

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
IN CITY COUNCIL

February 24, 2022

RESOLUTION IN HONOR AND CELEBRATION
OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH - FEBRUARY 2022

WHEREAS, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a high school teacher, discovered that schools did not teach the history of Black Americans; and in 1915, he set out to change that by establishing the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History (ASALH) and in 1926, he established "Negro History Week" to be held during the second week of February, this date was chosen because it marked the birthdays of famed abolitionists Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass; and

WHEREAS, The Celebration of Black History Week was then expanded to encompass the month of February 1976, the Country's Bicentennial year, but not without some controversy and debate regarding designating a month to the history of one race rather than overall history; therefore, the importance of providing a Theme to show that the intention was never to dictate or limit the exploration of the Black experience, but to bring to the public's attention important developments that merit emphasis; and

WHEREAS, The ongoing mission of the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History, ASALH, is to promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture and to be the premier Black Heritage learned society with a strong network of national and international branches whose diverse and inclusive membership will continue the Woodson Legacy, and one of the most successful means to achieve this goal has been, and still is, BLACK HISTORY MONTH and its powerful Themes; and

WHEREAS, The **THEME** for 2022 is "Black Health and Wellness", exploring the legacy of not only Black scholars and medical practitioners in Western medicine, but also other ways of knowing (e.g. birthworkers, doulas, midwives, naturopaths, herbalists, etc.) throughout the African Diaspora, and the incredible work of Black health and wellness practitioners as we work to address and eliminate disparities in maternal and child health; there is much to learn – the historical impact of Black grief and infant loss and its connection to racism and social injustices, strategies to identify and address racism and racial bias and apply a racial equity lens to collective impact based health improvement initiatives; in the U.S., the gap in health outcomes between non-Hispanic black and non-Hispanic white children continues to widen, with children of color more frequently suffering from chronic and preventable health conditions, Black children are 1.8 times as likely to have asthma, 1.32 times as likely to be obese and over twice as likely to die before reaching their first birthday, these racial gaps in health outcomes signify the significant role racism plays as a key determinant of health, to drive sustainable improvements in children's health we must shift the way we promote and practice healthcare to incorporate both a health and racial equity lens, using a health equity lens helps us consider the contexts in which children and families live and how these circumstances contribute to long-term health, within this framework, we must be explicit in recognizing historical and current racism across policies and practices, a racial equity lens acknowledges how families of color are often systematically oppressed and have differential access to the opportunities and resources that allow families to thrive; and

WHEREAS, We cannot allow Black History Month to pass without recognizing our many local people of color who have accomplished great things against great odds, such as Frederick Douglass, who began his new, free life in our great City; Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. William Carney, who led his Civil War Regiment to victory; Westport's Paul Cuffe, son of an African slave and Wampanoag Indian, born in Cuttyhunk, who, in the years after the American Revolution built an American shipbuilding fortune on the Westport River and founded the first elementary school in Westport, MA; New Bedford Whaling Era's Lewis Temple, inventor of the toggle harpoon; abolitionist and confectioner Polly Johnson; escaped slave Henry "Box" Brown; Edward M. Brooke, III, of Massachusetts, who was the first African-American Attorney General of any State, first African-American United States Senator and a Presidential Medal of Freedom Winner; Deval Patrick, who was the first African-American Governor of Massachusetts; former Illinois Senator Barack Obama, who became the first African-American elected to the Office of President of the United States; as well as many, many other individuals whose accomplishments have not yet been fully recognized, people whose lives and names have been lost to history and the passing of time; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month continues to pay tribute to the African-American history makers of the past and present, and the sacrifices made to ensure equality among all men and women of this great Nation, and serves as an occasion to examine the collective creativity, cultural and political experience of the masses of Africans and people of African descent, through lectures, exhibitions, banquets and cultural activities held throughout the United States in schools, communities, Churches and political arenas;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New Bedford City Council takes note and celebrates the **MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2022**, as **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**, urges Citizens to honor and remember the Black Heroes of the past and present, and encourages everyone to take part in activities held Citywide in recognition of our community's rich heritage of diversity; and **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That this Resolution be posted outside of the City Council Chamber for the entire month of February 2022, in recognition of **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**.

Offered by:

Brian K. Gomes, Councillor at Large

Linda M. Morad, Councillor at Large

Ian Abreu, City Council President

Hugh C. Dunn, Councillor Ward Three

Naomi R.A. Carney, Councillor at Large

Ryan J. Pereira, Councillor Ward Six

Shane Burgo, Councillor at Large

Brad Markey, Councillor Ward One

Maria Giesta, Councillor Ward Two

Derek Baptiste, Councillor Ward Four

Scott Lima, Councillor Ward Five