

RESOLUTION OF APOLOGY BY THE GREENSBORO CITY COUNCIL FOR THE EVENTS THAT HAVE COME TO BE KNOWN AS THE “NOVEMBER 3, 1979 MASSACRE”

WHEREAS, on November 3, 1979 members of the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party attacked members of the Communist Workers Party and their supporters as they gathered to engage in a march across the City of Greensboro. These events have come to be known as the “Greensboro Massacre”;

WHEREAS, Greensboro’s police department in 1979 (the “GPD”) along with other city personnel failed to warn the marchers of their extensive foreknowledge of the racist, violent attack planned against the marchers by members of the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party with the assistance of a paid GPD informant;

WHEREAS, the marchers had a legal parade permit;

WHEREAS, the GPD failed to divert, stop or arrest the members of the Ku Klux Klan and American Nazi Party, whom police knew were carrying a cache of concealed weapons, as they approached the Morningside Homes Community where the marchers were gathered;

WHEREAS, numerous factors have contributed to an atmosphere of blaming the victims of the Greensboro Massacre rather than encouraging an objective investigation and comprehensive trial process;

WHEREAS, in November, 1980 six Ku Klux Klan and American Nazi Party members were tried for the murders of Cesar Cauce, Dr. James Waller, William Evan Sampson, Sandra Neely Smith and Dr. Michael Nathan, for injuries to others and for rioting. They were acquitted by an all-white jury who reportedly found that the defendants had acted in self-defense;

WHEREAS, in April, 1984 five members of the Ku Klux Klan and American Nazi Party were tried in Federal Court for the above referenced murders, civil rights violations and the wounding of others. They were acquitted by an all-white jury;

WHEREAS, on June 8, 1985, after a three month trial, a civil jury found six members of the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party and two Greensboro police officers liable for wrongful death in connection with the Greensboro Massacre. Thirty-seven other defendants were acquitted;

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2004, an independent Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (“GTRC”) was empaneled and funded by private sources in an effort to resolve conflicting narratives from the past and move towards true healing and reconciliation;

WHEREAS, on April 19, 2005, the City Council voted 6-3 to oppose the “Truth and Reconciliation Project”;

WHEREAS, on May 26, 2006, the City Council was presented with the GTRC Final Report;

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2007, the City Council voted 5-4 to defeat a resolution in support of the GTRC Report;

WHEREAS, the original mandate of the GTRC reflects that, “There comes a time in the life of every community when it must look humbly and seriously into its past in order to provide the best possible foundation for moving into a future based on healing and hope”;

WHEREAS, the final GTRC report found that the City of Greensboro must acknowledge the events of November 3, 1979 and recognize that “the single most important element that contributed to the violent outcome of the confrontation was the absence of police”;

WHEREAS, on June 16, 2009, the Human Relations Commission presented their report by the Truth and Reconciliation Review Committee and asked the City Council to adopt a statement of regret with respect to the November 3, 1979 massacre. The City Council voted 5-4 to adopt with the following regret statement:

“Without acknowledging or creating any City employee or public official liability, the City Council of Greensboro North Carolina is strongly committed to human rights and deeply regrets the events of November 3, 1979 that resulted in the loss of five lives and divided a community. We appreciate the work done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Citizens Review Committee and the Human Relations Commission, as well as, the great effort of many individuals and organizations to promote healing among the residents of our community by replacing divisiveness with harmonious relationships. We, the City Council of Greensboro, North Carolina, value the rich diversity of our neighborhoods, celebrate both our similarities and differences as human beings; and pledge our support to help the community heal.”;

WHEREAS, the Report of the GTRC and the Greensboro Human Relations Truth and Reconciliation Review Committee outlined a series of recommendations including but not limited to the creation of a police review board which has resulted in the establishment of a standing commission reporting directly to the City Council and the City Manager called the Greensboro Criminal Justice Advisory Commission (“GCJAC”) and its subcommittee, the Police Community Review Board (“PCRB”), a livable wage for City employees, racial equity/anti-racism/inclusion/diversity training for all City employees, the establishment of a Diversity and Inclusion Officer, and the development of the City’s Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise Program;

WHEREAS, on February 3, 2015 the Greensboro City Council passed a Resolution, by a vote of 7-2, in support of a State Historical Marker commemorating the events of November 3, 1979 to be installed near the site of the former Morningside Homes Community. The “Greensboro Massacre” marker bears the inscription “Ku Klux Klan members and American Nazis Party, on Nov. 3, 1979, shot and killed five Communist Workers Party members one-tenth mile north”;

WHEREAS, on August 15, 2017 in the wake of the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, VA, Councilwoman Sharon Hightower made a motion that the City Council apologize to the five families who lost love ones and for the events of November 3, 1979. It was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Yvonne Johnson. During discussion of the motion, many Councilmembers made comment as to their heartfelt sadness and desire to support this apology. It passed by a 7-1 majority vote of the City Council; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREENSBORO:

That the City Council of the City of Greensboro hereby expresses its apology to the victims, the survivors, their families and the members of the Morningside Homes community for the events that occurred on November 3, 1979 and the failure of any government action to effectively overcome the hate that precipitated the violence, to embrace the sorrow that resulted from the violence, and to reconcile all the vestiges of those heinous events in the years subsequent to 1979;

And be it further resolved, that the City of Greensboro will honor five students annually with a monetary academic award, one each in the memory of Cesar Cauce, Dr. James Waller, William Evan Sampson, Sandra Neely Smith and Dr. Michael Nathan, to be known as the “Morningside Homes Memorial Scholarships” in the amount of \$1,979.00 each to graduating seniors at James B. Dudley High School to be recognized by the Greensboro Human Rights Commission at the annual Human Rights

Celebration and will be further recognized at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast. The Scholarships will be awarded to individuals who submit an entry focusing on the issues of racial and social justice that help this community reconcile the remaining vestiges of the events of November 3, 1979 and that may even help city officials understand these issues in the context of future events in this community and around the nation. The entries may be in the form of written word, spoken word (video), or other forms of expression. Payment will be made upon graduation. The selection will be made by the Greensboro Human Relations Commission in coordination with the administration of James B. Dudley High School.