

Halton Hills council proclaims zero tolerance for racism in wake of racial violence in U.S.

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Halton Hills council passed a motion on Monday (Aug. 28) proclaiming zero tolerance for racism of any kind following the tragic events in Charlottesville, Va., and racist marches in other U.S. cities.

The motion, brought forward by the mayor and councillor Jon Hurst, condemns racism in all its forms and reads in part:

"WHEREAS on August 12, 2017 a horrific, cowardly, and racially motivated act of violence took place in Charlottesville, Virginia that led to the death of a 32-year-old woman, and injuries to at least 19 others;

AND WHEREAS this horrific and cowardly act took place during what has

been described as one of the largest white supremacist events in history;

AND WHEREAS further incidents of racially motivated acts of violence have taken place both locally and abroad;

AND WHEREAS we must join together as a community, province, and nation to condemn this type of hatred and racism;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council for the Town of Halton Hills supports zero tolerance for racism of any kind, including nazi'ism (sic) and white supremacy."

The motion passed unanimously and will be forwarded to all other Ontario municipalities for support. The motion will also be sent to Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael

Chong, Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott, Halton Region as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

"It will not be tolerated in this community," the mayor said in a news release. "Everyone is a steward of this town and I urge residents to stand up against negative comments and acts of graffiti. We are all citizens of the world."

The mayor wasn't the only one with strong words of condemnation at Monday's council meeting.

"I'd like to think we already have zero tolerance," said Coun. Jane Fogal. "But on further reflection I think it's time that we have to say it out loud. It's one thing be (zero tol-

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- Councillor Jon Hurst

erance), and it's another thing to say that's what you're thinking instead."

"I think it's incumbent upon all of us when we see racism or hatred of any kind that we immediately condemn it under no uncertain terms," said Hurst. "Most importantly, in addition to talking the talk we have to walk the walk. We must make known our refusal to accept such despicable actions when they occur."

Hurst also pointed to a recent incident in Halton Hills just days after the events in Charlottesville where an abandoned building near Regional Road 25 and 15 Side Road was spray painted with a swastika and the words "Hail Hitler" underneath.

In keeping with the zero-tolerance proclamation, the mayor made it clear all incidents of racist graffiti or acts would be forwarded to Halton police

for investigation.

The town is asking any resident finding such acts of vandalism on public property to send a message including pictures to Dick Spear, superintendent of Public Works, at richards@haltonhills.ca or call 905-873-2601, ext. 2612.

Those looking to report graffiti on private property may contact Marina Botton, supervisor of enforcement services, at MarinaB@haltonhills.ca or by phone at 905-873-2601, ext. 2366.

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