

Correspondence received by the Concord Select Board
Week Ending – June 24, 2024

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11. Jim Ricker – 68 Shore Drive
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From: Mia Kelly <miakelly_99@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2024 4:07 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Message for the Select Board meeting.

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Dear Shannon,

I am writing for the Select Board and hope to have this correspondence included in the next meeting notes.

My message:

Dear Select Board Members,

I am writing to express my support for the raising of the pride flag in Monument Square on both June 21st and 22nd. At the last meeting of the Select Board, several members expressed concerns related to raising such a flag. While I appreciate the caution they are employing around the symbol of raising a flag, I strongly reject the validity of those concerns.

First, the raising of a pride flag (or lack thereof) represents an opinion of the town of Concord and its residents. To reject the request to raise the pride flag implies that Concord does not believe this issue is imbued with particular importance to its residents or the town itself. Pride flags have been a symbol of the LGBTQ rights movement for decades, and there is no reason for Concord to fail to raise such a flag if it holds itself as a supporter of the LGBTQ community. Some members' contentions that Concord can support Pride while denying a request to raise a flag insults residents and non-residents alike who will undoubtedly derive meaning from such an action.

Additionally, what other towns may or may not be doing with their flagpoles is irrelevant to the Select Board's decision. In raising the pride flag, the Select Board is speaking for the town of Concord. It is not speaking for Acton, or Carlisle, or any other nearby municipality. To base your decision on what those around us are doing is to imply that Concord's support for the LGBTQ community is conditional on those outside Concord. We cannot concern ourselves with how anyone else chooses to celebrate or reject Pride; we must focus on what message we as a town are sending to our community, our state, and our nation.

With regard to how this might set a precedent for future decisions, I remind the Select Board that the flying of *any* flag is at their sole discretion. They are not required to honor other requests in the same way. If the Select Board is worried about the future after approving this request, the Select Board is doubting its own ability to employ nuanced judgement in complex situations. Relatedly, the Select Board is entitled to fly the Pride flag for any duration it chooses. In this case, the significant activities for the festival on both the 21st and 22nd warrants a two day flag raising. Whether other flags are given more time is not relevant and those situations can be considered on their own merits.

I hope that my letter and the many others I am sure you will receive have convinced you that this is an issue important to the people of Concord. Raising a flag is an expression of that importance and a symbol of our support. I trust you will channel your constituents and send a clear and unwavering message to the world that Concord is a place where LGBTQ people are safe, supported, and celebrated.

From,
Mia Kelly
377 Main Street

From: Jennifer Kelly <jenwkelly@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2024 4:22 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Comment to Select Board for tonight's meeting

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Dear Select Board,

I was disheartened that the Select Board balked at raising a Pride flag on June 22nd in support of our community's first ever Pride celebration.

These are profoundly challenging days for LGBTQIA+ Americans. Their basic civil rights are being questioned and curtailed. This year alone, 518 anti-LGBTQIA+ bills have been introduced nationwide, with a similar number last year. Those in the LGBTQIA+ community frequently face hatred and bigotry.

An estimated 6.5% of the Massachusetts state population identifies as LGBTQIA+ and that percentage is much higher for the younger generation. These citizens, plus the many multiples of that number that count them as our friends, neighbors, colleagues, and beloved family members, need to hear that they are loved, supported, and welcomed in our town.

The Board's recently drafted flag flying policy correctly makes clear that the Select Board has the right to fly flags that express its views without opening the floodgates for any community groups to demand access to its flagpole. The issue confronting the Board is whether the town government of Concord is willing to express its own opinion that LGBTQIA+ members of our community deserve equality.

Leadership is not looking to see what other towns have done. Leadership is not waiting until a profoundly divided country reaches consensus on a national holiday. Leadership is standing up as a town government for the equality for all of its citizens regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

As the parent of two young adults who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, I am deeply saddened by the Board's response to this issue. I have always been proud to reassure my children that their hometown is a sanctuary for LGBTQIA+ people. Now the Board is making me question that reassurance. What message are you sending to my children and the many other Concordians like them?

The citizens of Concord deserve a Select Board that is fearless in its protection of every person's civil rights, just as our forebears were. Flying a Pride flag is a powerful and simple way for the Board to show the town's LGBTQIA+ citizens that they are not alone in their fight for equality.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Kelly
377 Main Street, Concord

From: Gail E. Hire <gail.hire@comcast.net>

Sent: Monday, June 17, 2024 1:28 PM

To: Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>

Cc: Andrea Fountain <afountain@concordma.gov>

Subject: Umbrella Cell Tower Proposal needs Public Process

Dear Members of the Concord Select Board:

Please accept the below public comments regarding use of the Umbrella building for a cell tower.

Gail Hire

At the June 3 meeting, this Board expressed an intent to make town property available for wireless communication. With respect to the Landfill site, this intention is entirely appropriate. The Landfill site was examined in at least two Town-commissioned reports by radio frequency (RF) consultants. The site was discussed publicly at the Cell Tower Listening Session, and in public hearings and forums leading up to Town Meeting, thanks to a citizen petition urging use of the Landfill site. Town Meeting voted to support it.

In contrast, the Umbrella site has not received such a vetting in disclosed reports or public venues. Instead, we have statements funneled through the Town Manager's private Task Force that the Umbrella cupola is attractive to wireless companies and has always been Verizon's "number one" site. Our town has a wireless communication bylaw that says towers on existing structures must be 300 feet from residences, and 500 feet from schools and child care facilities. There are approximately 80 abutting parcels within 300 feet of 40 Stow Street, and many more people living in those parcels. The building itself houses dozens of working artists and invites children to participate in classes and camps. These people deserve to know that the Umbrella is being considered for a tower, and they deserve a better reason than the wireless companies prefer it.

Verizon is currently defending at least two lawsuits brought by individuals who allege that Verizon towers, placed 400-600 feet from their homes, have caused them debilitating and life-threatening injuries. In the right location, a tower can be a public benefit. In the wrong location — like a densely populated area — it is a public nuisance. I urge the Select Board to consider other solutions for downtown cell coverage. Here are three other

locations: Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, the parking lots on Keyes Road, and a temporary installation at the Keyes Road DPW site. In addition, this Board should ensure that Concord Light fiber passes every home and business in Concord Center so building occupants can use Wifi calling, which will reduce demands on the existing cellular networks.

There is precedent for issuing a short-term lease to accommodate future uses. At Select Board meetings in 1998 and 1999, when a tower at the Landfill was being discussed, it was noted that leases longer than three years require a town meeting vote. At that time, the long-term status of the Landfill was under consideration with various interested parties and government agencies. The Select Board discussed the RFP at numerous Board meetings between early 1998 and 2000; it provided criteria for a Landfill tower RFP including a 3-year term at \$50,000 per year. The RFP and then the permits were issued in early to mid-2000. While I don't think as much time is needed today, Concordians deserve more from their Select Board on the topic of an Umbrella site than its cursory approval of recommendations from a non-public Task Force.

As noted in the April 5, 1999, Select Board meeting minutes, the "Town is under no legal obligation to lease land to providers or allow providers to design and build cell towers." In 25 years, much has changed, but that statement of the law has not. With regard to Town property, the Town, not the wireless companies, needs to stay in the driver's seat.

Gail and Stephen Hire
54 Nancy Road, Concord

From: Margaret Schumacher <roscoeotis2@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2024 6:22 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Fly the rainbow flag

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To whom it may concern,

What is controversial about flying a flag that supports all persons? I am very discouraged by recent decisions made in our town. Are we slipping backwards? I fear we may be. Fly the flag.

Margaret Schumacher
25 Highland St

From: William Wright <billywright1@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2024 9:17 AM

To: Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>

Subject: Please publish theist town website- corrections made

Some people who received this message don't often get email from billywright1@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

My previous email had some grammar errors and my auto-signature was a nickname for my work colleagues, however not my full name. Thank-you and please publish this letter to the town website and confirm when it will be published.

