



Town of Danvers

Office of the Town Manager

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To the Danvers Community:

Since Monday's statement was released, we have received several emails and phone calls from residents concerned that the announcement means the public will no longer be informed of future incidents. This is not true, and the purpose of this letter is to clarify what is (and is not) changing as a result of Monday's statement.

First, the signatories of that statement want to reassure residents that we, as community leaders and as an organization, are committed to transparency, to building a more inclusive community, and to rooting out the behaviors that have recently been on display with disturbing frequency in our town.

The incident referenced in Monday's statement was the discovery of a homophobic message written in marker on an upper seat of the metal bleachers on Pickering Street. The message itself was reprehensible. It is unclear whether it was recently written or just recently reported, but shortly after it was reported on Sunday, it was photographed, removed, and an investigation began. Incidents like this will continue to be handled with the urgency and delicacy they require – and appropriate actions will be pursued, whether punishing perpetrators, supporting victims, facilitating restorative justice, or some combination thereof.

Incidents like this will also continue to be shared with the public through appropriate channels, including a publicly facing database that will allow the community and officials to track, quantify, see patterns, and draw conclusions as we work collectively to design trainings, plan events, and develop programs aimed to reduce and eliminate these kinds of incidents from happening in the first place. We anticipate this database going live on the Town website in January of 2022.

We will continue to call out hateful acts when they occur in our community, such as the statements released after an apparent noose was discovered near a local church this summer or when allegations of racial profiling were made against a local business this fall. We will also continue to prioritize the work to push back against all forms of prejudice, discrimination, and hate. That work has begun and will continue. It will range from community workshops, staff trainings, and sponsored events, to conversations with individual community members and relationship building. It will also rely on partnerships with external anti-hate organizations, internal staff, volunteers, and, most important, community members who are willing to engage in this work.

There is much work to do, and success will ultimately depend on the buy in, support, and collective effort of our community.

Sincerely,

Steve Bartha
Town Manager