

TOWNSHIP OF MARLBORO

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Mayor

Jonathan L. Hornik

Telephone:

(732) 536-0200

October 20, 2020

Dear Neighbor,

During the 2016 presidential election, almost exactly four years ago, I was compelled to write a letter about the uptick in bias-related incidents in Marlboro. Such acts are unlawful and unacceptable, and entirely inconsistent with who we are as a community.

Since I took office in 2008, I have served as Mayor to a community that is home to people from a wide range of faiths and ethnic backgrounds. Our Township consists of more than 40,000 residents, many of whom trace their roots back to countries all around the globe. Our diversity is reflected in our schools, youth programs, and on our local committees, enhancing what is the very rich cultural fabric of Marlboro.

On October 11th, a resident reported on Social Media that his grandmother was harassed while walking in her neighborhood and he was urged to report the incident to the Police. Without going into detail or disclosing identities in the midst of investigation, I can tell you that the incident was reprehensible and unacceptable. That said, there was an outpouring of outrage from our community and support of the victim, which was quite heartening.

I could not be more proud of our Police Department during this time. Under the leadership of Chief Peter J. Pezzullo, Detectives Ungrady, Pedone, Peterpaul, Pecararo and SRO Perrini reviewed residents' doorbell camera video and conducted residential canvassing. This led to the perpetrator admitting wrongdoing, and charges of harassment against the perpetrator by the Monmouth County Prosecutor's office.

It is with determination and without equivocation that I declare that expressions of bias or intolerance are not welcome in this community. Furthermore, let it be clear that any crimes committed in this regard will be prosecuted under the fullest extent of the law.

The Constitution gives us the right to peacefully express our opinions. This only works when there is mutual respect for the rights of others to do the same. In Marlboro, we pride ourselves as being open and tolerant to those from of all walks of life. In this spirit, let this incident be a reminder that we must speak out against discrimination in all its forms. In February of last year, I launched Marlboro's 'See Something. Say Something ® We Will Do Something' initiative. This initiative was enacted to allow residents to be a partner in ensuring security in our schools, and throughout our community. This extends to reporting of incidences of bias and hate.

If you observe an expression of discrimination, whether a live incident or graffiti on private or public property, I ask you to be proactive. Don't wait -- call the Marlboro Police at 732-536-0100. Should you wish to report an incident anonymously, call the Marlboro Tip Line at 888-536-1010. If you feel that your own safety, or the public's safety, is at risk, get to a safe place and dial 911.

I am gratified that Marlboro responded the way it did to this incident, and in the aftermath, how residents supported a victim of harassment. For me, this is yet another reminder of what makes Marlboro a great community, where residents come together to support neighbors, and stand tall in the face of discrimination and injustice. Thank you for doing your part to ensure that Marlboro maintains its status as a welcoming and premier suburban community in the State New Jersey.

Yours in community,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Hornik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Jonathan Hornik