

(The following is not a verbatim transcript of comments or discussion that occurred during the meeting, but rather a summarization intended for general informational purposes. All motions and votes are the official records).

SPECIAL MEETING – CITY COUNCIL

-FEBRUARY 11, 2021-

A Special meeting of the City Council was called held on Thursday, February 11, 2021 via ZOOM Webinar.

The meeting was called to order at 5:06 P.M. by the Council President.

Roll call showed the following members present: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Also Present: John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor.

-FEBRUARY 11, 2021-



**CALL OF SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

In accordance with Section 3.07 of the Home Rule Charter and Section 2.04.060 of the City Code, I hereby call a special meeting of the City Council to be held on **Thursday, February 11, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.**

Virtual ZOOM Webinar

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.
When: Feb 11, 2021 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Topic: Special City Council meeting

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81390109998?pwd=dnVzdzc1WDRuUUZXUHdHYWJ1T2NXQT09>

Passcode: 053841

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +13017158592,,81390109998#,,,,*053841# or
+13126266799,,81390109998#,,,,*053841#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1
346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or 877 853 5247 (Toll Free) or 888 788 0099 (Toll Free) or 833
548 0276 (Toll Free) or 833 548 0282 (Toll Free) Webinar ID: 813 9010 9998

Passcode: 053841

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81390109998?pwd=dnVzdzc1WDRuUUZXUHdHYWJ1T2NXQT09>

At which meeting the following matter will be heard and considered for final passage.

- **Resolution requesting the Administration and City Council to celebrate Black History Month in Cranston throughout the month of February by various activities. Sponsored by Councilwoman Germain. [\[click to view\]](#)**

I hereby request the City Clerk to notify all Council members of the Call of the special meeting.

Executed at Cranston, Rhode Island, this 1st day of February, 2021

/s/ Christopher G. Paplauskas, Council President

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that a true copy of the attached Notice of a Special meeting of the City Council to be held on, Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom Webinar, was delivered via electronic mail on the 1st day of February, 2021 to the addresses listed below.

Council President Christopher G. Paplauskas
chrispaplauskas@gmail.com

Council Vice-President Edward J. Brady
Brady4cranston@gmail.com

Councilwoman Jessica M. Marino
marinoforcranston@gmail.com

Councilman Robert J. Ferri
robferri2426@gmail.com

Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli
nicoleforcranston@gmail.com

Councilwoman Lammis J. Vargas
Lammis.vargas@gmail.com

Councilwoman Aniece Germain
aniecegermain2@gmail.com

Councilman John P. Donegan
JohnDoneganForCranston@gmail.com

Councilman Matthew R. Reilly
mreillyesq@gmail.com

/s/ Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk

-FEBRUARY 11, 2021-

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE ADMINISTRATION AND CITY COUNCIL TO CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN CRANSTON THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY BY VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Reilly, it was voted to adopt the above Resolution

Under Discussion:

Councilwoman Germain stated that today is a very important day in our City. It is the first time we are having a conversation to recognize the African American History and Heritage and contribution to this country in particular to our State. She urged each and every City Council Member to join her in making this historic step to celebrate the heritage, contribution and achievement of Black African American during the month of February.

Annette Bourne, 51 Community Dr., appeared to speak in favor of this Resolution and stated that she is grateful for Councilwoman Germain to bringing this Resolution forward.

Kayland Arrington appeared to speak and stated that she works at 1090 Cranston St. and she is also the Initiative Director of One Cranston Health Equity Zone and spoke in favor of this Resolution. She stated that racism is a public health issue. While celebrating Black History Month will not eliminate racism in the City, honoring Black lives and celebrating Black Leaders that have gotten us to where we are, is a step towards the right direction.

Councilwoman Vargas thanked Councilwoman Germain for introducing this Resolution and stated that 2020 was a year that shed much light on much needed conversation that to some has been and continues to be extremely uncomfortable and it is yet a reminder that there is much more work that needs to be done.

