



# MAYOR GINA-LOUISE SCIARRA

City of Northampton

Office of the Mayor

210 Main Street Room 12

Northampton, MA 01060-3199

(413) 587-1249 Fax: (413) 587-1275

mayor@northamptonma.gov

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - January 6, 2022**

## **Statement by Mayor Sciarra on the Rise of Anti-Semitic Activity in the City of Northampton**

NORTHAMPTON - There has been a disturbing increase in the use of anti-semitic language and images in Northampton public discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic, and most recently at a Northampton Board of Health public meeting convened to discuss policy related to vaccinations and public safety last Thursday, December 30, 2021. This is in addition to the rise in anti-Asian and other racism we have experienced during the pandemic.

We have seen flyers posted around town depicting anti-semitic messages. We have heard statements and seen racist imagery in Zoom windows during the public comment portion of city meetings that are profoundly hurtful to our Jewish neighbors, and the fabric of our community.

These actions are vile, hateful, and are unwelcome in the City of Northampton.

While we acknowledge constitutionally protected free speech during public meetings in the city that cannot be censored, that does not mean that we do not denounce hateful and derogatory comments or images. We must speak up against the words and actions of those who sow hatred toward any group. They are a threat to the safety and peace of our community and beyond.

Remote access during the pandemic has opened up city meetings and civic engagement to so many in our community who weren't able to previously participate. But, it has also allowed access from anywhere and the cowardly ability to hide behind anonymity to those who seek to disrupt and spread hate.

Northampton city government honors the Jewish community who are and have been an integral part of the success and accomplishments that comprise our city history. I urge everyone to join me in the ongoing work to create and maintain a community that fights for the dignity and safety of all our residents.

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra