CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Nineteen …………………………………………………………………………………

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

That  WHEREAS, we, the Burlington City Council, recognize that what makes Burlington unique and special is a forward-thinking environment that fosters a healthy community dialogue and acceptance of all people; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that diversity is a gift and is our future, and this diversity encompasses people of color, people with disabilities, older people, LGBTQ, people of different faiths, beliefs and cultural views and more; and

WHEREAS, Vermont became a refugee resettlement state in 1981 and welcomed refugees from many continents; and

WHEREAS, based on the Burlington School District data, over 48 languages are spoken by students in Burlington schools; and

WHEREAS, on July 16, 2012, with the full support of Mayor Weinberger, the Burlington City Council unanimously adopted a resolution to create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to facilitate the development of a Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan has proposed the following three main achievable goals:

● Eliminate race-based disparities across all city departments
● Promote inclusion and engagement of all community members
● Eliminate race-based disparities in the greater Burlington community; and

WHEREAS, people of color are stopped, arrested, convicted and incarcerated at disproportionate rates in Vermont; and

WHEREAS, significant racial disparities in Vermont's criminal justice system exist: Blacks stopped by traffic police at a rate that is 60% greater than would be expected given their population share; Blacks are arrested at twice the rate of whites, subsequent to a traffic stop; Blacks are searched in traffic stops at twice the rate of white drivers; and Blacks are 8.5% of Vermont's incarcerated population, despite being only 1.8% of the state's population; and
WHEREAS, the Vermont Attorney General and the Human Rights Commission Task Force, Act 54, (2017) Racial Disparities in State Systems Report (Act 54 State Systems Report) indicated that “In addition, and likely related to the income disparities, racial disparities have been documented in each of the areas identified in Act 54 (education, labor and employment, housing, healthcare and economic development);” and

WHEREAS, last year Vermont adopted Act 9, a law creating a Racial Equity Director (and Panel) with cabinet level authority. The stated legislative intent of the General Assembly is “to promote racial justice reform throughout the State by mitigating systemic racism in all systems of State government and creating a culture of inclusiveness;” and

WHEREAS, the Act 54 State Systems Report explains, “Addressing these issues also furthers other state goals. To the extent that People of Color are the fastest growing demographic in the state, taking steps to be more inclusive in all aspects of our state systems will further economic growth in a time when our workforce is rapidly aging. In other words, equality of opportunity is good for everyone, White, Black and Brown;” and

WHEREAS, Burlington, the largest city in Vermont with the largest number of people of color, is faced with a unique responsibility to take decisive steps to dismantle systemic disparities and aggressively respond to all forms of overt racism and discrimination;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Rule 4 of the Rules and Regulations of the City Council shall be amended to add a standing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to oversee the implementation of the City’s Equity Strategic Plan, as follows:

4. Committee Assignments.

(a) No later than the second meeting following the election of the president, the president shall appoint standing committees on licenses, ordinances, institutions/human resources, charter changes, community development and neighborhood revitalization, public safety, parking and transportation, energy and utilities, parks, arts & culture, and tax abatement, and diversity, equity and inclusion; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in addition to overseeing the implementation of the Equity Strategic Plan, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is tasked with the exploration of the creation of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission and shall report recommendations to the City Council within 90 days from the time the Committee is established; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Burlington shall create a senior, full-time position, responsible for overseeing, managing, and advising other senior officials on the City’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives; the position will report to the Mayor, be part of the City’s leadership team, and have citywide responsibilities and authority; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council respectfully requests that the Administration, in consultation with the City Council Institutions/Human Resources Committee, develop a job description and seek Council approval for the proposed position on or before September 23, 2019, and seek to fill the position on or before January 1, 2020.