

Briefing on Proposed Resolutions Related to Matters included in the Legislative Agenda

City Commission

Committee of the Whole

September 14, 2021



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Overview

- **Resolution process overview**
- **Review proposed Resolutions**
 - Declaring Climate Change a Crisis
 - Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis
 - Support for local, state and federal efforts to decriminalize the use and possession of Entheogenic Plants and Fungi
- **Direction moving forward**

Process for Resolutions

- **Ordinance**
Formal action of the Commission. Constitutes local legislation.
- **Resolution**
Formal Commission action on short-term matters that do not create new legislation or laws (ex. Annual budget, purchasing). Can be used to state position on state/federal legislative matters.
- **Proclamation**
Immediate or timely matters of ceremony or symbolic action by the chief elected official on behalf of the body.

Process for Resolutions

- 1. City Manager receives clear direction from the body on the interest to prepare Resolution.**
- 2. Resolution drafted with SME and presented to Legislative Committee for comment and review.**
- 3. Resolution brought to full body for additional review and comment.**
- 4. Resolution is amended (if necessary) and brought forward for a formal vote and adoption.**

Process for Resolutions

- Resolutions/documentation can be added as backup to adopted Legislative Agenda
- Generally, Resolutions of a legislative nature should demonstrate some alignment with the adopted agenda of the Commission
- Recommend adoption of policy establishing framework and triggers for future Resolutions, including terms of effect and termination as well as reconciliation of potential budget impacts

Staff Investment in Draft Resolutions

- Collectively, 20 staff have spent over 200 hours on the three resolutions being presented today
- This is equivalent to one full time employee working 5 weeks
- Largely, employees are already doing the work to achieve these objectives through their departmental and strategic plans, or through the adopted legislative agenda
- While not new, this has not been adopted process for 10+ years in GR
- Absence of a resolution does not suggest that these issues are unimportant

Declaring Climate Change a Crisis

Alison Waske Sutter
Sustainability and
Performance
Management Officer



[mLive, 20 most dramatic images from historic Grand River flood, April 24, 2013](#)

Why this is important

- Scientific, economic and public health data is clear that climate change is having catastrophic impacts on our human health, economy, infrastructure and safety
- Speed of climate change and the extent of impacts currently happening and projected to occur are much more severe and faster than previously estimated (recent IPCC report)
- Over last 50-70 years, Grand Rapids has had increased temperatures, precipitation, and frequency and intensity of severe storms. Scientific projections show that by 2050, Grand Rapids will experience significant increases in temperatures (especially in winter), # of extreme heat days, rain during winter (flooding) and heavy precipitation days
- Cities are responsible for 70% of global carbon emissions
- Number of billion-dollar disasters per year from weather and climate events in Michigan tripled in the 2010s (15)
- MDHHS estimated annual costs for asthma at \$92 million and extreme heat at \$42 million

Why this is important

- Clear data and information demonstrate that our black and brown residents and residents living in poverty are disproportionately negatively impacted by climate change
- Sustainability is one of the City's core values and directs us to think about how decisions impact both today and the future
- Supports the City's Health and Environment priority - The health of all people and the environment are advocated for, protected and enhanced
- Aligned with the City's Strategic Plan objective and focused work on reducing carbon emissions and enhancing climate resiliency
- We cannot achieve our City's vision of fostering a robust economy and a safe and healthy community if we are not urgently and systematically addressing climate change

What have we been doing?

(Highlights...
not exhaustive
list)

- **2005:** one of the first cities to adopt sustainability as a priority (consultant, CSP, 20% renewable energy goal)
- **2007:** City exceeds 20% renewable energy goal and creates 100% renewable energy goal for municipal operations
- **2010:** one of the first cities to offer free curbside single stream recycling for residents
- **2013:** \$15 million investment in flood walls and published West Michigan Climate Resiliency Report
- **2015:** one of first and only cities to successfully separate stormwater from sewer (\$400M)
- **2015 - present:** planted nearly 9,000 trees (\$2.5M); created Grand Rapids 2030 District
- **2016 - present:** Mayor Bliss has and continues to actively engage on climate change
- **2017:** City hires first full-time employee dedicated to sustainability

What have we been doing?

