

The Fair Lawn Democratic Organization has issued the following statement in response to the “Rally in Support of Police and First Responders” that took place on Monday, August 3rd:

Black lives matter. The use of the phrase “all lives matter” as a response to “Black lives matter” is a direct denial of the inescapable truth that the Black community is uniquely threatened in the United States in a way other groups are not. Black Americans have been killed while jogging, at traffic stops, while going for walks to buy candy, and even while sleeping in their own homes. Black citizens live under an incessant threat of violence and in an exhausting mental and physiological state of constant vigilance because of it. This threat belies the American promise to its citizens that its people are all created equal and able to live in liberty, and free from fear.

We support and thank all first responders, including the police, volunteer firefighters, ambulance crews, and rescue squads whose work and sacrifices during the ongoing pandemic have helped to keep the town we love safe. We applaud our Democratic majority council’s ordinance in June 2018 that gave our volunteer first responders an annual monetary stipend in thanks for their ongoing dedication and service. Now, they are on the frontlines of a health battle we are only beginning to understand and this bravery deserves our gratitude and respect. We were, therefore, angered that the reality of the rally to thank all of these individuals did not match its advertised intent. Far from it, the rally was divisive and aggressive, attended by individuals with affiliations to alt-right extremist organizations such as the “Three Percenters” and “Proud Boys” participating publicly, parading their insignias on masks, shirts, and flags, and shouting at a small group of counter demonstrators primarily made up of young

people. That some of our own townspeople participated in such an event is heartbreaking and regrettable.

FLDO encourages all of our fellow townspeople to join us in having difficult conversations, and to engage in the painstaking work that truly builds inclusion and equity. We state, unequivocally, that hate and racism have no home in Fair Lawn and condemn them in all their forms. Opinions and politics may run the gamut in our town, and we all have inherent biases we must confront in order to create and leave a better world. Even as we do that work, we must draw a line against racism and xenophobia here. We support our Council's strong stand against racism and bigotry and its ongoing work to ensure that Fair Lawn continues to be a town dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Moreover, in its mission to promote democratic values, FLDO is committed to standing up against racism and hatred and working towards promoting those goals loudly and clearly.