



**MAYOR ROBERT M. GREEN**

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February 1, 2021

**STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION RESIGNATION  
AND NEXT STEPS**

Neighbors,

On the morning of Saturday, January 30th, I received the resignation letter of the chair of the Human Rights Commission, Nicole Winther. Ms. Winther expressed that she had been spending up to twenty hours a week on her commission duties, but didn't provide a direct explanation for her abrupt departure. I thank her for her seventeen years of service to the commission, particularly in the recent effort to create an action plan for the commission, which will be presented to the City Council on February 15th.

Turbulence is to be expected during a time of significant change. Counting the appointment to replace Ms. Winter, five of the nine commissioners will be brand new to the commission. I'm also changing the staff liaison for the commission, in order to provide the commission with a clean slate. While I didn't wish for these five recent resignations to occur, I'm confident that these nine energetic and committed commissioners can move Cedar Falls significantly forward on true inclusion and diversity in the years ahead. And the Council and I will be directly involved in that effort as well.

One major hurdle is the sense of urgency required to tackle the civil rights challenges of our community. This urgency (and even necessity) is clearly split along partisan lines. In a recent Pew Research Center survey, 74% of Democrats (and those who lean Democrat) said that addressing issues around race should be a top priority for the President and Congress this year. Only 24% of Republicans (and those who lean Republican) agreed. I'm not saying this to stoke party divisions further, only to appreciate that a significant percentage of Americans don't believe that racism is a problem worth addressing right now. I disagree. It was a problem worth addressing 400 years ago, and a hundred years ago, and today, and in all the years ahead. Racism might not affect you day in and day out, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist, or that it can be safely ignored. As a moral people, we have a moral imperative to act; every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

I'm looking for Human Rights Commission applicants who are willing to actively engage the hard but respectful conversations that Cedar Falls needs. To make (as a commission) bold, constructive statements against racism past and present. To advocate for victims of discrimination to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. And to make policy recommendations to the City Council to ensure all Cedar Falls residents and visitors are free from discriminatory practices within city government.

If this kind of work appeals to you, contact me at [rob.green@cedarfalls.com](mailto:rob.green@cedarfalls.com), or visit [www.cedarfalls.com/boards](http://www.cedarfalls.com/boards) to apply. Thank you for your interest in resolving long-standing issues of racial injustice. Together we can build a more diverse and inclusive Cedar Falls -- for ourselves, our children, and all the generations ahead.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Green".

Mayor Robert M. Green

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