

Public Statement, Expression of Opinion And Resolve of the Lincoln, Maine Town Council

WHEREAS, we, the Lincoln Town Council, find that events we did not create or support have taken on a life of their own, and

WHEREAS, those events have become so public, notorious and publicized by folks in Lincoln and well beyond, and

WHEREAS, the many opinions being expressed on this matter, in part, ask for a Statement and clarity from the Town of Lincoln through an official Resolve of the Lincoln Town Council, and

WHEREAS, some of those opinions are damaging to the good public image of the Town of Lincoln that is held by many people, and

WHEREAS, we find it is incumbent upon us to react to those calls for clarity, then

Now, therefore, we, the Lincoln Town Council, assembled in official meeting, declare in this contentious matter we find, that

FINDING ONE: All persons, elected or otherwise, in our nation, State and Town have a clear First Amendment Right to express any opinion that they wish to express and disseminate within the rights protected by the United States Constitution, and

FINDING TWO: That an expression of opinion from one or more Councilors not constituting a majority of this Council is not an action, opinion or policy of the Town or the Council, and

FINDING THREE: That opinions expressed by one or more Councilors may in fact be opposed by or offensive to other Councilors or even a majority of the entire Council, and

FINDING FOUR: Recently, Councilor Sheldon Hanington expressed through social media opinions that bear on a national controversy. In the Council's view such comments are of a nature that would have a tendency to exacerbate the divisions the Nation is experiencing and to heighten the emotions in this national controversy, and

FINDING FIVE: It is the Council's view that the Nation and the Town are better served by statements that help us reconcile with one another and move forward as one Nation united and working together. For these reasons, the opinions and postings in this specific instance have become the subject of questions that the Council must address. In so doing, the Council disassociates itself from the comments and expresses its public regret, and

FINDING SIX: That, despite some calls to expel a sitting Councilor or fire him as a member of this Council, he has not engaged in conduct that disqualifies him from office under the Town Charter nor is he an employee. However, as is true of all members of the Council, he is accountable to the voters for the conduct of his office, and

FINDING SEVEN: That this public expression of regret is the official policy, Resolve and position of the Lincoln Town Council, the express policy of which is to foster a civic atmosphere in which all people are welcomed and brought together.