

RESOLUTION NO. 22-xxx

APOLOGY TO CHINESE VILLAGE COMMUNITY AND DESCENDANTS FOR SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION, ACTS OF FUNDAMENTAL INJUSTICE, VIOLENCE AND CRUELTY; SEEKING FORGIVENESS AND COMMITTING TO THE RECTIFICATION AND REDRESS OF PAST POLICIES AND ACTIONS

FINDINGS

1. WHEREAS, the first men and women settlers from China arrived by ship, before California statehood, and were met with prejudice and discrimination; and
2. WHEREAS, men and women of Chinese heritage, and their American-born children, settled the coastline between Point Almejas and Point Alones in what is now Pacific Grove, creating a thriving community in 1851, the first commercial fishery on Monterey Bay, with fishing techniques and scientific discoveries still utilized today; and
3. WHEREAS, the Point Alones Fishing Village became the largest Chinese fishing settlement in California, including women and children, growing from a few residents in 1844 to several hundred by 1906, welcoming those seeking refuge from the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, and was the first, and largest family-based Chinese community in the United States at that time; and
4. WHEREAS, in the early 1900s growing anti-Chinese sentiment, town modernization, oceanfront real estate development and resort interests resulted in the Pacific Improvement Company attempting to evict Point Alones residents from “Chinatown” in 1905; and
5. WHEREAS, on the evening of May 16, 1906, a fire of suspicious origin swept through the Point Alones Village, one of many suspicious fires that occurred in most California “Chinatowns” from the mid-1880s to early 1900s; and
6. WHEREAS, unable to stop the fire, Village residents rescued belongings while hundreds of spectators watched, cheered the flames and looted those belongings as residents rushed back to save more, until only 15 of over 100 buildings were standing two hours later; and
7. WHEREAS, on May 17, 1906 local looters picked through warm ashes for Village belongings while that day, and for months after, the Pacific Improvement Company erected fences, posted guards, forcibly removed residents refusing to leave, and tore down rebuilding attempts; and
8. WHEREAS, following the destruction of the Point Alones Village a few residents and visitors noted the “deplorable, disgusting spectacle” of looters in a community “dedicated to Christian principles” stating “Conscience, honor, delicacy, decency seemed thrown to

the winds...”. However, a more common local sentiment was “We wish them to be removed so far that they will never be any more trouble...”; and

9. WHEREAS, until May 1907 members of the Point Alones Village community resisted removal through land occupation, rebuilding, intercession by the US Army and Chinese Consul, and legal means such as a “Demand for Surrender of Real Property” suit filed in 1906 by attorneys for thirty-five named Chinese residents; and
10. WHEREAS, in May 1907, after the last remaining Village resident, Quock Tuck Lee, left for Monterey, the destruction of the Point Alones Village, the removal of its men, women, children and families, and the eradication of their community, heritage and history was complete; and
11. WHEREAS, the history of structural racism and discrimination against Chinese immigrants, and their descendants, in Pacific Grove reaches back over 170 years; and
12. WHEREAS, in the 1850s immigrants from China were considered “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” and therefore could not vote, hold office, own land; with no rights to testify against white citizens; and
13. WHEREAS, in the 1870s the Naturalization Act denied naturalization rights and access to citizenship to Asians; and the Page Law prohibited recruitment of laborers and women for “immoral purposes” and was primarily enforced against Chinese; and
14. WHEREAS, in 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act specifically restricted Chinese immigrants (the first time a race and country of origin were so targeted), and was actively enforced for 61 years, including registration requirements, denial of bail and bearing witness in court trials; and
15. WHEREAS, in the 1890s restrictive covenants were written into house deeds stating “[T]he premises herein described...shall not be in any manner used or occupied by Asiatics or Negroes;...[buyers] agree not to sell or lease the said property...excepting to persons belonging to the Caucasian race;... nor to any lineal descendant...except that persons of said races may be employed as household servants.”; and
16. WHEREAS, the effect of Pacific Grove’s racial covenants is apparent in the change from the 1900 U.S. Census record of 175 Chinese of various occupations residing at Point Alones to 1910 Census records with five Chinese residing in Pacific Grove – two servants, two gardeners and one laundryman; and
17. WHEREAS, ruled illegal in the 1940s these racial covenants can still be read in Pacific Grove property deeds to this day; and
18. WHEREAS, in July of 1906 the second “Feast of Lanterns” event was held half a mile from the burned, fenced, guarded Point Alones Chinese Village site, occupied by protesting residents; and

