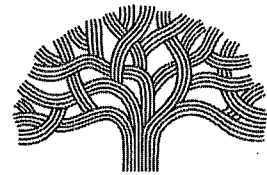


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OAKLAND



CITY OF OAKLAND

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CITY HALL ■ FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA, 2nd Floor ■ OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Office of the Honorable Lynette Gibson McElhaney
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Date: Friday, April 01, 2016

To: President Pro Tempore Larry Reid
Vice Mayor Annie Campbell Washington, and

Cc: LaTonda Simmons, City Clerk
Barbara Parker, City Attorney

Members of the City Council

Desley Brooks
Noel Gallo
Abel Guillén
Dan Kalb
Rebecca Kaplan

From: Council President Lynette Gibson McElhaney

Re: Declaring Oakland the "Love Life" City

Dear Colleagues,

The resolution before you would adopt "Love Life" as the official motto for the City of Oakland and direct the City Administrator to return with a recommendation on implementing the motto in official communication for the City and on the City's welcome signage.

BACKGROUND

On October 20, 2015, members of the public including Donald Lacy, Dwain Butler and numerous members of the Love Life foundation appeared by the City Council during Open Forum. Mr. Butler and others had for come before the council repeatedly over the past 5 years asking the Council to consider adopting "The Love Life City" as Oakland's official motto. The basis of the request is a desire by these families and others to send a strong message to Oakland's youth that their lives matter, that life is precious and to elevate love over fear and greed.

The Administrator agreed to return to the Council with a report and analysis of the request. I scheduled the item to be heard by the Rules and Legislation committee on 2/25/16. The agenda report presented to the Rules and Legislation committee revealed a modest cost for signage but the matter failed to advance from committee.

On 3/1/16, on a motion by CM Brooks the matter was referred to the full Council for consideration.

In 1997, 16-year-old LoEshé Adanma Lacy, whose first name means 'love life' in Ibo, was tragically shot to death as a bystander across the street from her school, McClymonds High. Prior to



becoming a victim, LoEshe was moved by the death of too many of her classmates and had begun an anti-violence campaign to tell her peers that they should love life. She laid the framework for the Love Life foundation and inspired efforts to provide comfort and support to families who have lost a loved one to homicide.

Since LoEshé's passing, 1,868 people have been murdered in Oakland. In the past four years alone, there have been 407 homicides, 30 of whom are youth under the age of 18.

This senseless loss of life to gun violence impacts tens of thousands of Oakland's youth and adults who witness violence or live in tyranny every day. Despite modest drops in violent crimes this year, the abysmally low clearance rate for homicide and the proliferation of illegal firearms continues to plague our city. Too often the community feels that Oakland's leaders have failed turned a blind eye to the real human cost to the spirit of the people who live with this daily threat.

Love Life honors the lives of the thousands of members of our community who have been killed by senseless violence - especially our youth and articulates our aspirations for the future. Oakland's rich artistic heritage speaks to a love of all arts. When we launched the Oakland Promise - it was based on our belief that every child is precious and they should have the love and support they need to succeed as adults. Oaklanders contribute powerfully through a variety of institution and art forms. The number of languages, cuisines, hobbies and ethnicities found in Oakland speaks to a people who choose to live in a place known for its love of diversity. Oakland's business community of start-ups focused on green-tech, a thriving maker community, and socially responsible industry locate here because of a desire to join a community dedicated to positivity and who embrace the love of life.

Love Life reflects the joy and energy that characterize our artists and businesses. *Love Life* responds to our communal desire to build an inclusive, equitable, and authentic Oakland.

Analysis

Businesses, corporations, non-profits and movements throughout the world know and understand the power of a motto. Mottos inspire and unite. They quickly provide a reference in order to galvanize people to act. In 2004, Kaiser launched its "Thrive" campaign, which has been so successful that it continues today and has influenced other local messaging efforts, including the Oakland Unified School District's strategic plan which sets out its aspiration as a place "where every student thrives." This is the power of a message.

In the staff report to the Rules and Legislation Committee dated 2/8/16, the City Administrator reports that it will cost \$21,084.59 for new signs or \$4,670.60 for stickers to be added to existing signs. This cost is nominal compared to the powerful lift that the City will gain from codifying its care for every resident by adopting the "Love Life" motto. The spin-off impact will be great as schools and businesses develop supporting messages that celebrate Oakland as a city of love, art and culture. It begins to demonstrate a united care and concern to inform and guide our practices in our quest to make Oakland a safe, just, sustainable, equitable and vibrant city. The city's focus on homicide is often focused on perpetrators of violence with very little attention given to victims and to the trauma imposed on the entire community in the wake of such tragedies. Families are too often a footnote in a media story focused on police and there is no attention given to the educators, social workers, faith communities and neighbors who are left to grieve with little recourse. Adding



to this negligence is the fact that low clearance rate leaves many with the belief that the City does not care about the serial killers who continue to terrorize the community just by the very fact that they've not been arrested or convicted.

Conclusion

I urge you to join me in supporting the community's desire to create *Love Life* as our motto. It is far more representative of the love Oaklanders hold for their city and our youth than the current unofficial tagline "the bright side of the Bay." In adopting this Ordinance, the Council will send a clear message that honors residents who have lost their lives to gun violence and speak hope and healing to the communities of residents who are dedicated to living robust lives.

Now is the time to act. For more than 10 years, the community has asked for this motto. There is now immense public support and I believe that the current crescendo of this movement reflects a desire of our long-tenured residents who continue to believe in Oakland despite the failure of the City to keep their neighborhoods safe.

Establishing this motto begins to communicate this reflects our deep sense of civic pride and our intention to create more symbology that speaks to the resilience and beauty that is the soul of the town.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this beautiful community initiative to proclaim to the world what Oakland is all about: *Love and Life*.

Signed,



Council President Lynette Gibson McElhaney

