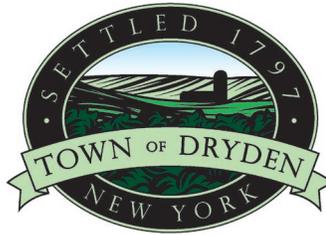


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For Immediate Release:  
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**Statement**  
Supervisor Jason Leifer and Deputy Supervisor Dan Lamb  
Hate Speech Incident at 1/27/21 Comprehensive Plan Meeting

The Town of Dryden firmly believes that diversity makes our community stronger. The more there is, the better. We strive to be an inclusive environment, and we welcome all people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation. We know that each one of us possesses distinct traits, stories, and talents that are to be respected.

Unfortunately, Dryden is not immune to divisive actions motivated by racism and white supremacy, as was demonstrated last night at a public meeting. The meeting was held on Zoom to gather input for comprehensive planning, but it was disrupted by individuals who threatened participants and scrawled hate speech across the screen. The town is disgusted that the actions of a few cowardly, anonymous individuals sought to sow the seeds of division in this public setting.

While they succeeded at disrupting the meeting and wasting taxpayer dollars, they will not alter our resolve to make our community better. We pledge to redouble our efforts to make this a more inclusive community.

Everyone in Dryden has a fundamental right to feel respected and safe in this community. While that right was briefly challenged last night, we shall make every effort to insure that it never happens again. The town deeply regrets this incident and the pain it has caused to our community. We are also taking efforts to track down those involved in this incident and have been in touch with law enforcement.

Dryden has seen challenges before and has always demonstrated that we are stronger together. We must always take a united stand against all forms of racism, bigotry, and hatred.

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