(Highlights...
not exhaustive
list)

- **2019:** City's values (sustainability), Strategic Plan adopted; City initiates Community Collaboration on Climate Change (C4)
- **2021-2022:** City's Legislative Priority Agenda includes increasing climate resiliency, reducing carbon emissions and supporting renewable energy production
- **2021:** City has reduced carbon emissions by 30% since 2008 and estimates a 47% reduction by 2025 due to recent investments including biodigester (\$85M), LED street lighting (\$9.3M) and 1 MW solar at Lake Michigan Filtration Plant (net \$1.2M savings)
- **2021:** City hires full-time Environmental and Climate Justice Specialist; partners on C4 and Equitable, Healthy and Zero Carbon Buildings Initiative (E.H.Zero) launch
- **2021:** City announces best in class municipal carbon emissions goal of 85% by 2030 and 100% by 2040 that could cost the City between half a million and a million dollars annually for 24 years to achieve 85% reduction based on best information available at this time, which includes construction solar at Butterworth)

What are we committed to doing in the near term?

- Working in partnership with community and businesses to address the climate crisis
- Considering climate justice in all policy and administrative decisions, including the Community Master Plan
- FY2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022):
 - Completing a communitywide carbon emissions inventory and vulnerability assessment
 - Continuing to search for pathways to install solar at the Butterworth Landfill and other City properties
 - Facilitating conversations on establishing a communitywide carbon emissions goal with C₄, Energy Advisory Committee and other stakeholders
 - Begin laying the foundation in partnership with the C₄ and other community stakeholders to draft our Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

What does the resolution do?

- Declares climate change a crisis in the City of Grand Rapids
- Urges all residents, businesses, organizations and public entities to adopt equity-informed policies and practices as soon as possible and no later than 2025 that address carbon reduction, climate adaptation and climate resilience and protect the health, safety, economic prosperity, and quality of life for all in our city
- Prioritizes engaging in state and federal advocacy and lobbying for legislation and regulations that increase climate resiliency, reduce carbon emissions and support renewable energy production as outlined in the 2021-2022 Legislative Priority Agenda
- Affirms the City Manager's adopted municipal carbon emissions reduction goals of 85% by 2030 and 100% (carbon neutral) by 2040

Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis

Stacy Stout
Director of Equity and
Engagement



Why this is important

- Established and Emerging Data – including narratives of generations of people – on how Racism impacts health
- Speaks Truth & Honor Lived Experiences
- Movement Building
- Education and Awareness
- Center and Prioritize Anti-Racism
- Leverage Resources for Community In this Work
- Connected and supports to Invest Health GR, C4, E.H.Zero and additional City efforts and partnerships

Why this is important

- Aligns to City's Equity value - *leverage City influence to intentionally remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice.*
- Reinforces the City Commission's 2021 Legislative Agenda that acknowledges racism as a public health crisis.
- Supports City's Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan Priorities
 - Racism deep and pervasive in systems, thus impacting all social determinants of health and quality of life for Grand Rapidsians.
 - Health & Environment – The health of all people and the environment are advocated for, protected and enhanced.

What have we been doing?

(Highlights...
not exhaustive
list)

- **2016:** Racial Equity Here (REH) Cohort three-year learning and strategy experience with Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and Living Cities. City Within A City community read.
- **2017:** Racial Equity Action Leadership (REAL) Cohorts with National Equity Project (NEP), GARE trainings and piloted Equity Foundations training. Neighborhood Match Fund launched. Neighborhood Summit values established.
- **2018:** GARE Racial Equity Toolkit applied to FY2019 budget submissions. Neighborhood Leadership Academy with equity focus. Gateways For Growth Report.

