

From: Rebecca Gruber <rgruber@alumni.upenn.edu>
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Date: Sun, 20 Sep 2020 21:08:27 -0400
Subject: Voicing my dismay at the removal of the Black Lives Matter banner from Town Hall

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Dear Sirs and Madam,

I am writing once again regarding the hanging of Black Lives Matter banners in our town, and specifically about the decision last week by you, the Select Board and the Town Manager, to remove the Black Lives Matter banner from our Town Hall.

I understand that you plan to hang a different sign espousing our Town's beliefs about respect for all. But in my opinion, hanging such a sign is not the same as what the Black Lives Matter sign represents, which is that in a country and a community in which systemic racism exists--as I believe you all have acknowledged during your comments about the decision--it is critical that we espouse our especial recognition that Black lives matter.

Almost all of you in your comments about your decision mentioned the anti-police mood in our town. I am not anti-police in any way; although I do think the Town's handling of the Lt. Pedrini case has cast a very negative and unfortunate pall on our police department. And while you did not explicitly make this connection, by your comments you implied that you believe that removing the Black Lives Matter banner will in some way diminish these tensions in our town. In fact, I think the result will be the opposite. Might I respectfully suggest that you have engaged in the type of either / or thinking that has been referred to by many eminent scholars, such as Dr. Beverly Tatum, as characteristic of white supremacy culture.

Instead, I call to your attention the words in the Town's "Overview Report on the Lt. Pedrini Incident and Subsequent Town and Police Actions," which are "Therefore the work now before the Town, the community, and Lt. Pedrini relative to his actions is to translate the input from the CBI Report and other venues of public feedback to cultivate trust, healing, and a pathway forward in the wake of that repudiation and many associated individual and community harms." Continuing to hang the Black Lives Matter banner from our Town Hall is one way to cultivate that trust, healing and pathway forward.

I hope that you, our town leaders, will do the right thing--and reconsider your decision and keep the Black Lives Matter banner hanging!!

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns, and I ask that you please attach my comments in this email to the September 21st Select Board meeting minutes.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Gruber
215 Pleasant Street