

**In the matter of:**

**Supporting Martizians for Black Lives in their legal public commentary and condemning those who illegally defaced the “Black Lives Matter” mural**

WHEREAS, on July 4, 2020, a group of approximately 100 people painted a bright yellow “Black Lives Matter” temporary mural on Court Street in front of the Wakefield Taylor Courthouse in Martinez, California, after obtaining a city permit to paint the mural;

WHEREAS, the yellow Black Lives Matter mural in Martinez is one of thousands painted recently on streets locally, nationally and internationally in response to the killings of unarmed Black men and women by police and vigilantes, and to express support for efforts to stop this violence and end racism against African-Americans;

WHEREAS, shortly after the Martinez “Black Lives Matter” mural was painted, a woman, assisted by a man, partially covered up the mural with black paint; and when several onlookers asked what they were doing, those defacing the mural responded with comments such as “Racism is a lie,” “There is no racism,” “This is not happening in my town,” “No one wants Black Lives Matter,” and “Keep America Great Again” ;

WHEREAS, the Contra Costa County District Attorney filed three misdemeanor charges, including a hate crime, against the two individuals accused of covering up the mural;

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors support the words of Martinez Police Chief Manjit Sappal, who said “ The City of Martinez values tolerance, and the damage to the mural was divisive and hurtful”; and supports the sentiments of Contra Costa District Attorney Diana Becton, who stated “The mural completed last weekend was a peaceful and powerful way to communicate the importance of Black lives in Contra Costa County and the country. We must continue to elevate discussions and actually listen to one another in an effort to heal our community and country”;

WHEREAS, following the defacement of the mural, many residents gathered at the mural working together to restore the lettering, and draw colorful chalk pictures and comments around it with messages of love, acceptance, and tolerance; and

WHEREAS, Martinez is the county seat of Contra Costa County and home to many County offices; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County does hereby stand for peace, equity, social justice, and freedom of expression, and supports Martizians for Black Lives in their legal public commentary through their “Black Lives Matter” mural, and strongly condemns those who illegally defaced this mural as a racist and illegal act.

