

Mayor Murphy Releases Statement on Racism

As the nation works collectively to share views on racism and ways to come together for lasting, positive change, Valparaiso Mayor Matt Murphy, in partnership with many community representatives, is making a public statement asserting the city's proactive position. "In Valparaiso, we have long sought ways to expand our inclusion and encourage a welcoming community. At this time, it feels important to reaffirm these thoughts," said Mayor Murphy. "I want to thank our Advisory Human Relations Council for their input in creating this statement, as well as City Council members Robert Cotton and George Douglas who have taken the lead in gathering collective thoughts," he said.

After speaking with numerous individuals and groups representing the Valparaiso community, the Mayor's Statement on Racism is as follows:

"Now more than ever, diversity, inclusion, and community engagement are important for our city, state and nation. No group or individual should feel targeted or excluded.

The City of Valparaiso condemns any act that is racist, hateful, violent, or discriminatory against any person, or group of people.

The City of Valparaiso strives to maintain and encourage a civic environment that is welcoming and inclusive for all people. Valparaiso stands for the principles of freedom and equal opportunity. The Mayor's Advisory Human Relations Council offers all citizens the ability to be heard and to share their experiences, insight and suggestions as to how to make Valparaiso a better community. The City's Human Rights Ordinance adopted in 2016 establishes a meaningful process for the City to investigate inappropriate acts and to foster conversation, understanding and reconciliation between parties.

Additionally, public, peaceful assembly has a long and legitimate history in our community and our country. It creates an important dialogue between the community and its public systems. We commend citizen leaders who in the last several months have organized prayer vigils, walks and other peaceful assemblies. We also commend our Police Chief and all officers for their work in assisting and protecting all individuals exercising their Constitutional right to peacefully assemble.

I want to thank the members of the Advisory Human Relations Council for their help in drafting this Statement. As we move forward, we recognize that statements have value, but action is necessary. All associated with Valparaiso city government will continue to work with individuals and organizations of good will to ensure Valparaiso is an open and welcoming community to all."