

**Resolution urging the City of Newton to take action on Anti-Asian hate crimes and invest in multiracial community health and safety**

Whereas, 23 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders account for 7 percent of the population in the United States; including 16.6% of the population of Newton, MA;

Whereas, the percent of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders account for 20% of the Newton Public School enrollment population;

Whereas, the use of anti-Asian terminology and rhetoric related to COVID-19, such as the “Chinese Virus”, “Wuhan Virus”, and “Kung-flu” have perpetuated anti-Asian stigma;

Whereas, the use of anti-Asian rhetoric has resulted in Asian Americans being harassed, assaulted, and scapegoated for the COVID-19 pandemic;

Whereas, in 2020, there was a 133% increase in reported hate crimes and incidents against those of Asian descent in Boston, and similar increases have been seen across the country;

Whereas, on February 18, 2021, two Asian people were unprovokedly attacked and robbed on the Red Line at the North Quincy MBTA Station, which left one victim hospitalized;

Whereas, on March 16 2021, there were 8 victims of a gun violence attack at two spas near and in Atlanta, GA. 6 of the 8 victims were of Asian descent, and the City of Newton had a vigil on March 21 2021 remembering the lives that were lost in the mass shootings;

Whereas, in the summer of 2021, there were 5 home break-ins in Newton that were targeted against AAPI homeowners and public artwork that was vandalized;

Whereas, in the spring of 2022, the Newton Police Department identified and arrested the alleged individuals responsible for those break-ins;

Whereas, on March 10, 2020, Dr. Robert Redfield, then Director of the CDC, testified that use of the term “Chinese coronavirus” is wrong and inappropriate; and in April 2021, Newton resident and Director of the CDC, Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky, declared racism is a serious public health threat that directly affects the well-being of millions of Americans and, as a result, affects the health of our entire nation;

Whereas, intersectional anti-racism work is not transactional, and allyship with Black people and other BIPOC communities does not divert attention from aiding Asian communities, so BIPOC

must work together towards our collective liberation by dismantling systems that uphold white supremacy;

Whereas, fighting against anti-Asian sentiment encompasses collaboration with Black, Indigenous, Latinex, Pacific Islander, and the LGBTQIA+ communities to find long-term solutions to stop systemic racism, xenophobia, and violence in all our communities; and

Whereas, an Asian community organization, OCA Asian Pacific American Advocates, New England Chapter, joined together with Newton Asian leadership such as Betty Chan, the author of this Anti-Asian Hate Crimes Resolution to urge Newton City Council to take specific actions to prevent, combat and address acts of AAPI hate.

THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, That the Newton City Council

(1) condemns and denounces all forms of anti-Asian sentiment, including those relating to COVID-19;

(2) recognizes that the health and safety of all persons, no matter their background, must be the utmost priority;

(3) condemns all manifestations and expressions of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, anti-Asian sentiment, scapegoating, and ethnic or religious intolerance;

(4) calls for the creation of an Anti-Asian Hate Crime Task Force to work alongside the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) subcommittee of the Newton City Council, the task force would not work under the direction of the Newton Police Department, but would utilize the NPD as a resource, and the task force will include community members who speak Asian languages and are culturally competent to build trust and support while engaging with crime victims;

(5) recommits the City of Newton to serving as a national leader in building more inclusive, diverse, and tolerant communities—

(A) by prioritizing language access and inclusivity in communication practices; and

(B) by combating misinformation and discrimination that put Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders at risk.