

Town Council Introduces Ordinance To Expand "Government Speech"

During its Monday, August 14, Township Council meeting, an ordinance was introduced to amend the township code with respect to its expression of government speech. An amendment was previously made to the code in regard to the Town Hall flag pole. The change now mentions, more generally, the "township's public display areas," to cover other parts of town, including an area at the South Livingston Avenue/Northfield Road intersection, which holds a town-

supported banner a few months out of the year, and around the Livingston Oval.

During the conference meeting prior to the regular meeting vote, township attorney Jarrid Kantor said the public display areas are an "expression of our (the town's) speech, not the speech of the residents."

At the start of the year, a resolution was unanimously passed to permit certain flags to be raised during the year as an expression of government

speech. The listed flags were for Black History Month, Juneteenth, PRIDE, National Hispanic Heritage, and the national flags of Italy, India, and Israel. The list is not exclusive, and additional flags may be added. These flags were part of the resolution because they have been previously raised by the township.

The resolution was a response to a Supreme Court decision related to a flag pole in Boston, in which the city denied a request to fly a Christian flag

outside of City Hall. The Supreme Court determined the denial was a violation of free speech. This resolution seeks to avoid a similar situation in Livingston.

Resident Justin Alpert objected to the resolution in January, and did so again during Monday's meeting, questioning the legitimacy of the term "government speech."

"We're just trying to protect the residents of this town," Mayor Michael Vieira said during the conference meeting, in regard to the ordinance.

The ordinance will have a final hearing during the September 7 Council meeting.



FANG GONG, an active member of Friends of the Library and long-term volunteer for Livingston Public Library, gathered signatures for her Board of Education candidacy. Shown here with Nora Lichtenstein, Superintendent Designee and Strategic Planning Committee Chairperson of the Livingston Public Library Board of Trustees, the photo underscores Fang's unwavering dedication to education and our cherished local library. Championing "Excellence, Empathy, and Equity," you can discover more about Fang's campaign at www.Fang4LBOE.com.

Beating the August Heat at Haines Pool

Don Schwartz and Jerry Siskind Photos



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