



The Town of Warrenton  
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Date: May 31, 2023

To: Mr. Scott Christian

From: Thomas L. Cureton, Acting Town Manager

Subject: Decision on Appeal to Relocate BLM Vigil for Action

Mr. Christian,

Please accept this letter as the formal response upholding the Town's decision to relocate the BLM Vigil for Action from Courthouse Square to Eva Walker Park. The decision to move the BLM Vigil for Action to Eva Walker Park, was based upon the following factors; (1) another special event sponsor applied for and was approved for use of Courthouse Square during the same time as the BLM Vigil for Action from Saturday, May 13, 2023, to Saturday, June 24, 2023, and (2) the safety of all who use the "Courthouse Square" intersection, both in vehicles and not, during the vigil and counterdemonstration.

Safety can encompass many different things but the observation over time is that pedestrians, and drivers especially, are increasingly distracted by the activity in the square during the vigil and counterdemonstration to the point where there are weekly near misses of vehicles on vehicles and vehicles on pedestrians. Drivers looking at the activity in the square and/or participating (waving, honking, etc.) are distracted to the point that they do not pay attention to the intersection layout, pedestrians, and/or other drivers in a location that can be challenging even when there is no assembly activity. During the telephone conversation you had with Chief Carter on May 11, 2023, he mentioned the possible threat of someone using a vehicle as a weapon to strike demonstrators and/or citizens. While the malicious act of using a vehicle as a weapon cannot be ruled out, the far more likely scenario would be a distracted pedestrian accidentally striking another vehicle or a pedestrian, as was the case when a vehicle (lightly) struck former Chief Kochis last year while he was in the middle of a crosswalk on Main Street. That driver was distracted while looking at the assembly.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Cureton

Acting Town Manager