

Article

To see if it is the sense of this Town Meeting that racism is a public health crisis, and the Town needs to work to combat racism and support people who are impacted by racism and targeted by acts of hate.

Summary:

The last year has seen the largest Civil Rights movement in the United States since the 1960s. In 2020, policymakers from more than 50 American municipalities and three states have formally highlighted racism as a public health crisis and on September 3, 2020, Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) introduced the Anti-Racism in Public Health Act in Congress.

Often acts of racism and hate are committed discreetly as it is the intent of the perpetrator to isolate, intimidate and dehumanize their targets. Additionally, due to privacy, the acts of hate and racism are often not publicized leaving residents unaware that their neighbors have been targeted. This year we have seen two members of the Acton-Boxborough School Committee targeted by acts of racism and hate while volunteering their time to serve our Town and school children. These volunteers were targeted because they are Black. In response to these incidents over 350 students from R.J. Grey Junior High School acknowledged and signed a letter written by 2 students in support of the members of the School Committee as well as acknowledging racism exists in Acton-Boxborough and takes a firm stand against it.

The Town can begin to address racism by:

- Reaching out and supporting individuals and groups affected by acts of hate;
- Confronting denial of racism, which serves to silence and isolate targeted individuals and perpetuate racism that exists; and
- Working to create a safe and supportive community which fosters inclusion, equity and diversity.

These acknowledgements would be in line with the Boxborough 2030 Master Plan.

Goal 2.1 of the Boxborough 2030 Master Plan states:

*Support diversity by valuing, respecting, appreciating, and welcoming individuals – those who reside, visit, work, or pass through Boxborough – of all ages, genders, socioeconomic levels, cultural heritages, racial/ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions, and ability levels.*

By addressing this subject at Town Meeting, Boxborough will model how a community can come together to work against racism and hate. Our children, residents, and all others who work or pass-through Boxborough will see our endeavor in striving to be a welcoming, supportive and engaged community for all.