



## **Town of Needham, Massachusetts Media Release**

Office of the Town Manager  
Town Hall, 1471 Highland Ave, Needham, MA 02492

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, February 11, 2021

### **CONTACT**

Cyndi Roy Gonzalez  
[croygonzalez@needhamma.gov](mailto:croygonzalez@needhamma.gov)  
781-675-0394 (cell)

## **Needham Select Board Adopts Racial Equity Vision Statement Recommended by Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative (NUARI) Working Group**

NEEDHAM – Thursday, February 11, 2021 – At its meeting Tuesday evening, the Needham Select Board unanimously adopted the vision statement and three guiding principles recommended by the Needham Unite Against Racism Working Group.

The vision statement for racial equity will help guide the Town’s efforts to ensure that Needham is a welcoming and inclusive community. The statement makes clear that the entire Needham community must work together to root out hate and discrimination.

“This vision statement and the guiding principles are key to our work ahead,” said Select Board member and Working Group member Marianne Cooley. “We have a clear vision for ensuring Needham is a community free from racism and discrimination and look forward to the continued work ahead.”

The Select Board agreed to ask Town Meeting Members at Annual Town Meeting this Spring to adopt the vision statement and principles. In addition, the Select Board will ask other Town Boards and Committees and other non-governmental organizations to adopt the statement and principles as an indication of their commitment to taking action that helps ensure Needham is an anti-racist Town.

The vision statement was developed over the course of several months by the Working Group. A draft was presented to the community in January for public input.

The Working Group will continue to work to finalize two other guiding principles and hopes to have those in place for Town Meeting's consideration this Spring.

### **Vision Statement**

Needham will be a community free of racism, racial bias, prejudice and discrimination. Our residents, schools, businesses, organizations and government will work together to identify barriers to racial equity and create solutions, opportunities, resources and support for removing them.

- We will work collaboratively and democratically toward a just, equitable, antiracist community.
- We will work to identify and change current policies, procedures, practices, and cultural norms in Needham that prevent meaningful access to opportunities because of race.
- We will create opportunities for the community to confront unpleasant truths and seek solutions that always amplify values of racial equity.
- We will intentionally create spaces for respectful dialogue and difficult conversations toward racial amity.
- We will actively engage with those who feel the impact of racism most directly, seeking their input, guidance, and honoring the wisdom of their experience.
- We will commit as individuals to be intentional in our efforts to learn and practice anti-bias and antiracism, transforming our thinking, attitudes and behaviors.

### **Guiding Principles**

- (3) A healthy and equitable community recognizes the harm created by implicit bias, intolerance and racism and strives to embrace diversity and inclusion by using a racial equity lens to promote anti-racist behaviors and attitudes in all aspects of civic and inter-personal living.
- (4) We value lifelong/ongoing self and group learning and critical social analysis to acknowledge and to further understand the dominance of white culture and privilege throughout US history, and the importance of disrupting racial structures that perpetuate it.
- (5) Becoming anti-racist means that we must tackle our own implicit bias, intolerance and discriminatory lenses - thus, bringing about restorative justice, healing and reconciliation to truly bring together the community we live in.

###