



**TROY 4
BLACK
LIVES**

Response to the Troy City Council Resolution Establishing The “Reimagine Troy Community Justice Services Work Group In Support Of the Black Lives Matter “Movement”

We are grateful to everyone who has submitted a comment to City Hall uplifting our demands. As a community, our work continues. Despite listening to hours of feedback and suggestions (and receiving pages of comments!) from Troy residents, all the City Council has to say for themselves is that they’re going to “begin citizen engagement and dialogue around the delivery of public safety.” Although this resolution initiates a necessary effort to listen to our community, the language of this motion leaves us with many questions and no clear indication that the City Council has any intention to implement actual change.

WHEREAS, the City Council resolution says this is “a response to the Black Lives Matter Movement” and yet continues to completely ignore the demands put out by some of the most vocal and active local organizers for Black Lives - Troy 4 Black Lives (T4BL), formerly known as Justice 4 Dahmeek, W

WHEREAS, despite Gov. Cuomo’s Executive Order No. 203 requiring cities to “create a plan to adopt and implement the recommendations,” **nothing in the resolution commits to implementing change.** The stated goal is to provide recommendations that will “assist the Mayor in identifying the needs of the community.” We are disturbed that the proposed timeline ends in February, 2021 without any plan or commitment to implementation.

WE CALL ON THE CITY COUNCIL TO:

- **Immediately issue a new resolution to include a commitment to take concrete action in defunding the police and investing in services needed by Black people as identified from the listening circles.**
- **Refer in this resolution to the specific demands put forward by Troy for Black Lives, who have decades of experience & come from communities most impacted by racism and police brutality.**
- **Make a commitment, by resolution, to consider these demands, as well as other demands made by the people of Troy most impacted by police violence, such as Black, Indigenous and other People Of Color at the intersection of LGBTQIA, Women, Young People and Elders, People with Disabilities, Poor People, Currently and Formerly Incarcerated People, People without Citizenship, People with Chronic Illnesses, People with Mental Illness and/or Addictions, and Protestors and Activists.**
- **Include a formal recommendation in the resolution that the Mayor also commit to timely & concrete changes in direct response to the demands and feedback of the communities identified above.**

WHEREAS, the City Council claims to honor the death of George Floyd while never acknowledging the unjustifiable murder of Edson Thevenin by then Troy police officer, Randall French, which was subsequently covered up by Mayor Madden, Rensselaer County D.A. Joel Abelow and the entire official structure of the City of Troy, including the police department, the city council, and the legal department.

WE CALL ON THE CITY COUNCIL TO:

- **Name Edson Thevenin and Dahmeek McDonald in every resolution, policy, or process regarding Black Lives Matter.**
- **Admit wrongdoing by the City in the murder of Edson Thevenin, the shooting of Dahmeek McDonald, and in exonerating the perpetrators and covering up, justifying, and defending these acts.**
- **Pledge, by City Council resolution, to revisit and undo the coverup, secrecy, and defense of these two acts of extreme racist police violence.**
- **Refuse to continue to participate in the coverup/defense and publicly reveal the contents of the secret report about Edson Thevenin’s murder.**

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WHEREAS, the City Council says they want “to reimagine relations between citizens and police” while blatantly ignoring frameworks for change that have been imagined by some of the people most impacted by police brutality. They say they are interested in working with “folks committed to listening and open to potential change” when they are the ones who have consistently demonstrated a lack of commitment to listen or pursue change. It is far too late for “potential change” and yet instead of enacting any, they chose to release their press statement during the City Council meeting while reading scores of letters in support of T4BL’s demands. They say they seek “broad-based participation” as though the 11,000 people at the historic Troy Rally for Black Lives was not broad enough. If 11,000 people and hours of public comments are not broad enough, we are confused about which Troy residents the City Council is listening to.

