

Welcoming City Resolution

Resolution Designating Gainesville as a Welcoming City

Whereas, Gainesville is known as a city that welcomes newcomers from many parts of the world and recognizes their many contributions to the cultural, social, and economic life of the community and its broad hopes for general prosperity; and

Whereas, Sister City Program of Gainesville, Inc., has pioneered and promoted citizen diplomacy for 33 years, thereby bringing Gainesville residents into relationships with people in cities around the globe; and

Whereas, Gainesville citizens have joined-in interfaith harmony to repudiate racial, ethnic or religious bigotry whenever it has arisen; and

Whereas, Gainesville is known as a center of innovation in science, technology, industry, and health care because of its academic researchers, health care professionals and entrepreneurs, many of them from other countries; and

Whereas, the more than 8,000 international students currently enrolled at the University of Florida and Santa Fe College contribute to their respective preeminent standings; and

Whereas, it is in the city's interest to attract and retain business and professional leaders, potential job creators, and a skilled work force by encouraging every effort to eliminate barriers and to develop a climate of welcome; and

Whereas, Welcoming America is a national movement, headquartered in Decatur, Georgia, that has inspired people to build communities that embrace immigrants and foster opportunity for all and has already assisted 56 cities, large and small, and 10 counties in developing their own local programs to achieve these goals; and

Whereas, Gainesville citizens representative of business, academic, student, faith, and social service communities and the City Commission have worked together for more than a year to develop ways to make Gainesville a Welcoming Community; and

Whereas, that planning has identified existing programs in the City of Gainesville, the Alachua County School Board, the University of Florida, Santa Fe College, and other public and private institutions that make Gainesville a hospitable community for newcomers and recent arrivals, and has identified gaps that need to be filled to achieve that success; and

Whereas, Welcoming Gainesville is now incorporated as a non-profit with volunteer cross-community advisory committees and a salaried Executive Director to implement the Welcoming City plan with only incidental impact on city staff or budget;

NOW, therefore, be it **resolved** by the Gainesville City Commission, **that**

Gainesville is designated a Welcoming City, and the City of Gainesville **will** become part of the Welcoming America network, the first Florida city to do so; and

Welcoming Gainesville, Inc., **will be** primarily responsible for implementing the goals and recommendations of Welcoming City, analogous with the way Sister City Program of Gainesville, Inc. is responsible for administering Gainesville's sister city relationships; and

Welcoming Gainesville is authorized, in consultation with city staff where appropriate, to develop and conduct programs, activities, research projects, and cultural events that will make existing programs more accessible, provide new resources, promote the Welcoming City concept, increase public involvement, and make Gainesville a truly Welcoming City for everyone who comes here; and

The City Manager (or designee) is designated as the official liaison between the City of Gainesville, its departments and staff, and both Welcoming America and Welcoming Gainesville; and

The City Commission encourages immigrant groups, government agencies, community institutions, and business leaders to make Gainesville not only a receptive, hospitable place for new residents from other countries, but also a center of world commerce, higher education, and intellectual and cultural innovation.

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