What have we been doing?

(Highlights...
not exhaustive
list)

- **2019:** City's new Strategy Plan and process to center and embed equity in process and Plan. Elevated equity, diversity and inclusion as a function of the executive office. Revised Equity Foundations training. Passed Human Rights Ordinance. Hired River Equity Analyst.
- **2020:** Data guidance & definitions. Driver's License for All Resolution. Employee Resource Group policy. Healing Tensions and creation of Social Justice ERG. Community Relations Commission Strategic Planning. Iterated FY2021 budget process. MLBE focus & policy change. Hyper-Local Purchasing pilot. La Lucha Fund. Welcome Plan Released.
- **2021:** Iterated FY2022 budget process. Increased direct equity investments. Community Diversity & Inclusion Program. Undoing Racism Training. Equity Champions Cohort. Virtual Equity Foundations. Language Access Pilot. CRC letter in support of resolution. Community Engagement RFP to be released. New Equity Analyst position.

What does the resolution do?

- Helps focus efforts on systems and structures rather than dismiss inequalities as the fault of individuals.
- Identify and name it so we can address it.
- Affirmation and Healing.
- Educate, examine, and elevate.
- Support local efforts and movements.
- Leverage resources.
- Inspire local, state and federal policy and investments that undo racism.
- Resolution not all encompassing. Racism is deep and pervasive. Data gaps.
- A Step. Not the full solution.

Support
for Decriminalizing
the Use and
Possession
of Entheogenic Plants
and Fungi

Karyn Ferrick
Government and
Legislative Affairs Officer



Why this is important

- Interested Grand Rapids residents, the Decriminalize Nature Grand Rapids advocacy group and Commissioners have elevated the issue surrounding the use and possession of Entheogenic Plants and Fungi.
- The draft resolution is consistent with local, state and federal law and would affirm the desire of the City Commission to support efforts at the local, state and federal level to decriminalize the use and possession of Entheogenic Plants and Fungi.

Why this is important

- Entheogenic Plants and Fungi are defined for purposes of the resolution as the full spectrum of plants, fungi, and natural materials deserving reverence and respect from the perspective of the individual and the collective to do the following:
 - Benefit psychological and physical wellness,
 - Inspire personal/spiritual well-being, and
 - Reestablish humans' unalienable and direct relationship to nature.

What has been happening?

- Decriminalize Nature and interested Grand Rapids residents have suggested that (it is important to note that none of this has been independently verified):
 - Those seeking to improve their health and well-being ought to be able to explore these healing methods without risk of arrest and prosecution.
 - To ensure equitable access for all people, personal home cultivation and culturally relevant settings such as community-based ceremony are critical.
 - Individuals in over 140 cities are looking into decriminalization efforts and Decriminalize Nature campaigns are underway in 42 cities in the United States.

What does the resolution do?

- The draft resolution does not authorize or enable any criminal activity that is illegal pursuant to local, state or federal law.
- Enforcement of laws regulating the possession and use of Entheogenic Plant and Fungi has not been a high priority for the City of Grand Rapids with very little public funds directed toward proactive investigation or prosecution of such cases.
- The draft resolution would affirmatively state the Commission's support for local, state and federal legislative efforts to decriminalize Entheogenic Plants and Fungi and plant-based compounds that are listed on the Federal Controlled Substances Schedule.

Next Steps

- **On the three resolutions presented today:**
 - Commission can submit feedback to ACM/CAO through Friday, September 17
 - Present final draft resolutions to Commission at the Committee of the Whole on September 28, 2021 for a final vote
- **Future process:**
 - Recommend semi-annual process for alignment of these types of Resolutions with the adopted legislative agenda
 - Staff will bring back a draft policy to the Legislative Committee in conjunction with January Legislative Agenda updates/revisions

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Thank you.