

Robert J. Gask

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EAST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MICROSOFT "TEAMS"

SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

TOWN CLERK
EAST HARTFORD

PUBLIC FORUM – ADDRESSING RACISM

PRESENT Chair Richard F. Kehoe, Vice Chair Donald Bell, Jr., Councillors Connor Martin, Awet Tsegai, Angela Parkinson and John Morrison

PRESENT Majority Leader Sebrina Wilson, Minority Leader Esther B. Clarke,
VIA "TEAMS" Councillor Patricia Harmon

ALSO Marcia Leclerc, Mayor
PRESENT

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kehoe called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.

The Chair explained that this is a Town Council forum in conjunction with Mayor Leclerc to examine the issue of systemic racism and how the community of East Hartford can work to address the underlying causes of racism. Vice Chair Don Bell explained the goals drafted by the Councillors that would help move East Hartford forward and address the underlying causes of racism. They are:

Forward East Hartford Goals

East Hartford is a great place for people of all backgrounds to live and work. We want to make it better while addressing the underlying causes of systemic racism.

- Improve the Quality of Affordable Housing and Increase Home Ownership Opportunities
- Encourage/Incentivize Growth of Small Businesses/Eliminate Barriers for People of Color Owned Enterprises
- Improve Financial Literacy
- Enhance Civic Engagement Throughout the Community
- Explore Partnerships to Increase Access to Adequate/Affordable Health Services
- Ensure Sufficient Social and Mental Health Services for Youth
- Coordinate Mental Health/Social Services in Responding to Emergency Calls

- Enhance and Expand Positive Community/Police Interaction
- Improve Police Accountability and Transparency
- Provide Quality Education and Set High Expectations for all Students

The following people came forward to comment on racism and the proposed goals:

Marc Weinberg, 68 Silver Lane, thinks that there are different degrees of racism. He sees East Hartford as a multicultural community.

Rachel Botts, 131 Jessica Drive, thanked the Town, the Council, the schools and the police for speaking about racism and making an effort to put a process in place to remedy it. She believes that the best approach to solving social issues is through the educational system. She stated that if the wealth gap or income disparity or housing disparity is to change, the first step begins at the schools. Ms. Botts also inquired on the town's business development goals.

Sarah Crudden, 35 Zimmer Road, had concerns about the town's school system. She stated that children without learning disabilities get by, but not children that have learning disabilities.


Harry Amadasun, Jr, 31 High Street, a member of the East Hartford Board of Education, appreciated the Council's discussion on racism. Mr. Amadasun looks forward to collaborating with the Council during the upcoming budget season to address the financial needs of the town's schools.

Mayor Leclerc, in answer to Ms. Botts' inquiry, spoke on economic development efforts of the town on Silver Lane and along the riverfront.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION By Esther Clarke
 seconded by Don Bell
 to **adjourn** (7:49 p.m.)
 Motion carried 9/0.

Attest


 Richard F. Kehoe
 Town Council Chair