WE CALL ON THE CITY COUNCIL TO:

- Amend or pass a new resolution for developing a plan in response to Black Lives Matter.
- Incorporate into the plan specific references to the demands of Troy for Black Lives as reiterated and amplified by the 11,000 people who rallied to the cause of Black Lives in Troy on June 7th, 2020.
- Acknowledge that rally was a response to police violence **HERE IN TROY** and commit to a process of implementing the changes demanded.

WHEREAS, this resolution does not present a framework for “citizen-driven” change. This resolution instead reinforces age-old tactics to stall implementation until public fervor and demand dissolves. Meanwhile, we have been connecting with our neighbors for years on these issues. We have hosted listening circles, speakouts, been at neighborhood meetings, and shared and listened with countless Black residents. Our demands have come out of those conversations.

WHEREAS, there have been several recent shootings in Troy and the City Council proposes to respond by increasing the funding for the police without similarly funding social and community services that have been proven to reduce gun violence.

WE CALL ON THE CITY COUNCIL TO:

- Increased budget to ensure that 100% of our youth that are eligible participate in summer and fall youth employment
- Increase budget in our parks and recreation areas to ensure ALL POOLS are open and safe for our families and children.
- Restoration of abandoned properties to ensure housing our low income and houseless population.
- Funding to ensure all City Youth have access to mentorship and apprenticeship.

WHEREAS, the resolution specifies that resumes are required for citizens to participate in the Reimagine Troy Work Group. This is another iteration of white supremacist respectability culture and gatekeeping that will only allow certain people to the table. This qualification creates a barrier to access for countless people who are both highly qualified and most impacted by police violence.

WE CALL ON THE CITY COUNCIL TO:

- Eliminate the resume requirement for participation in the Reimagine Troy Working Group.
- Create a range of options for how people can present their qualifications, including but not limited to written, audio recorded, or video statements.

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WHEREAS, neither the Troy City Council nor Mayor Madden have established themselves as trustworthy advocates for Black Lives. Why are they the ones who get to decide the other members of this Working Group? What assurance do we have that the Council won't act as the Mayor did when he appointed a citizen review board with “no tension in the selection process?” Tension arises naturally wherever there are difficult conversations holding a diversity of opinions (like those around race and policing) and yet the Mayor seems to value the lack of this tension when choosing people to hold the police accountable.

WE CALL ON THE CITY COUNCIL TO:

- Invite to join the Working Group organizations that are 1) based in and led by Black Communities and Communities of Color or community leaders who not associated with any organization and 2) are explicitly anti-racist in their mission and work.

WHEREAS, you cannot build a strong house on a rotten foundation. Just as the U.S. cannot eliminate racism without acknowledging and repairing the wrong of slavery, Troy cannot move toward a positive future without acknowledging wrongdoing in the murder of Edson Thevenin, the shooting of Dahmeek McDonald and countless other incidents involving police brutality.

THEREFORE, Troy for Black Lives declares that the Troy City Council, Mayor, and Police have built a rotten foundation with their silence and defense of past and present wrongdoing. The city they maintain through this foundation is not safe for all of its residents. The listening circles that have been proposed by the City Council will not address these structural defects.

WE CALL ON THE CITY COUNCIL TO:

- Demonstrate good faith by responding directly to the demands of Troy for Black Lives and other pro-Black Lives organizations and individuals who have already reimaged a Troy in which Black Lives Matter, meaning the safety and wellbeing of all residents are protected and ensured.

REVEAL THE SECRET REPORT!

**END THE PANIC DEFENSE AND QUALIFIED IMMUNITY FOR
KILLER COPS!**

**DROP THE CITY'S LEGAL DEFENSE IN THE THEVENIN AND
MCDONALD LAWSUITS!**

**ACKNOWLEDGE WRONGDOING AND MAKE REPARATIONS
IN THE POLICE SHOOTINGS OF DAHMEEK MCDONALD AND
EDSON THEVENIN!**

**DEFUND THE POLICE AND INVEST IN BLACK COMMUNITIES!
RESPOND TO THE DEMANDS OF TROY 4 BLACK LIVES!**

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