

Correspondence received by the Concord Select Board
Week Ending – June 3, 2024

1. Attorney Robert Meltzer – 33 Bradford Street

Robert N. Meltzer

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May 31, 2024

Mary Hartman, Chair
Board of Selectmen
Town of Concord
22 Monument Square
Concord, MA 01742

re: "Flag" Request—June 3, 2024 Agenda—"DEI Commission"

Dear Ms. Hartman:

I am a resident of Concord in the 3rd precinct.

I was appalled to see on the June 3, 2024 agenda yet another controversial and divisive item before the Select Board from the "DEI Commission," this one requesting permission to fly a "pride" banner and a "juneteenth" banner in Monument Square. This is totally inappropriate and offensive, and this request should be summarily denied by the Select Board. As a primary matter, these flag poles should be reserved for displaying the flag or our nation and state, and this Board should not open a can of worms as to the universe of potential flags or banners that any particular lobbying group demands as a matter of right.

While the banners requested by the Commission had well-intentioned origins, both have become extremely divisive and frightening political symbols, and the "pride" banner itself has become fully linked not only with virulent anti-Semitism but with outright calls for massacres of Jews. See the enclosed, which links radical Hamas politics with the "pride" banner and Black Lives Matters. While a number of issues have been brought before this Board by the Commission, replete with reports of offense to completely illusory and unverifiable "victims," this current request is brought forward on the tail end of three verifiable and shocking anti-Semitic acts in the town of Concord which have not been adequately addressed. Divisive symbols of anti-Semitism clearly put town residents at risk. Considering that many Jewish residents of this community are still reeling from the loss of family and friends in Israel, the notion that banners used to celebrate terrorism and murder and calls for genocide should be publicly displayed on town property is utterly abhorrent and cannot be tolerated.

Of equal concern is the language used in a "pride month" schedule which states that "Pride Fest begins with a flag raising in Monument Square," even though the Select Board has not approved this activity, and which creates the unseemly and totally inappropriate perception that applications before the Select Board are simply rubber-stamped by the Select Board, as if no

discussion, dissent, opposition or alternatives can be raised or debated. I urge the Select Board not to allow itself to be stampeded or demeaned in this manner.

As another matter, it is clear that if applications for these types of banners (they are not "flags") are to be entertained by the Select Board, that such applications be made through a process of the type of banner bylaws that have been widely approved by towns which require a decent interval between application and hearing, with an opportunity for community response and, if necessary, a legal injunction. At the very least, the Select Board should reject controversial banners this year and work toward a policy to be approved by Town Meeting that gives all stakeholders the opportunity to address this issue and to formulate a policy that is not ad hoc. I am not available on short notice to be present at the meeting on June 3, which further demonstrates the unfairness of inadequate notice of these important requests.

In light of the ongoing and unpleasant discord that has been caused by the naming of the Concord Middle School, I urge the Select Board to give the residents of this town some much needed respite from divisive and discordant political controversy by denying the request of the DEI Commission to display these banners as not being consistent with current town bylaws.

Very truly yours,

Robert N. Meltzer



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PALESTINE**
USYD QUEER ACTION COLLECTIVE

