

Letter: Response to Bindelglass's Referendum Comments



To the Editor:

I disagree with most of First Selectman Bindelglass's recent comments in the Courier (5/6/21) on the rejection of the Easton Resolution on Racism and Public Health by Easton residents 5/4/21. The question, (shall the Town of Easton approve the Easton Resolution on Racism and Public Health?), was defeated by 498 votes (1,259 residents voted against the Resolution and 761 voted for it). According to Town Clerk Christine Halloran: "more than 2,000 voters, 36%, turned out at the polls on May 4. For the last seven years or so, budget referendums typically brought out 800 voters at most, she said, or roughly 14% of registered voters or fewer."

Dr. Bindelglass said in the Courier that "The resolution was available to be read. It was lengthy, and from conversations I had at the polls, it was clear to me that many people still did not understand what the resolution said, or even what we were actually voting on. I consider that to be my fault. I apologize for not doing a better job of presenting it."

I disagree with Dr. Bindelglass that Easton voters were not well informed. The Racism resolution was two pages long and double spaced. It was short and clear. It had been

discussed a lot since its adoption in August. The Resolution got a second round of publicity when the Selectmen rescinded their adoption of it. They had to rescind the Resolution and put it to a town vote because the Town's General Powers ordinance (#200) states Resolutions have to be approved by both the Selectmen and the Town (via a town meeting).

Proponents barraged the Courier and social media outlets with letters of support. Every conceivable reason to vote for it was given over and over. The Resolution was explained in a presentation at the virtual town meeting. One reason to vote for it the advocate explained was that would open the door for new programs in Easton.

The Town of Easton Diversity Committee supported it. Republican leaders published letters suggesting voters read the Resolution and showing them where to go to get it. They did not express an opinion on its merits.

Since it was such a controversial Resolution, there was unusually strong grassroots advocacy by the Left and the Right. This meant Easton residents were better informed than they have been on many other votes, especially the recent Non-binding sidewalk vote.

I do not think Dr. Bindelglass failed in any way to communicate what the Resolution meant. The Resolution spoke for itself. Its proponents, passionate in their righteousness, citing all kinds of personal experiences and feelings, along with some facts, got the word out. You either supported the Resolution or you were a Racist. It was not complicated.

I agree with Dr. Bindelglass's final statement in the Courier article. He repeated Republican Selectman Kristi Sogofsky's comment and agreed with it. She said, "This Resolution does not apply to our community."

Thank you, Kristi for that succinct summary of the situation. Thank you Dr. Bindelglass for your last statement.

As far as I am concerned the Resolution does not and never did apply to our community.

Dana Benson

Easton