DEI Committee and in particular its leadership has failed Concord. The issues they fight for in the name of justice, are self serving and divisive. There is clear evidence that since the DEI Committee has been formed, the town is more divided as a result. This committee has acted as activists and instigated false narratives. The town tercentenary markers/signs was a recent hot topic in which a small segment of the population including the DEI leadership insisted we must remove a sign because it's offensive and inaccurate. What holds more weight in debates like this claiming something is offensive and there were zero complaints or evidence of the sign being offensive. The most recent hot topic was the name of the Concord Middle School. The DEI officers instigated a lot of unnecessary drama and tension after the elected School Committee voted for the name of the middle school to be "Concord Middle School". There was a funding-raising effort for the naming of Ellen Garrison which was used for signage, websites and other exposure to coerce the public that the overwhelming majority of Concordians wanted Ellen Garrison to be the new name of the school which is not accurate. Here are the facts. The Committee received close to 300 emails from the community during the public hearing period and 160 were in support of Concord Middle school and 94 for Ellen Garrison. In addition, Concord-Carlisle High School student representatives to the School Committee were surveyed and 69.4% voted in favor of Concord Middle School. The Concord Bridge also did a poll and close to 70% voted for Concord Middle school. When in doubt, shouldn't we listen to the student leaders who voted on this topic? Our youth leaders were silenced and their votes never mentioned by the activists in their self serving interests. The activists who have been writing letters to the Concord Bridge and showing up to the town meetings have acted inappropriately. Some letters have suggested or blatantly accused the School Committee members of being racist. Often, activists who claim to fight so hard for something are not genuine and self serving. For example:

The School Committee had a public meeting on May 21, 2024 in which a METCO representative was called a racial slur by an activist member of the public after she advocated for keeping the name of the middle school "Concord Middle School". In her own

words, she was "intimidated, hurt, humiliated". The irony is that an activist who supposedly is fighting for equity and insisted the name of the school must be Ellen Garrison, later calls the victim of the incident a racial slur because a Black Latina wanted the school name to be "Concord Middle School." The victim said she was "humiliated". Why is there not more accountability for this incident? The DEI Committee and their small activist army has been silent.

I believe the DEI officers and their aggressive efforts to not accept the School Boards decision we the people elected is nothing short of manipulation and bullying. The DEI leadership led people to aggressively make false accusations in newspapers like The Bridge alluding or directly calling the School Members racist. There needs to be a change in the mission of DEI and certainly the members.

What's the next issue for the DEI Committee? PRIDE. They have already formed a sub-committee specifically for this endeavor and began the aggressive efforts to raise the PRIDE flag at Monument Square. It;sbeen advertised the flag will be raised at Monument Square before town approval. The activism is becoming bolder and more aggressive. The false narrative is that the PRIDE flag won't hurt or offend anybody and means so much to the LGBTQIA2S+ community to feel welcome. This is a false narrative and we should not allow a small segment of activists to bully and coerce the town into their demands. The PRIDE flag and what it symbolizes has migrated from its origin in 1978 thru the 80's. Concord is already inclusive, loving, compassionate and welcoming. What is debatable are issues such as drag queens and their role engaging with children, the trans movement and the many complexities involved within trans issues, athletics and the rights and fairness of girls/women participating in sports and many other issues at hand and more. The PRIDE flag has migrated into new areas which is offensive to some and this alone should be disqualifying. The American Flag is the most unifying flag.

William Wright
Thoreau Street



**Stand Up
For Ellen**

Concord School Committee,
Dr. Laurie Hunter, Superintendent
Concord Public Schools
120 Meriam Road
Concord, MA 01742

June 17, 2024

Re: The Ellen Garrison Building at Concord Middle School

To: Members of the Concord School Committee, Dr. Laurie Hunter,

As you are aware, the Friends of Ellen Garrison,, The Robbins House, and many other local organizations have long advocated for the new middle school to be named the Ellen Garrison Middle School. We are deeply disappointed that the School Committee twice contravened the will of the Town, as demonstrated in its April 30, 2024 votes, by choosing to name only the building after Ellen Garrison and not the new middle school.

The Friends of Ellen Garrison and The Robbins House continue to strongly disagree with the School Committee's decision not to name the middle school the "Ellen Garrison Middle School." However, given that is what has been decided, we respectfully request that the School District and the Town of Concord ensure the signage of the building will be clearly visible and follows a similar signage format as is now used at the Sanborn and Peabody buildings by displaying "The Ellen Garrison Building," on the facade. The signage would be an important step towards honoring Ellen Garrison, a Black civil-rights activist and educator born, raised, and educated in Concord. Please find below a mock-up of the proposed signage.





**Stand Up
For Ellen**

We ask to be an active partner in the signage discussions and await your reply. We may be reached at standupforellen@gmail.com. Please note that we also shared our request with the Middle School Building Committee.

