RESOLUTION NO. 2022-016

SPONSORS Executive Shapiro & Ms. Sims & Council as a Whole

DATE January 31, 2022

COMMITTEE Human Services

A Resolution declaring the month of February 2022 as Black History Month in Summit County, recognizing the accomplishments made by Black Americans while facing incredible adversity throughout history, as well as acknowledging the challenges of the present, for the Council and the Executive, and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, the Civil Rights Movement has prompted historians and educators to expand the teaching of Black history as well as recognize the contributions of Black scientists, artists, educators, athletes, politicians, business people, religious and spiritual leaders, and countless others that reflect the greatness of the United States and Summit County; and

WHEREAS, locally, one of the first Black History Month recognitions was proposed and celebrated by the faculty of the Center of Pan-African Culture and the members of Black United Students at Kent State University in 1970, conferring local significance to what would become a national event in 1976; and

WHEREAS, current movements for racial justice and equality continue to press for the tenets of the Civil Rights Movement, such as equal treatment under the law, and increased awareness about black and brown identities; and

WHEREAS, following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, Summit County joined state, county, and local governments across the county in declaring racism as a public health crisis to address how racism – not race – causes disproportionately high rates of homelessness, incarceration, poverty, poor educational outcomes, and poor health outcomes in the Black community; and

WHEREAS, the work of the Racism as a Public Health Crisis Special Review Committee is ongoing, with the aim of enacting real change and promoting racial equity in the County of Summit; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to expose health disparities perpetuated by racism, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noting in November of 2021 that hospitalizations among Black Americans due to COVID-19 are 2.6 times higher and deaths among black Americans due to COVID-19 are 1.9 times higher compared to white Americans; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month continues the conversation around the achievements and challenges of Black Americans, shedding light on how resilience has led to stories of inspiration and hope; and

WHEREAS, Vice-President Kamala Harris represents part of this narrative, serving as the first Black and Asian American female vice president in the history of the United States, and inspiring young people of color to pursue their dreams; and

WHEREAS, the Executive and this Council hope to share this message of this perseverance and hope at the start of a new year, and
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WHEREAS, this Council finds and determines, after reviewing all pertinent information, that it is necessary and in the best interest of the County of Summit that February 2022 be declared Black History Month in Summit County, and encouraging the residents of Summit County to join in this acknowledgement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Summit, State of Ohio, that:

SECTION 1

The month of February 2022 is hereby declared Black History Month in Summit County and the residents of Summit County are encouraged to join in this acknowledgement and recognize the role that racial diversity and inclusion plays in strengthening our community.

SECTION 2

This Resolution is hereby declared an emergency in the interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the residents and employees of the County of Summit and for the further purpose of immediately declaring February 2022 as Black History Month in Summit County.

SECTION 3

Provided this Resolution receives the affirmative vote of eight (8) members, it shall take effect immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Executive; otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force at the earliest time provided by law.

SECTION 4

It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the adoption of this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action, were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

INTRODUCED January 31, 2022

ADOPTED January 31, 2022

CLERK OF COUNCIL

APPROVED February 1, 2022

EXECUTIVE

ENACTED EFFECTIVE February 1, 2022

Voice Vote - YES: 11-0:
Darrow, DeVitis, Dickinson, Donofrio, Feeman, McKenney, Rodgers, Schmidt, Sims, Walters, Wilhite