



Borough of Lansdowne

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Anthony Campuzano
Mayor

Craig Totaro
Borough Manager

June 4, 2020

Dear neighbors,

We pride ourselves in Lansdowne Borough as being a community that values the diversity of all of our residents--a community comprised of individuals of many different religions, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds. We are dedicated to the belief that our community fosters relationships between neighbors. Although we may differ in beliefs, interests, or backgrounds, we are joined together as fellow residents who respect our neighbors, share our common spaces, and value the close-knit nature of our community. The diversity in our community is a strength in which we are all proud.

Yet, despite our best efforts to foster a feeling of community, Lansdowne Borough cannot help but be affected by the tragic deaths of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery or even the explicit bigotry targeting Christian Cooper in a public park. Bearing witness to these crimes has revived for many residents the real traumatic memories of past incidents, reminders of the systemic racism affecting our nation, and kindled the righteous indignation at the injustice visible in the videos played repeatedly in the media.

Because of these national events, individuals throughout the region have assembled and continue to assemble and exercise their First Amendment Rights to protest. Over the past week, Lansdowne residents gathered to protest in Lansdowne about the recent events and protest longstanding institutional racism. Of our many responsibilities in Lansdowne Borough is the preservation of the Constitutional rights to protest, to criticize the government, and express grievances.

On Sunday, May 31, Mayor Tony Campuzano, Councilmember Magda Byrne, and Council President Benjamin Hover joined with many other residents of the Lansdowne community in a peaceful demonstration to recognize the need for justice in the killing of George Floyd and an end to systemic racism. We want to acknowledge the members of the community--High School students and the owners of Foose Grill who came out to share beverages with all of the people demonstrating. Members of the Police Department and other emergency responders stood by for the protection of the protestors and also distributed water and snacks to members of the community.

On Sunday, May 31, reports of possible rioting and looting in Delaware County persuaded Mayor Campuzano to sign a Declaration of Emergency to enact a curfew in conjunction with Yeadon Borough, East Lansdowne Borough, and Upper Darby Township. This was done out of an abundance of caution. While incidents of looting were confined to Upper Darby Township, rumors and false reports necessitated a state of high alert and curfew from Sunday through Tuesday.

We, the Borough Council and Mayor Campuzano, want to express support of our Police Department in their efforts to make sure we in Lansdowne Borough remain safe. Similarly, during these tense times, we need to recognize the efforts on the part of our officers who daily conduct outreach within the community to ensure our safety.

The Lansdowne Police Department is committed to community policing, working with all sectors of the community to establish relationships with our faith communities, residents young and old, school children, and members of our business community.

Our police officers are our neighbors, friends, protectors, and human. Now, we need to remember the ties, the relationships, the humanity that binds our community together.

Commitments:

The recent news stories about George Floyd's killing by a police officer, the murder of Ahmaud Arbery, and even the threat of police action against Christian Cooper in public parks are painful reminders of how tenuous the trust in governance and fragile bonds can be in a diverse community.

Lansdowne Borough Council recognizes the need to reflect upon our practices in Lansdowne, examine our procedures, and solicit community input to build upon the work and strong relationships we have in Lansdowne.

To this end, our Public Safety Committee under the Chair of Councilmember Sinoe Najji-Taylor and Mayor Campuzano will continue to work with Chief Donegan to maintain the high caliber and professionalism of the Lansdowne Police Department. We believe that our Police Department and officers support a great community and we want to note our areas of strength and also areas to improve.

We will also commence an ad hoc Committee with Councilmembers Wardell Holt, Sinoe Najji-Taylor and Council President Benjamin Hover to encourage the inclusion of all members in the Lansdowne Community in our arts, parks, recreation, and cultural programs to ensure that all members of the Lansdowne Community feel included. While the Boards and Commissions consistently strive to be inclusive, we have created an ad hoc committee to focus on our beliefs in Lansdowne and identify areas where we can improve.

In this time of division, Lansdowne Borough Council remains committed to building unity and a better Lansdowne.

We believe in one Lansdowne that respects all members of the community.

We believe in justice for all in Lansdowne Borough.

We support the rights of all citizens to peaceably assemble.

We reject and renounce the brutality exhibited in Minneapolis.

We support a community in which all members feel safe.

To the members of our community demonstrating, we stand with you in the commitment to working for justice and our police and emergency responders stand ready to protect your rights to peacefully assemble, petition, and address grievances. We are listening and hear you when you speak.

To our police officers, we stand with you and recognize and thank you for being on the front line to place yourself in harm's way, to protect and serve, and thank you for building the relationships of trust in our neighborhoods.

To all of our residents, we commit to continuing to serve you in maintaining and building Lansdowne into the community we all deserve: public places, safe spaces, and quality services.

Please contact us with any concerns.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Hover
President

Tony Campuzano
Mayor

Magda Byrne
Vice President

Wardell Holt
Councilmember

Tangela James
Councilmember

Janet English
Councilmember

Michael Schleigh, Esq.
Councilmember

Sinoe Najji-Taylor
Councilmember