

SC City Labels KKK Terrorist Group

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Charleston, SC -- The Charleston City Council labeled the Ku Klux Klan a terrorist group Tuesday, but only after council members were assured that the non-binding resolution would not abridge anyone's constitutional rights.

The resolution, approved by a voice vote, also was amended to condemn any organization "whose purpose is to encourage hate of any individual, race, religion, culture or way of life."

Councilman Wendell Gilliard, the resolution's sponsor, had said earlier the goal was to take away the Klan's rights to speak and assemble in the city. There was no specific mention of a ban in the wording.

"This is not a black thing. This is a human thing," he told the council.

"This is about race relations. This is about saving lives."

"To me, the burning of the church in Greeleyville was a terrorist act," agreed Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr., referring to the Zion AME Church in Williamsburg County burned by two Klansmen in 1995.

The resolution said Charleston welcomes diverse opinions "but not those views that instigate fear, bias, bigotry and hate." It added "the Ku Klux Klan has been involved in numerous acts of domestic terrorism throughout its history."

Several council members were concerned it would lead to Klan marches and lawsuits.

"I would prefer letting the Klan die a natural death rather than cutting off their First Amendment rights," said Paul Tinkler.

But city attorney Bill Regan said the resolution only expressed the opinion of council and was not a law. The Klan could still request a permit to march, he said.

The Klan last marched in Charleston several years ago. Other cities have tried to limit Klan activity with laws prohibiting people from assembling while wearing masks, for example. Some measures have been upheld and others have been overturned, said Mark Potok, a spokesman for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala

Potok said he knew of no other municipality designating the Klan a terrorist group.

Horace King, leader of the Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina, refused to comment.

To see more documents/articles regarding this group/organization/subject [click here](#).

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