



Town of Danvers

1 Sylvan Street, Danvers, Massachusetts 01923 | p: 978-777-0001 | f. 978-777-1025
www.danversma.gov

Joint Statement from the Town of Danvers on the death of George Floyd

June 3, 2020

To the Danvers Community:

By now, we are all familiar with the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of George Floyd, an African American from Minneapolis who died at the hands of a Minneapolis Police Department officer.

The graphic video depicting Mr. Floyd's final moments is upsetting and infuriating. It puts a spotlight on the reprehensible behavior by an individual – behavior that went unchallenged by his fellow officers – that does not reflect the honorable profession of policing that, in Danvers and elsewhere, is filled with friends and neighbors who heed the call to public service and work to protect human life and serve communities.

We believe that the callous and immoral disregard for life on display in this video reflects an exception, not the rule, when it comes to policing, we also acknowledge that it has happened before and reflects an aspect of our society that requires vigilance, training, and thoughtful discussion, if we are to ensure that it doesn't happen *here*.

The Danvers Police Department has a long track record of effective community policing.

It was the first accredited Police Department in Massachusetts. The Department has worked openly and collaboratively for many years with the Diversity Committee, which is now called the Committee for Human Rights & Inclusion. Its officers are all trained in the critical practice of de-escalation and limiting use of force, and most have voluntarily pursued crisis intervention training, which emphasizes the need to identify and triage mental health related behavior.

In June 2017, the Danvers Committee for Human Rights & Inclusion partnered with Danvers Police to develop a resolution reaffirming Danvers as a safe community for all, which said, among other things, that "we are committed to assuring that all persons in our town feel safe and welcome" and that the "Danvers Police Department has always had the practice of protecting all persons who fear any form of danger, whether real or perceived, and we underscore that no law abiding person should fear interaction with the Danvers police for fear of reprisal due to their race, status or background."

In February 2018, Danvers employees adopted a set of core values committing to: respect diverse ideas, perspectives, and individuals (inclusion); accept responsibility for personal and professional performance (accountability); and act with honesty, trust and transparency (integrity).

This statement is meant to reaffirm our commitment to this community – to uphold the laws and to do what's right. It is intended as a statement of our desire to honor and respect the fundamental right to free speech, including the right to peaceful protest. It is also intended as a reminder - to us and to our community of the need to be vigilant and deeply committed to our own core values, in order to ensure that justice is administered faithfully, equally, and without prejudice.

For more information on the work of the Human Rights & Inclusion Committee, please visit their webpage on the Town of Danvers website: <https://www.danversma.gov/departments/danvers-committee-diversity/>.

Respectfully,

Daniel C. Bennett, Chair of the Board of Selectmen
Dutrochet Djoko, Chair of the Committee for Human Rights and Inclusion
Patrick Ambrose, Chief of Police
Steve Bartha, Town Manager