Thank you for your attention and prompt response.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Turner, Executive Director of The Robbins House

Michael A. Williams, on behalf of the Friends of Ellen Garrison

CC:

Concord Middle School Building Committee
Concord Select Board
Kerry A. Lafleur, Town Manager

From: Claire Kelly <claireannekelly@me.com>
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2024 4:36 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Select board letter for 6/17

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Hello,
Below is a letter I would like to be distributed to the select board before tonight's meeting.

Thank you,
Claire

Members of the Select Board,

I am writing to you regarding today's vote on raising the Pride flag in Monument Square on the 22nd. I have watched the recording of the June 3rd board meeting and am appalled at the board majority's discussion of the issue. Your reluctance to fly the pride flag is thinly veiled anti-LGBTQAI+ sentiment, regardless of your assertion that you "support the event." Let me remind you that inaction is action. If the board votes to refuse flying the Pride flag, you are making a statement on behalf of yourselves as a board and as the town of Concord that you do not share, let alone celebrate, the overwhelming support for the LGBTQAI+ community citizens of Concord have expressed.

As a member of the LGBTQAI+ community and a longtime Concord resident, I have lost respect for the board. I hope that you do the right thing in your vote tonight and take a step in rebuilding the trust of both myself and the rest of the LGBTQAI+ community members and allies. Concord residents, as well as surrounding towns, are watching for your decision — let it be a decision to be proud of.

Sincerely,

Claire Kelly
377 Main Street

From: Elizabeth <elizabethcopley1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2024 1:38 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Re: RAISE the PRIDE FLAG

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To the Concord Select Board -

I urge you to approve the raising of the Pride Flag in conjunction with the Town's celebration of Pride month. If there was any worry about opening a bag of worms by approving of it, that worry has been addressed through our town's policy APP 16 as most recently revised 06/05/2023 regarding the raising of flags on town flag poles. It emphasizes the Board's support for the celebration of Pride Month.

It will mean SO MUCH to our citizens to demonstrate that Concord is indeed a place of inclusion that honors the inherent worth and dignity of every individual. It should be so proclaimed!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Copley
8 Concord Greene, Unit 2, Concord, MA 01742
Elizabethcopley1@gmail.com
925-899-5244

Good morning Andrea,

As a resident who lives in Concord, I remember in 2018 when the town decided to buy Gerow Park (a new town-owned recreational park with water side access to Warner's Pond,) and then it was voted again in 2020, 2021, and 2023 to approve CPA funds to help pay for dredging of Warner's Pond, I've been very concerned about the fate of the Warner's Pond dredging project and how it was handled and communicated to Concord residents. As a resident, I was told by hired consultants that dredging was the preferred management option needed to restore the pond and to allow for improved recreational opportunities in it. (2012 & 2018 ESS reports).

At the May 9th Warner's Pond Task Force meeting, Keith Hannon, member of the Task Force and Friends of Warner's Pond representative, gave an enlightening and revealing presentation about the ~\$9 million bid to dredge Warner's Pond that the town received in 2022. He described why the bid was so high and compared it to another recent and similar dredging project that successfully dredged a much larger quantity at a lower price, more in line with what we were told to expect. It should be noted that Keith works for the US Army Corp of Engineers and was recently referenced in an NBC segment about using herbicides on the CT River to control an invasive plant spreading there in the river.

Keith explained that the primary reason the dredge bid was so high was the contractor submitted a proposal to bring dredged material to an "undisclosed" disposal facility, instead of to the minimum security prison, which alone would have cost over \$4.5 million. The reason the contractor opted for the undisclosed facility was because the minimum-security prison was too restrictive to access easily. Therefore, the disposal cost exceeded the Town's Total dredging budget. But as Keith explained, this is not a true representative cost of dredging. Instead of relocating sediment to a distant offsite location, it can be placed within the pond to create new wetlands, or in the adjacent farm field to the north of the pond, both of which would significantly reduce the cost associated with dredging and allows us to dredge more for less. In short, it makes dredging affordable and within our budget.

I also want to remind Concord officials and representatives that we voted to rebuild the dam in 2006 & 2007, and we (residents and taxpayers) voted multiple times for dredging the pond, not dam removal. As I referenced earlier, we also invested approximately \$5 million to purchase the Gerow property to build a new park next to Warner's Pond because the pond was being restored via dredging. What happens to that investment if we don't restore the pond? Should we destroy the pond via dam removal? \$5 million is a lot of money to have spent on a new park next to a pond. And finally, the pond would be a benefit to future MCI development and the people who will eventually live there. Based on Keith's slides, dredging is affordable, so why are we looking at dam removal and the pond's destruction? It doesn't make sense.

