



Legislation Text

File #: 32312, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

No appropriation is required.

Title

Recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Adoption of the City's Equal Opportunities Ordinance.

Body

WHEREAS, during the 1960's African Americans all over the United States were fighting for equality in all aspects of society, including education, housing, employment and voting. Civil rights groups demanded the end of segregation and racism; and

WHEREAS, African Americans and other minorities in the City of Madison were facing the same issues of segregation and severe discrimination, especially in the area of housing. Various studies and reports published between 1959 and 1962 indicated that Madison had a severe housing discrimination problem and that African American families were restricted to two areas of the City; and

WHEREAS, many individuals and organizations such as Madison Citizens for Fair Housing, the Madison Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Coordinating Committee for Social Concerns, the Governor's Commission of Human Rights, the League of Women Voters, the Special Committee on Minority Housing, the Madison Area Council for Churches, the Madison Jewish Welfare Council, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the National Association of Social Workers came together to work on the discrimination issue in Madison and wrote the draft of the Equal Opportunities Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Madison Board of Realtors was the major opposition of an Equal Opportunities Ordinance claiming that such an ordinance would restrict the rights and freedoms of the individual American property owner and would restrict them of their right to sell or rent to the person of their choice. The Madison Board of Realtors printed a full page advertisement on December 2, 1963 where they indicated they were "opposed to any so called 'Fair Housing' ordinance" because it was inconceivable that they lose their "basic rights of property ownership in an attempt to solve the problems of a few."

WHEREAS, on December 12, 1963 the Equal Opportunities Ordinance was introduced to the City Council. After hours of public appearances, discussion and amendments, the City Council vote on the amended ordinance was 11 to 11 with Mayor Henry Reynolds casting the deciding vote that adopted the Equal Opportunities Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the City of Madison continues to fight racism and all types of discrimination, as it denies dignity, respect and equal opportunities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on December 3, 2013, Mayor Paul Soglin and the City of Madison Common Council recognizes the past but also the continued struggles to achieve racial equality and honors the 50th Anniversary of the Equal Opportunities Ordinance.