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New Bedford, Massachusetts

Mr. Christopher Pereira, DHS Class of 1998
Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Mr. Jacob J. Ventura, Esq.**, DHS Class of 2005
Dartmouth, Massachusetts

** - members of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)

Monday, July 12, 2021

Via E-Mail Only

Dartmouth School Committee – Equality & Diversity Sub-committee

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Subject: *Public/Tribal Comment Period re: Dartmouth Indians Name and Logo*

Members of the Equality & Diversity Sub-committee:

We, the undersigned, as concerned citizens, object to the manner and process in which the Dartmouth School Committee's appointed Equality & Diversity Sub-committee ("subcommittee") has operated with respect to the agenda item of removing the Dartmouth Indians name and logo from the Dartmouth Public School system. Specifically, to date, the subcommittee has failed to meaningfully and publicly engage the two federally recognized tribes in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The subcommittee has also failed to provide an opportunity for public comment. In addition to the two procedural concerns highlighted above, the subcommittee has also failed to invite public testimony from individuals or entities who are supportive of maintaining the Dartmouth Indians name and logo. Even more troubling, it appears that each guest speaker invited to offer testimony before the subcommittee has been cherry-picked to fit a narrative that supports removal of the Dartmouth Indians name and logo.



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First, the subcommittee has not publicly engaged either of the two federally recognized tribes in the Commonwealth: the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. Both federally recognized tribes have tremendous historic ties to the land where the town of Dartmouth was established. Both tribes are the **only federally recognized tribes by the U.S. government**, despite members of this subcommittee calling for potential outreach to certain ‘local’ and ‘unrecognized’ tribes with zero legal recognition status. It is imperative that the subcommittee formally engage the two federally recognized tribes before issuing recommendations to the Dartmouth School Committee. While we, in our individual tribal member capacities, cannot speak on behalf of our tribal government or council, two of the undersigned to this letter are federally recognized members of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and have been in a multi-year dialogue with certain tribal leaders on this specific issue. We invite Dartmouth town officials and members of the subcommittee to engage in a formal dialogue with the two federally recognized tribes in an effort to preserve and honor our local indigenous history in Dartmouth.

Second, while the subcommittee's meetings have been conducted remotely via live stream due to COVID-19 guidelines pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 18-25, the subcommittee has failed to provide an opportunity for any public comment. There is currently no mechanism for public comment, in-person or electronically. As you know, the Commonwealth ended its COVID-19 state of emergency last month. We urge the subcommittee and School Committee to begin holding in-person meetings that are open to the public in which members of the public will have an opportunity to offer comment on this topic. As taxpayers and residents, the public is entitled to engage in a fully-informed and public debate on this issue. Residents of the town and alumni must have a seat at the table.

We are further troubled by the June 22, 2021 subcommittee testimony offered by Dr. Laurel Davis-Delano who discouraged the subcommittee from seeking public opinion on the issue. **Dr. Davis-Delano stated:** “It’s not a good idea for schools or towns to survey their students about this issue, or survey the community. And the reason why is, when that happens, it implies that non-native people should be making decisions about making representations that are not them.” (See *Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee Meeting, June 22, 2021 YouTube video stream*: Timestamp: 36 minutes, 38 seconds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyhfvBoHYPO>).

Dr. Davis-Delano continued: “It is almost impossible to educate a community. And here’s why: you can’t get them there.” “It’s really hard to education people on this issue in general.” (See *Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee Meeting, June 22, 2021 YouTube video stream*: Timestamp: 40 minutes, 30 seconds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyhfvBoHYPO>).

We vehemently disagree with Dr. Davis-Delano. The public must be fully engaged on this issue and have an opportunity to attend in-person public meetings to provide comment, before a recommendation is delivered to the School Committee. We also disagree with Dr. Davis-Delano that it is impossible to educate our community. The people of Dartmouth are well-educated, respectful, open-minded, and are more than capable of exercising their First Amendment right to free speech in an open and public venue.



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Third, the subcommittee has failed to present a full and accurate account of the history of the Dartmouth logo and has not corrected the record about the author of said logo.

