

RESOLUTION 2010 – 20

A Resolution Establishing A Policy Of Sweatshop

Free Uniform Procurement

WHEREAS, there is ample documentation showing that abusive sweatshop conditions and practices are widespread in the global garment industry, including serious violations of the wage, health and safety laws of relevant jurisdictions, repeated violations of the core labor rights as defined by the International Labor Organization, as well as the universally condemned practices of forced labor and indentured child labor; and

WHEREAS, indiscriminate buying of uniforms by public agencies from vendors at the very end of the garment supply chain easily can and frequently does result in the purchase of uniforms produced in sweatshops, with the unintended consequence that public money is (1) indirectly supporting the illegal activity of sweatshops, (2) giving unfair advantage to sweatshops users who can offer products at lower costs than operators who respect the rights of workers and, further, (3) helping to perpetuate the cycles of poverty, deprivation and poor health where sweatshops dominate local economies, thus promoting further social instability; and

WHEREAS, the University City procurement staff currently uses generalized guidelines for buying (namely, if quality and price of products, and the reliability and integrity of the vendors are roughly equal, preference is given to buying products that are "green" from bidders who are "local"); there are no detailed disclosure requirements for vendors who are awarded the annual contract for the University City's uniforms that attempts to document where and under what workplace conditions and labor practices the uniforms are being produced; and

WHEREAS, the average annual expenditure in the City the last three years for "Clothing Allowance" was approximately \$31,000, and the average annual expenditure in the last three years for "Wearing Apparel" was approximately \$94,000; thus about \$125,000 annual spending by University City is potentially at risk of supporting a sweatshop operation somewhere in the world-a situation the Council finds unacceptable and in need of remedy; and

WHEREAS, the City likely will spend in Fiscal 2011 almost \$1 million on "Commodities," some of which may originate in sweatshops; and

WHEREAS, about 180 states, counties, cities, schools and other public agencies in the United States have taken steps to begin sweatshop free buying, the Sweatshop-Free initiative stands in need of highly visible and credible leadership among public entities in Missouri and Illinois, as well as nationally, which leadership this City desires to provide and is capable of providing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council hereby commits University City to have in place by March 31, 2011, a rigorous and comprehensive sweatshop-free buying procedures for uniforms and wearing apparel as will put University City among the leading public entities seeking to buy uniforms that are not tainted by sweatshop injustices;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that University City forthwith join, and in due time assume an active leadership role in, the national Sweatshop Free Procurement Consortium whose membership is composed of four (4) states and ten (10) cities (Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin; Ashland, OR, Austin, TX, Madison, WI, Milwaukee, WI, Portland, or and San Francisco, CA) seeking the most effective ways for governmental bodies to share information and resources to become a single entity powerful enough to positively influence the global garment industry on sweatshop-free issues, including monitoring and certification of manufacturers, and joint purchasing contacts to gain bulk discounts; and

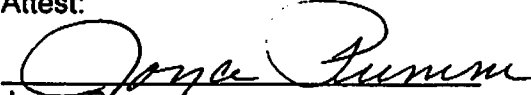
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a five-member ad hoc advisory committee of University City residents be appointed by the Mayor to assist the City Manager or his designee in development of sweatshop-free buying procedures for uniform and wearing apparel; to research and report to the Council ways that the City might screen the City's substantial annual purchases of commodities for products known or suspected of being made in sweatshop conditions; and to advise University City boards, commissions and staff when sweatshop-free buying concerns might be inconsistent with meeting other objectives, i.e. projects and purchases deemed to be desirable because they are "green"; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the City conduct the necessary educational, promotional and public relations efforts to assure that the municipal staff, the community and the public at large are given ample opportunities to understand and appreciate the rationale for University City's sweatshop-free buying policies.

Adopted the 4th of October, 2010.


Shelley Welsch
MAYOR

Attest:


Joyce Pumm
CITY CLERK