



Proclamation

- WHEREAS,** the City of Ocoee is dedicated to cultural diversity and the ability for all citizens to exercise their right to vote; and
- WHEREAS,** the historical record clearly shows that African-American residents of West Orange County in and around what later became the City of Ocoee were grievously denied their civil rights, their properties, and their very lives in a series of unlawful acts perpetrated by a white mob and governmental officials on November 2, 1920, and the following weeks simply because they tried to vote, as any eligible citizen should be able to do, including such prominent local leaders as Moses Norman and Julius Perry; and
- WHEREAS,** the historical record also reveals that no African-American persons resided in the City of Ocoee for the following 60 years, leading to the area being referred to as a “sundown city”; and
- WHEREAS,** the City of Ocoee seeks to express its regret and horror at the events of November 1920 while recognizing the more recent efforts of local leaders and citizens of all cultures to create a diverse community open to all residents and visitors; and
- WHEREAS,** the population of the city is now highly diverse “sunrise city,” with African-Americans being a large portion of the population; and
- WHEREAS,** the City opposes all efforts to divide its citizens on the basis of color, creed, religion, national origin, cultural or political beliefs; and
- WHEREAS,** the City believes that remembering and honoring those individuals who were killed, injured, driven from their homes, and had their property taken from them is a core requirement for ensuring that such acts do not occur again; and
- WHEREAS,** the City’s Human Relations Diversity Board has developed language for an historic marker describing the events of November 1920 and the City’s efforts to change the community culture that allowed and encouraged those atrocities; and
- WHEREAS,** the City Commission of the City of Ocoee has the desire and authority to erect such a marker in a public place so that all visitors may recall and consider the events of November 1920 and jointly vow to never allow such a cultural divide to exist in the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF OCOEE, that the City shall erect a suitable historical marker in a public space that will describe the tragic events of November 1920; that November 2nd shall be declared a day of remembrance for those residents of Ocoee and West Orange County who lost their lives and property through an act of domestic terror; and that any future public cultural event held by the City during the first week of November shall acknowledge the terrible events of November 1920 that sought to disenfranchise a group of citizens and shall emphasize the community’s need for cultural diversity. Let it be known that Ocoee shall no longer be the sundown city but the sunrise city, with the bright light of harmony, justice, and prosperity shining upon all our citizens.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Ocoee, Florida to be affixed this 20th day of November, 2018.

Rusty Johnson, Mayor