Mr. Clyde Andrews, undersigned, is a graduate of the Dartmouth High School Class of 1974, Dartmouth Football Hall of Famer and more importantly, a member of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah. In or around 1974, as a member of the Dartmouth High School football team, Mr. Andrews was tasked with designing a profile of an American Indian that would serve as a permanent logo to replace a cartoon caricature of an 'Indian' that was placed on the letterman jackets of the then-successful football team. Mr. Andrews designed an iteration of the Dartmouth Indians logo that is currently used throughout the school department today. The logo was designed to respect and honor the region's indigenous people. These facts have not yet been entered into the record of the subcommittee despite cookie-cutter testimony that has been offered by others.

The manner in which the subcommittee has operated has not reflected a full and accurate account of the history of the formation of the logo and the involvement of Mr. Andrews. In fact, Dr. Davis-Delano's June 22, 2021 testimony regarding logo formation couldn't be further from reality as it relates to the case here in Dartmouth.

Dr. Davis-Delano stated: "It involves, non-native people, usually white people, in origin of native mascots, taking somebody else's identity—another group's identity and their culture. So, representations of native mascots or representations of Native American people and yet they're created by non-native people and they're used by non-native people, generally speaking, and they're used for the purposes of those non-native people. And that's like the epidemic of, you know, appropriation." (*See Equality and Diversity Subcommittee Meeting, June 22, 2021 YouTube video stream: Timestamp: 35 minutes, 35 seconds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyhfvBoHYPO>*).

Dr. Davis-Delano and members of the subcommittee failed to correct the record regarding the origins of the logo in Dartmouth, designed by Mr. Andrews, a tribal member.

This subcommittee should invite the oral or written testimony of Mr. Andrews and other federally recognized tribal members who currently or previously resided in Dartmouth and who have attended Dartmouth Public Schools. The public deserves access to this unique point of view. If necessary, we fully anticipate a number of additional tribal members with ties to the town of Dartmouth to come forward soon on this topic.

Fourth, while the issue of whether or not to remove the Dartmouth Indians name and logo has been informally debated online and in-person for the past several years, we remain committed to working collaboratively with the subcommittee and the Dartmouth School Committee during this process. We believe in respectful dialogue, however, the federally recognized tribes, the public and Dartmouth alumni must have a seat at the table. As was reported in local media on May 25, 2021, "subcommittee members



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preferred to host it...[a public forum].” (*See Diversity subcommittee plans potential forum on Indian logo, Dartmouth Week, May 25, 2021, By Sandy Quadros Bowles.*) We encourage the subcommittee or School Committee to follow through with such a public forum prior to any subcommittee or School Committee vote on this matter.

Rather than cancel our indigenous history and imagery, we implore the subcommittee to work with us to enhance and honor our history and continue to ensure that the Town of Dartmouth remains an inclusive and respectful community for all, including those whom with which we may disagree with. On that note, we believe the Equality & Diversity Sub-committee should endeavor to promote a diversity of viewpoints on this matter. Not once has the subcommittee publicly engaged a proponent of keeping the Dartmouth Indians name and logo. That must change.

The subcommittee and School Committee must ensure that this process is transparent and open to the public and federally recognized tribes for comment. The subcommittee and School Committee must also ensure that the public record regarding the design of the logo is corrected and fully informed. While we hope to avoid further action on this matter, we reserve all rights to ensure that the process underway by the subcommittee and School Committee is in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal laws and federal tribal treaties.

Sincerely,

Mr. Clyde Andrews

Member, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah;
Designer of Dartmouth Indian logo (1974);
Dartmouth High School, Class of 1974;
Dartmouth Sports Hall of Fame (football).

Mr. Christopher Pereira

Town Meeting Member;
Chair, Veterans Advisory Board;
Former Dartmouth School Committee member, elected (2002-2008);
Dartmouth High School, Class of (1998);
DHS Class President (1998).



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Member, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah;
Former Dartmouth Finance Committee member;
Former Town Meeting Member;
Dartmouth High School, Class of 2005;
Drum Major, Dartmouth High School Marching Band, US Champions (2003, 2004).

cc (via e-mail only):

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Media

Dartmouth Week

Dartmouth Chronicle

New Bedford Light

Standard Times

WBSM 1420 AM

WSAR 1480 AM