

ALBANY CALIFORNIA



CITY OF ALBANY
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE
ALBANY, CA 94706
www.AlbanyCA.org

Agenda Date: March 25, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: Albany City Council Members

From: Ad hoc committee on Ceasefire in Gaza

Re: Resolution Calling for a Bilateral Ceasefire in Gaza

SUMMARY

The action before the council is to consider voting on the Ad-hoc committee's resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopt Resolution No. 2024-16.

BACKGROUND

At the Council's March 4th, 2024 meeting, the Council voted to appoint Councilmember Tiedemann and Mayor Miki to an ad-hoc committee to evaluate writing a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. The committee met to discuss an initial approach and draft suggested language before meeting with a variety of community groups, leaders, and interested residents. In all, the committee held a dozen meetings with interested parties from all sides of the issue.

After these meetings, the ad-hoc committee has decided to bring forth the attached resolution for a vote by the Council.

DISCUSSION

As discussed in the March 4th meeting that appointed the ad-hoc committee, there are a variety of reasons to take on this work. As evidenced by national discourse, protests, events within our own community, and the amount of time devoted to this topic at Albany City Council meetings even when it is not on the official agenda, there is a great amount of consternation in our community. Members of our community are directly affected by the

events unfolding in Gaza and Israel, while many more feel compelled to do something in the face of the humanitarian crisis that is occurring there.

Taking on this task, the ad-hoc committee wanted to focus our efforts on two things;

1. recognizing the fear, pain, and grief that members in our community are experiencing as a result of this conflict, including both those directly affected and those who have felt the ripples of this issue in the East Bay indirectly
2. Calling for an end to the humanitarian crisis that has claimed too many innocent lives

In meeting with interested parties, there were a large number of suggestions, most of which the ad-hoc committee has tried to incorporate in some manner. Many of these comments hinged on explicitly recognizing the pain experienced by all residents of our City. While, in an ideal world, we could make simple statements that apply to many of us at once, it became clear in meetings and during drafting that tensions are so high and misinterpretation so easy that our resolution needed to make explicit our shared pain with those grieving for Israelis and Palestinians, as well as those who have been affected more indirectly by intolerance in our own community.

Our meetings also illustrated that, while there are important areas on which almost all of us agree, there are marked points of disagreement. Most especially this is characterized by an overarching desire for peace and safety from the vast majority, but disagreements on how that is best achieved, who bears some or all of the blame for the current crisis, and how Palestinians and Israelis should live together in the long term. The resolution as written, instead of staking out a position on each of these, remains committed to the two areas of focus mentioned previously, and should be read as a statement of values rather than a step-by-step plan for resolving the issue completely. The ad-hoc committee fully acknowledges that achieving the goals of this resolution will not be easy and will require vastly more detailed policymaking at a much higher level than this City Council to achieve.

Furthermore, while the desire for peace and prosperity for all peoples is widespread, there are exceptions. On the largest scale, there are those who support one side or another in the war, regardless of the cost, while on the smaller, and more common scale within our own community, there are those who, regardless of reason or intent, are intolerant or hostile to others. While this resolution tries to address some of this, calling for more understanding and taking a stand against many forms of prejudice, the ad-hoc committee acknowledges that it will take work far beyond the City Council's ability to address this in the long run. Our community, our nation, and people everywhere, must take difficult steps to understand, empathize with, and release our preconceptions about each other, and no level of government can ensure all those steps are taken. Instead, our civil society must work to heal itself.

Attachment:

1. Resolution No. 2024-16