19. WHEREAS, revived in 1958 the “Feast of Lanterns” annual event featured racist and stereotypical caricatures of Chinese women and men, insensitivity toward the history of prejudice and Chinese persecution in Pacific Grove, and cultural appropriation of the authentic Chinese heritage looted and destroyed in the fire, and this event continued to be supported by the City of Pacific Grove into the 21st century; and
20. WHEREAS, Chinese-Americans have persistently fought back against discriminatory laws, structural cruelty, and systemic racism with every political, economic, and legal tool available to them, including civil disobedience at Point Alones, and
21. WHEREAS, the rise in anti-Asian violence, racial discrimination, targeting and scapegoating during the current pandemic is a shameful reminder of the ways the Chinese Americans of Point Alones, and their descendants, have been treated throughout our history; and
22. WHEREAS, for over 50 years the men, women and children settlers of Chinese heritage, their American-born children, and grandchildren were able to settle, develop livelihoods, raise families and create a thriving community at Point Alones in what became Pacific Grove, despite racist and discriminatory laws, prejudice and harmful acts which touched every aspect of life, including housing, employment, education, marriage and culture; and
23. WHEREAS, the story of Pacific Grove’s Chinese immigrants, Chinese-American citizens and the dehumanizing treatment committed against them in the 19th, 20th and 21st century should not be purged, forgotten or minimized in the telling of Pacific Grove’s history; and
24. WHEREAS, the City of Pacific Grove acknowledges and takes responsibility for the legacy of discrimination against early Chinese immigrants and subsequently against their descendants and others as part of our collective consciousness that helps contribute to the current surge in anti-Asian and Pacific Islander hate crimes; and
25. WHEREAS, the experience of Chinese immigrants in Pacific Grove can be used to build solidarity with other immigrant and marginalized communities here, and in Monterey County, as similar discrimination and racism was, and still is, experienced by other communities, and
26. WHEREAS, in 2010, the Pacific Grove City Council addressed modifying race-based restrictive covenants; in May 2011, May 2012, May 2013, and May 2019, the Pacific Grove City Council recognized the Point Almejas-Point Alones Chinese Fishing Village and the many contributions made by the Chinese Community, then and now, and the Walk of Remembrance; in September 2014 the City unveiled a plaque dedicated to the memory of the Chinese Fishing Village to bring recognition to the site of the Village; and
27. WHEREAS, a genuine apology for the role of the City in this history and legacy is an important and necessary step in the process of healing, reconciliation and redress; and

28. WHEREAS, the City of Pacific Grove joins other California cities, including Antioch, San Jose, Los Angeles and San Francisco, who have issued apologies for their histories of discrimination and violence towards the Chinese community, Chinese settlers, citizens and their descendants; and
29. WHEREAS, an apology for grievous injustices cannot erase the past, but admission of the historic wrongdoing committed can aid us in healing the pain of the past and solving the critical problems of discrimination and racism facing Pacific Grove and the broader United States today.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE:

1. The Council determines that each of the Findings set forth above is true and correct, and by this reference incorporates those Findings as an integral part of this Resolution.
2. The Council apologizes to Chinese settlers, citizens, immigrants and their descendants, who came to Pacific Grove before and after it became a City, and were the victims of institutional racism, prejudice and discrimination;
3. The Council acknowledges the acts of fundamental injustice, prejudice and harm against the residents of the Point Alones Fishing Village community, and their descendants, whose effects linger to this day.
4. The Council apologizes to the memory of those whose dignity was assailed, whose voices were silenced, whose homes were burned, whose belongings were looted, whose community was destroyed and scattered, and whose stories and history were lost or hidden due to racism, fear, protectiveness or shame.
5. The Council acknowledges the legacy of racism, prejudice and discrimination from the City's treatment of Chinese residents, racist home deeds, long time support of the "Feast of Lanterns," and indifference to the lasting effects of institutionalized racism and the threat of personal harm.
6. The Council recognizes the contributions, resilience and persistence of the Chinese community and their descendants' commitment to seeking the truth, fostering reconciliation and friendship, and "change with kindness."
7. The Council resolves to rectify the lingering consequences of discriminatory actions and policies of the City and to use this resolution as a learning moment for the public to move away from prejudice and racism towards inclusion, equity and justice for all.

8. The Council commits to programs and policies that can educate the community about this painful history of discrimination and its ongoing consequences, as well as provide for rectification and redress.
9. This Resolution shall become effective immediately following passage and adoption thereof.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE
this _____ day of _____, _____, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

APPROVED:

BILL PEAKE, Mayor

ATTEST:

DATED: _____

SANDRA KANDELL, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

DAVID C. LAREDO, City Attorney