Below is the link to see the slides from Keith's May 9th presentation. I'm forwarding them for you to better understand the potential to restore the pond using the dredging management technique described. I urge you to look at them and help the community to raise awareness that dredging is affordable and should be the pursued plan, instead of dam removal. Please also share with the Select Board members who have an interest in the Warner's Pond project.

<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/48853/2022-Dredging-Bid-Review>

Sincerely,
Kate Malagodi

Best regards/ Med venlig hilsen

Kate Malagodi | Channel Account Manager | M: 603-305-5227 |
kmalagodi@jabra.com

GN Netcom | 900 Chelmsford Street, Tower II, 8th Floor | Lowell | MA |
01851 | jabra.com

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END *****

From: William Wright <billywright1@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, June 20, 2024 9:24:39 AM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>

Subject: Important follow up regarding PRIDE flag and request for June 2025

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Good morning,

I learned that 2 members of the board rushed a vote for the PRIDE flag being raised at Monument Square this Saturday.

It's my understanding Wendy Rovelli and Mark Howell rushed this vote for the flag to be raised without taking the proper steps to see if this is in the towns best interest.

As a practicing Catholic and parent, I find this offensive and inappropriate. The flag symbolizes different things to different people and there are many different flags and meanings within the LGBTQIA+ community. Currently, the PRIDE flag takes on all these meanings and has deep symbolism for issues such as Drag Queens engaging with young children, biological men who identify as woman competing against girls/young woman, and the safety of minors with gender dysphoria transitioning into the opposite sex of their biology which holds some very serious mental and physical health consequences.

I would be deeply offended with my fellow practicing Catholics if the flag is still raised on Sunday morning June 23rd at 8:00 AM when I attend Mass at Holy Family .

Will the PRIDE flag be removed before Sunday morning when I will be attending mass at Monument Square?

Second, I would like to raise a flag meaningful to me and those who honor Jesus next June 2025. The month of June is dedicated to The Sacred Heart of Jesus and I would like to have the same inclusion and permission to have this raised next June.

A copy of this email has been sent to my attorney to ensure Concord is handling these issues appropriately.

Regards,

William Wright
781-858-7955

From: Jim Ricker <jimricker68@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 19, 2024 1:19:20 PM

To: Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>

Subject: Report from White Pond Task Force

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Near the end of 2022, the Select Board disbanded the White Pond Advisory Committee and replaced it with the White Pond Task Force. In brief, the Task Force was convened for 2023 and charged with evaluating various issues pertaining to White Pond and to develop a plan for alleviating or eliminating those issues.

As a 49 year resident on White Pond, twice a WPAC member, and a member of Friends of White Pond, I'm concerned that the Select Board has not publicly responded to the Task Force's report. Due to the success of Jon Higgins' Apod program, water quality has improved considerably as reflected in the substantial reduction of closures of the Town's beach. The Task Force, for example, recommends continuing the Apod solution. Rather than deal with it on an annual basis, I urge the Select Board to incorporate it as an annual line item in the appropriate department's annual budget. The Town was given an incredible gift from the White Pond Associates and needs to insure that it is managed at a high level.

Thank you.

Jim Ricker
68 Shore Drive

From: Cynthia Deysher <deysherc@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2024 1:51:56 PM

To: Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>;
Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>

Subject: Senior property tax exemption

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from deysherc@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear Select Board members

I read with interest the voter information mailed to us by the Select Board about the permanent senior means tested tax exemption to be voted on in our June 25 special election. This proposal was designed by the Tax Fairness Committee to provide permanent relief offered on property taxes. While it does have an income test an age test, and a home value test, I noted that it does not have an asset test. Additionally it does not consider whether the person owns other properties outside of Concord. It is quite conceivable that a senior who might qualify for this tax exemption might also have significant assets and not need such a tax exemption.

This seems to be a significant deficiency in how this tax exemption was formulated. For that reason, I am voting NO this and encourage others to do the same. I would like to ask the Select Board to reevaluate the qualifications of a senior tax exemption to include total assets held.

Cynthia Deysher
29 Willard Common

Sent from my iPhone