



City Council Meeting Minutes Monday, August 8, 2022 - 6:00 p.m. City Hall, Council Chambers

Council in attendance: Mayor Jo Brown, Councilor Jay Chandler, Councilor George Dzujna, Councilor Olivia Zink, Councilor Vincent Ribas, Councilor Valerie Blake, Councilor April Bunker and Councilor Ted Starkweather

Absent: Councilor Bob Desrochers and Councilor Paul Trudel

Others in attendance: Police Chief David Goldstein and members of the public

Call to Order

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at City Hall Council Chambers at 6:01 p.m.

Salute to the Flag was led by Councilor Ribas.

Agenda Item I: Discussion Around Racist Attacks on Local Businesses within the City:

Mayor Brown addressed the reason for this particular city council meeting. Citizens and business owners of the city have recently been treated poorly. She was made aware of some cyber attacks against business owners and she and the council have discussed putting together a resolution that condemns hate and intolerance in the City of Franklin, as it is never appropriate to tear anybody down via any platform. It is never appropriate to make threats or to do any sort of action that negatively impacts a business due to differences.

She stated that she would like to hear from the public on their opinions and also any other businesses facing attacks as well. She mentioned that everyone will be allowed 3 minutes to speak and she was also welcoming other communities to speak at this meeting.

Mayor Brown first had a request from a citizen who could not make the meeting. A letter was written by Karen Darling, Ward III, and Brown read this out loud. This is included at the end of these minutes.

Public Comment:

Mayor Brown opened up the meeting to the public at 6:06 p.m. to hear from citizens on how they would like the council to proceed in making Franklin a welcome community.

Franklin residents and business owners, along with citizens from other communities, all discussed the recent social media attacks and threats that have been made throughout New Hampshire based on differences of race and opinion. Everyone agreed that more proactive forms of acceptance and support would be great to see from the community.

Public comment was closed at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Brown turned the comments over to the City Council. All of the councilors in attendance individually let the public know that they do not condone intolerance or hateful attacks in any form, whether it is through social media or in person. Most of the councilors were unaware of these attacks.

The idea of putting together a community task force as a sub-committee of the Downtown Business Group was discussed. This would include citizens of Franklin and the councilors asked the public to reach out if they were interested in joining.

Mayor Brown thanked everyone for speaking at this meeting and letting her and the council know what has been going on.

The next steps will be as follows:

- The community task force will be discussed at the next Downtown Business Group, which is on Wednesday, August 10th.
- Mayor Brown and Councilor Bunker will get together to work on a resolution within the week.
- Mayor Brown will send out some letters to the NH delegation making everyone aware of the attacks in Franklin.

Agenda Item II: Other Business:

Councilor Dzujna mentioned that the ordinance that was tabled at the last city council meeting would be brought back to the MSD Committee for review and revisions. They will be meeting on August 24th. He stated that if any councilors have input, to please get that to him before the MSD Committee meeting.

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Bunker and seconded by Councilor Ribas. All in favor. Motion PASSED.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Jones
Executive Secretary



Hi Judie,

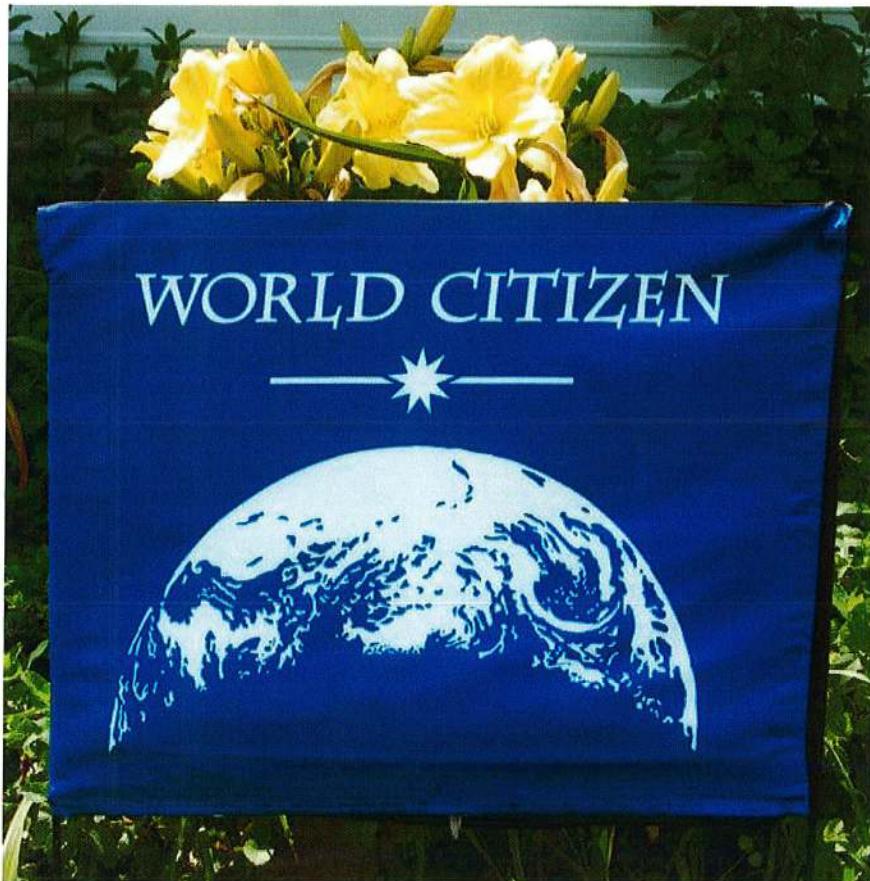
I'm traveling home from Montana and won't make it to the Council's special meeting tonight. Dan briefly told me, from the Concord Monitor article, about what had occurred. I surely wish I could be there tonight (and Dan has a Board meeting, so he can't either), as I would make these 4 points, if there is an opportunity for public comment. I'm wondering if you could read these points for me? (And if not, maybe you can recommend who? I'm on a 3-hour layover.) These are my points:

1) The Council may recall the document, "Path to Racial Justice" by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, which Dan and I distributed to the Councilors at its June meeting. At the time, Franklin hadn't yet experienced any overtly racist actions, so it seemed perhaps not timely then. I would encourage the Council to revisit this document, if members still have a copy, and note especially the paragraphs I read aloud in June, which included:

"An essential element of the process will be honest and truthful discourse about current conditions and their causes, and understanding, in particular, the deeply entrenched notions of anti-Blackness that pervade our society. We must build the capacity to truly hear and acknowledge the voices of those who have directly suffered from the effects of racism. This capacity should manifest itself in our schools, the media, and other civic arenas, as well as in our work and personal relations. This should not end with words, but lead to meaningful, constructive action."

2) I would like to offer myself as a resource -- I am a facilitator for the Institute for the Healing of Racism, and have given workshops for various civic groups. I would offer this to the City, organizations and individuals at no charge, except perhaps a stipend for travel expenses for a co-facilitator (these workshops are usually given by an interracial team) probably from the Seacoast area.

3) Love is a more powerful force than hate; light is stronger than darkness; understanding replaces ignorance. One simple act we can take is a public display of welcome and appreciation of all. Dan and I have a yard sign in front of our house, with "No room in my heart for prejudice" on one side, and "World citizen" on the other (with attractive graphics -- I've attached a copy, so you can see -- I would bring a sample if I could be there tonight). When we got ours a few years ago, they cost \$15. Perhaps others would like to post one?



4) Lastly, if a community task force is formed, I'd be happy to volunteer to be on it.

Thank you so much,
Karen Darling (Ward 3)