



STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor Fischer and Members of the City Council

FROM: Corrin Wendell, Community Development Director

DATE: April 12, 2023

RE: Discriminatory Covenants on Deeds & Participation in Just Deeds Coalition

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED:

Motion to pass a resolution condemning the use of discriminatory covenants and approving participation in the Just Deeds Coalition.

BACKGROUND:

What is Just Deeds?

Just Deeds is a coalition of community stakeholders committed to acknowledging and addressing systemic racism in housing in Minnesota. Coalition members provide free legal and title services to help property owners find discriminatory covenants and remove them from their property titles and will provide the foundation of education and acknowledgement necessary to pursue reconciliation and anti-racist solutions. We represent organizations and entities who share responsibility for creating and correcting systemic racism in housing. We acknowledge the racist systems created and perpetuated within communities, and we will work toward dismantling these systems. Members of the Just Deeds coalition are committed to working toward meaningful and lasting change in Minnesota. Coalition members will achieve this goal by:

- educating Minnesotans about the racist practices perpetrated by developers, real estate agents, lawyers, and local, state, and federal governments to establish segregated housing and keep wealth and opportunity away from communities of color
- educating Minnesotans so they understand who has directly and indirectly benefitted from historically racist practices and how those practices have shaped access to property, homeownership, and wealth over time
- taking action to dismantle the racist systems that perpetuate inequality and devoting resources to create equity for communities of color

All members of the Just Deeds Coalition recognize the following truths and principles:

- Systemic racism in housing occurs today. Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color continue to face discrimination and lack of access to affordable housing and home ownership.
- Continued denial of opportunities to build generational wealth through home ownership perpetuates inequity within our communities.
- We will not erase or deny history. We will acknowledge it and learn from it.

- We are dedicated to honesty about institutional roles (public and private) in building and perpetuating systemic racism.
- We commit to begin and participate in hard conversations within our communities and institutions about our shared history of discrimination and systemic racism.
- We pledge to examine the current policies and practices of our institutions to prevent future racist actions.
- When we identify racism in our institutions and processes, we will actively work to remove it.

By joining the Coalition, the City is taking the first step to mitigate its role in systemic racism in housing. The Just Deeds project acknowledges that discriminatory covenants are one part of a racist system that intentionally excluded Black, Indigenous and People of Color from social, economic, and political benefits associated with homeownership generally. In order to address all matters of racial inequity, the lasting impacts of racial segregation must be addressed through the public denouncement of this historical practice.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Motion to pass a resolution condemning the use of discriminatory covenants and approving participation in the Just Deeds Coalition.