positive, intentional progress toward racial equity in the community; and

WHEREAS, the State of Minnesota, including the City of Roseville, recognizes the harm that Discriminatory Covenants—and the racial, religious, and other discriminatory practices that they represent—cause to society in general and to the individuals who are adversely affected by racial, religious, and other discrimination through the presence of discriminatory covenants in the public land records.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Roseville City Council that:

1. The City of Roseville disavows and condemns the past use of discriminatory covenants.
2. The City is directed to investigate and to identify any real property owned or leased by the City that contains discriminatory covenants and to prepare and record an affidavit or request an examiner's directive discharging such discriminatory covenants pursuant to Minnesota Statute § 507.18, subd. 5.

3. City staff is directed to participate in the work of the Just Deeds Coalition to educate the community about this and other historically discriminatory practices; to identify contemporary discriminatory systems, policies, and practices; and to take action to dismantling racist systems, practices, and policies in the City of Roseville to create equity for all.

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Councilmember Strahan and upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Willmus, Strahan, Etten, Groff, and Roe and the following voted against the same: None.

WHEREUPON said resolution was declared duly passed and adopted.

