



STATE OF THE CITY

Mayor Roy D. Buol Sumer 2020

The events that began unfolding around the country in early June are not just a response to the tragedy of George Floyd's death at the hands of law enforcement in Minneapolis. That murder is, sadly, the latest in a long list of injustices experienced daily by people of color around the United States.

We, in Dubuque, like so many around the country, are struggling with emotions and question on how to best advance racial equity and reduce racial disparities here and around our nation.

We must first acknowledge that incidents of police brutality and other acts of oppression and harm that occur hundreds of miles away do have local impacts. Those incidents, while not representative of the majority of individual law enforcement officers, create mistrust, fear, sadness, and anger locally.

We also know that we are not perfect. I want to remind our residents that the City of Dubuque takes police misconduct seriously and we have a forum for complaints against the Dubuque Police Department. This forum, facilitated by the Community-Police Relations Committee, exists through a memorandum of understanding between the City of Dubuque and the Dubuque Branch of the NAACP and includes community members of diverse backgrounds. Anyone with concerns can contact the Human Rights Department at 563-589-4190 for more information or for support in filing a complaint.

As mayor and on behalf of my city council colleagues, I want all Dubuque residents, especially our black and brown residents, to know that we hear you, we see you, and we care about each of you. We recognize that you face daily challenges that most of us do not realize or even understand, but we must listen and seek to understand if we are to create an environment of mutual respect and trust.

This is the crux of the "Black Lives Matter" movement – not a denial that all lives matter, it is that for too long Black lives have not experienced the same care for their lives that many of us take for granted every day.

I also want to acknowledge the peaceful protests and rallies that were held in Dubuque in late May and early June. The conduct of those groups and involvement of local law enforcement was exemplary and showed how engaged residents can come together and effectively make their voices heard, both peacefully and powerfully, in a time of extreme pain, crisis, and anger.

The Dubuque City Council made the conscious decision to include the word "equity" in the City's Vision and Mission Statements. We are committed to continued dialogue and action. We are committed to acknowledging, to listening, and responding to our community members' thoughts on what our community needs to heal, what it needs to meet the needs of our families, and finally, to develop the best ways to work together to create the long-term actions that will benefit the Dubuque community.

We also are committed to the actions underway to disrupt racism and to promote equity and inclusion in our community. These include continued support of partnerships and initiatives like Inclusive Dubuque, the Equitable Poverty Prevention Plan, City staff efforts to create equity plans specific to the services each department offers, supporting the Police Chief's Forum, and continuing intercultural competency training for all City employees.

The City Council also recognizes and invites the varying perspectives of residents to make equitable and inclusive decisions. We encourage community members of color to reach out to us directly. For people interested in a more direct role within government, please consider applying for work with the City of Dubuque, serving on a City board or commission, or running for elected office.

The City of Dubuque will continue to pursue our vision to make Dubuque a "sustainable and resilient city and an inclusive and equitable community" and we will support the Dubuque Police Department's mission to enhance community livability by providing equitable community service and protection through integrity, compassion, and competence. We must all commit ourselves to acknowledging and responding to the challenges facing our community, state, and nation. §