

**\*\*\*SPECIAL LAWS & RULES COMMITTEE MEETING\*\*\***

Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm

1. Memorializing Resolution: conflict in Gaza



RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KINGSTON, NEW YORK TO ADOPT A MEMORIALIZING RESOLUTION CALLING ON REPRESENTATIVES TO SPONSOR, CO-SPONSOR AND SUPPORT RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR A PERMANENT CEASE-FIRE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE AND LIFTING THE SIEGE ON GAZA

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kingston is united against all forms of violence and recognizes that all life is precious; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kingston condemns all forms of racism including but not limited to anti-Semitism and anti-Arab racism, islamophobia, fascism, white supremacy, anti-indigeneity, and xenophobia throughout the world; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kingston aspires to be a safe and welcoming community and is committed to promoting peace, unity and respect for all residents and community members; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kingston grieves all victims of Hamas' and the Israel Defense Forces' massacres and capture of Israeli, Palestinian, and international civilians before, on and since October 7, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kingston denounces the destruction of civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, houses of worship, schools, humanitarian centers, and residential homes; and

**WHEREAS**, nearly two million people, amounting to nearly eighty percent of Gaza, have been displaced from their homes, and the continued lack of food, healthcare, and potable water has produced a "full-blown famine" in Northern Gaza, according to the head of the United Nations World Food Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner reports that women, girls, and children overall are among those most exposed to danger; and

**WHEREAS**, the killing and wounding of tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza including thousands of women and children will only serve to perpetuate hatred and violence by successive generations aimed at Israel and the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, Palestinians have the right to a sovereign homeland where they can live freely in peace; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kingston affirms that there is no military solution, recognizing that a lasting peace that affirms human rights can only be achieved through diplomatic means; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kingston recognizes the urgency of the human rights crises in Palestine and Israel and the need for immediate action; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kingston recognizes that we have the ability and opportunity to help ease the pain and divisions within our community through a statement of shared understanding.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Kingston calls upon our leaders in Albany and Washington to sponsor and support resolutions calling for an immediate permanent ceasefire in Israeli and Palestinian lands to protect and save human lives, to release all hostages on both sides of the conflict, to end unrestricted military funding to Israel, to fund and supply humanitarian aid to victims of this war, and to lifting the siege on Palestinian lands; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Common Council of the City of Kingston calls on President Joseph Biden, Senators Charles Schumer and Kristen Gillibrand, and Representative Patrick Ryan to abide by the democratic will of the people of Kingston to negotiate an immediate permanent ceasefire in Israel and Palestine.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of Kingston supports the urgent appeal for the establishment of humanitarian corridors to ensure the unimpeded delivery of much-needed aid and the reinstatement of essential services to the region.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of Kingston passionately urges the swift and secure return and release of all hostages and administrative detainees in Israel and Palestine, emphasizing the critical importance of safeguarding their well-being.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to President Joseph Biden, Senator Charles Schumer, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Congressman Patrick Ryan, New York Governor Kathy Hochul, State Senator Michelle Hinchey, Assemblywoman Sarahana Shrestha, Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger, Ulster County Legislative Chair Peter Criswell, Ulster County Legislative Majority Leader Abe Uchitelle, Ulster County Legislator Joseph Donaldson, Ulster County Legislator Greg McCullough and Mayor Steve Noble.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KINGSTON, NEW YORK, THAT THIS RESOLUTION THEREUPON BE ADOPTED**

## **Memorializing Resolution: Foreign Conflict and Local Resolve to Hold One Another in Community**

We the members of the Kingston Common Council declare our support for the following goals: (1) an end to all aggression in Israel and Gaza, (2) a permanent peace among all parties to the current conflict, and (3) increased support for the security and prosperity of all inhabitants of the region.

We recognize that the only authorities who can agree to a ceasefire and a lasting peace are the ruling parties in Israel and Gaza. We understand any such agreement will be difficult to reach due to deep divisions between not only the current political leaders but also the support of majorities of citizens of Gaza and Israel for their respective leaders.

Further, we recognize that the call for a “ceasefire” is a slogan and not a solution. It does not take into account the immense complexities of resolving the Middle East conflict. We understand that those in our community calling for a “ceasefire” have related aims: ending the war, returning the hostages, curtailing US supplies of offensive military weaponry. We also understand that others in our community see the conflict as a necessary war, while still others see the conflict as unrelated to our day-to-day lives.

We decline to cast blame in the current conflict. To do so would be to take sides. And to take sides would make us partisans in the conflict. Partisans, by definition, cannot provide alternatives or solutions to such conflicts. The only “side” we should take is the side of peace, prosperity, and community over war, destruction, and division.

Moreover, to take sides would be highly divisive for our community here in Kingston. We have already seen painful evidence of this in Council Chambers.

The conflict in the Middle East has greatly affected many members of our Kingston community in the most intimate and horrifying ways. We have seen an outpouring of poignant commentary advocating for peace, charity, and grace. We have also seen how easy it is for bitter denunciation and insidious prejudice to take root.

We greatly value free speech and open dialogue in Kingston. But as Eleanor Roosevelt long ago observed, “With freedom comes great responsibility.” As a Council, we stand firm in our commitment to fostering an environment where opinions can be freely expressed, but never at the expense of respect and understanding. To properly represent our constituents, we must take account of the wide diversity of opinions and ideas among all the citizens of Kingston. This demands the development of sound practices for working through difficult conversations.

We cannot allow the divisive practices of denunciation and “call-out” culture to make us enemies of each other. Instead, we encourage all residents of Kingston to work toward what the activist Loretta Ross refers to as “call-in” culture. She notes that “call-out culture” is “the logical result of systems of domination and control, such as white supremacy and patriarchy.” She advocates instead *calling folks in* to develop new frameworks for going beyond the mere “diagnosis of problems to engage instead in new practices with each other.” The aim, she says, is to “gain clarity on a sense of belonging and purpose in a broader human rights movement.”



The practice of “calling in” brings us to the values that must animate our struggle here in Kingston to establish what Martin Luther King, Jr., called “the beloved community.” For King, the beloved community was a place of reconciliation and mutual care, where all members are prosperous, housed, loved, and loving. King called on us to go beyond being against bad things, but to actively work toward positive outcomes.

It is not enough to stand against war. We must practice peace.

It is not enough to stand against division. We must practice community.

It is not enough to stand against hate. We must practice love.

By “love” we mean the “revolutionary love” advocated by civil rights activist Valarie Kaur:

“Revolutionary love” is the choice to enter into wonder and labor for *others*, for our *opponents*, and for *ourselves*. It is not a formal code or prescription but an orientation to life that is personal and political and rooted in joy. Loving only ourselves is escapism; loving only our opponents is self-loathing; loving only others is ineffective. All three practices together make love revolutionary and revolutionary love can only be practiced in community.

We hereby resolve to focus on holding each other in community, even as we may disagree over issues that are beyond our municipal mandate.

This resolution shall be sent to all federal officials who represent the City of Kingston.