Councilman Donegan thanked Councilwoman Germain for bringing this Resolution forward and he appreciates her and stands in solidarity with her in this work.

Councilwoman Marino echoed sentiments of her colleagues and thanked Councilwoman Germain for bringing this Resolution forward. She also stated that she, as she assumes everyone else, is proud to serve on one of the most diverse City Council that the City of Cranston has seen and, hopefully, we can carry that torch through our actions and through some policies and initiatives that will better our community.

Councilman Reilly thanked Councilwoman Germain for bringing this forward and stated that he will be voting in favor of this Resolution. He thanked Mayor Hopkins for recognizing Black History Month this year and he knows past Administrations have also done that. He indicated that there are a few sections in this Resolution that he would like to amend. He stated that in reading this Resolution, he felt that some language is harsh in nature and he feels we should make this more of a celebratory Resolution.

Councilman Reilly moved to amend this Resolution as follows:

- Line #22, strike language beginning after “;” and from “and” to the end of the paragraph.
- Lines 25-27, strike entire paragraph. The reason for this is we, as a body and City Council, do not have the expertise to make these claims on behalf of the 80,000 people we represent.

Councilwoman Marino asked for point of order and asked if there is a Solicitor on the call because if Councilman Reilly is looking to present his motion to amend, that is one thing, but if we are having a discussion, that is something else and she does not think that is abundantly clear. Solicitor stated that a motion and a second needs to be made first and then discussion can be held.

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On motion by Councilman Reilly, seconded by Councilman Ferri, it was voted to amend this Resolution as follows:

- Lines #25-27, strike entire paragraph.
- Lines #29-31, strike entire paragraph and substitute with the following language: “Whereas, the City of Cranston honors Black Americans and will continue to provide an environment for critical conversations to continue in order to ensure that we combat racism and discrimination against Black people and people of color”.
- Line #35, strike “a moral” and replace with “the”; strike “to make” and replace with “of the City of”; after “Cranston”, add “to continue to strive to be”.
- Line #36, strike “and acknowledge its diversity to be” and add “and embrace this reality”.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Reilly stated that he is in full support of this, but some of the language is not necessary to effectuate the moving us of supporting Black History Month and us, as a body, do not have the expertise to state some of these conclusory statements being made.

Councilman Donegan stated that he is disappointed in these amendments. Part of this Resolution is not only celebrating, but calling upon the necessity for critical conversations about Black History, about the inequities that Black people and people of color face in our community and what these amendments say to him, as a white guy, is that we will celebrate Black History Month as long as it is comfortable. That is doing the easy work and that is not what we were elected here to do.

Council Vice-President Brady stated that we have had some great conversations and this is a hard conversation and that is why we are having it and we have to be open to amendments so we can move together and unite. We have to listen to both sides on these conversations and that is what we are doing.

Motion and second to amend this Resolution were withdrawn.

On motion by Councilwoman Vargas, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to amend this Resolution as follows:

- Line #31, add Councilman Reilly’s proposed language, but keep rest of the language in the original Resolution and the language suggested by Councilman Reilly be set out as new paragraph.

Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”:
Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

On motion by Councilwoman Germain, seconded by Councilman Reilly, it was voted to amend this Resolution as follows:

- Line #35, keep “a more” and “to make” and “of City of” and “to continue to strive” and add “and acknowledge its diversity” and keep “and embrace this reality”.

Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”:
Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

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Councilwoman Renzulli stated that what seemed to start off like we maybe were going in the wrong direction, she thinks that if Councilman Reilly did not bring up some of these red line, we would not have had these discussions and to work together to make this Resolution even better, she thinks is pretty important. She also hopes we can work with the School Department to make this part of the curriculum, but we need the students who are going forward to make real changes throughout their entire life time, she thinks this is really important.

Roll call was taken on motion to adopt the above Resolution as amended and motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”:
Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

/s/ Leanne Zarrella, JD
City Clerk

/s/ Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committee