

SUDBURY SELECT BOARD

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021

(Meeting can be viewed at www.sudburytv.org)

Present: Chair Jennifer Roberts, Vice-Chair Russo, Select Board Member Daniel E. Carty, Select Board Member William Schineller, Select Board Member Janie Dretler, Town Manager Henry Hayes

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, the meeting was convened at 7:14 p.m., via Zoom telecommunication mode.

Chair Roberts announced the recording of the meeting and other procedural aspects included in the meeting.

Call to Order/Roll Call

Select Board Roll Call: Schineller-present, Carty-present, Dretler-present, Russo-present, Roberts-present

Opening Remarks by Chair

The Chair did not share any opening remarks.

Reports from Town Manager

There were no reports presented by Town Manager.

Reports from Select Board

Board Members did not share reports.

Citizen's Comments

Resident Pat Brown, 24 Whispering Pine Road, asked that information regarding the former Boy Scout property on Nobscot Road be provided to the public and the Board. She added the Sudbury Housing Trust had provided abutters with such information regarding the property.

Ms. Brown requested that the Nobscot Road information be shared at a Select Board meeting in July.

Discussion and possible Vote on potential events, activities, or actions for the community that may increase awareness and sensitivities towards acts of antisemitism and respecting all of humanity

Chair Roberts stated that she had received several e-mails suggesting that the Board consider, and perhaps issue a statement regarding recent antisemitic events which took place at Sudbury schools. Chair Roberts confirmed that she spoke to Police Chief Scott Nix and to Rabbi Freeman, Rabbi Breindel and Rabbi Eiduson. She stated that on Friday, Board Member Dretler suggested the Board take timely action.

Board Member Dretler stated that she reached out to local clergy inquiring if they wanted to hear from the Select Board regarding the incidents. Chair Roberts added that she received feedback from Rabbi Freeman today, who expressed his support and gratitude about the Board discussing the matter. She added that Chief Nix confirmed an increase in such antisemitic actions.

Discussion and possible vote to create and release a statement related to the recent antisemitic incidents in the Town

Chair Roberts maintained that a joint statement had been released by the Town Manager and Chief Nix, but nothing presented by the Select Board.

Vice-Chair Russo stated that such a statement from the Select Board was important in efforts to stop additional acts from occurring. He indicated that the Board was striving for a prejudice and harassment-free community.

Board Member Schineller agreed with the sentiments expressed, and emphasized that hate does not belong in Sudbury. Board Member Schineller stated he was personally affected by such actions when he was in high school.

Chair Roberts stressed that the Board had to take a leadership role at this time.

Board Member Carty stated he also released a public message, and offered to submit that message to the Board and asked that it be included in the supporting documentation for this meeting. He indicated that the Board needed to tread lightly in consideration of Sudbury Public Schools and Police Department policy regarding the incidents as they involved school aged children. Chair Roberts acknowledged that all entities required respect, and any actions suggested by the Board would be proactive.

Vice-Chair Russo maintained that the Board was not discussing anything out of the Board's jurisdiction.

Board Member Carty questioned the necessity of Town Manager Hayes working on this problem on Juneteenth, which could have been addressed today and tonight.

The "Statement of the Sudbury Select Board against Antisemitism in Our Community" drafted by Board Member Dretler, emphasized that the Sudbury Select Board "strongly condemns the recent acts of antisemitic behavior in Sudbury."

The "Statement" included that the Board would reach out to the New England Chapter of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), local clergy, and faith organizations to help advance partnership.

The "Statement" further detailed that the Sudbury DEI was charged with the mission "to support diversity, achieve equity, and foster inclusion for every member of this community, respecting all aspects of identities."

The last sentence of the "Statement" emphasized the Town's goal of creating a safe, inclusive environment in Sudbury.

Board Members reviewed the "Statement," and provided edits.

Board Member Carty stated that because the two incidents happened at Town public schools, the "Statement" should include language that the Board and other interested parties are partnering with school and police policies. Board Member Dretler agreed, and asked if the School Superintendents had reached out to the ADL. Board Members agreed that it was important that the Select Board partner with SPS and LSRHS. Vice-Chair Russo asserted that "we are stronger together."

Vice-Chair Russo recommended that the Board make the initial request to ADL, and DEI can organize prospective meetings with ADL. Chair Roberts agreed that the initial outreach to ADL should be performed by the Select Board.

Town Manager Hayes recommended that the word “tolerance” be substituted with the word “acceptance.” as it appeared in the closing sentence of the “Statement.”

Board Members agreed with all suggestions.

Board Member Dretler requested that the “Statement” be submitted to the local newspapers, the front page of the Town webpage, and the Town Facebook page.

Chair Roberts confirmed that she would contact the ADL, and attend the DEI Commission meeting tomorrow, and would report back to the Board.

Resident Pat Brown stated she appreciated the statements made regarding the recent events. She stated that the Board has made no effort to understand what actually happened, and who was at fault.

Board Member Dretler motioned to approve the “Statement of the Sudbury Select Board against Antisemitism in our Community,” as edited; allowing for grammatic and spelling review prior to publication. Board Member Schineller seconded the motion.

Board Member Dretler withdrew her motion until public comments were heard.

Citizen’s Comments

Resident Linda Faust, 189 Boston Rd, commented that she cried when she heard about the incident. Her grandparents died in concentration camps, and her parents had been through tough times. She opined about what the swastika symbol means to kids.

Chat comment received from Toby (last name and address not provided), who stated that two antisemitic actions are too many, and education with a zero-tolerance approach are necessary.

Resident Sue Abrams, 24 Hudson Road, maintained that the goal would be to interrupt acts of anti-Semitism/hate; and include such language in the “Statement.”

Resident Marla Platt, 144 Peakham Road, suggested that the “Statement” include respect, understanding mutual acceptance, and celebration of diversity in Sudbury.

Resident Helen Shik, 252 Old Lanchaster Road, stated that her children attended the Sudbury Public schools and participated in the STOP (Students Opposing Prejudice) Program, which began 25 years ago (the time that a similar swastika graffiti occurred at the Peter Noyes School. Ms. Shik suggested the Town investigate who the perpetrator/s might be.

Resident Carl Offner, 46 Sunset Path, mentioned the history and background of antisemitism.

Resident Sharon Schmidt-Gross, 298 Maynard Road, provided details regarding her group which educates people. She recommended the Board work with the ADL.

Resident Nalini Luthra, 941 Concord Road, suggested the words “public engagement” be included in the “Statement.”

Board Member Dretler motioned to approve the “Statement of the Sudbury Select Board against Antisemitism in our Community,” as edited; allowing for grammatic and spelling review prior to publication. Board Member Schineller seconded the motion.

It was on motion 5-0; Dretler-aye, Russo-aye, Carty-aye, Schineller-aye, Roberts-aye

VOTED: To approve the “Statement of the Sudbury Select Board against Antisemitism in our Community,” as edited; allowing for grammatic and spelling review prior to publication.

Chair Roberts offered to complete the grammatic and spelling review prior to publication.

Adjourn

Chair Roberts read in the words of the motion. Board Member Dretler moved in the words of the Chair. Board Member Schineller seconded the motion.

It was on motion 5-0; Russo-aye, Dretler-aye, Schineller-aye, Carty-aye, Roberts-aye

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.