

## **Statement from DefundNPD received by Fig City News after PST meeting reviewing marathon**

"Newton's PS&T discussion about the police response to Black spectators at the Boston Marathon was another missed opportunity to expand our approach to public safety. The councilors, who were the only ones allowed to speak, harped on training, as if better training of police would have led to a different response. But the Newton Police responded in perfect accordance with their training. It doesn't make any sense to think that we can train police not to be police.

Newton city councilors seem to have forgotten that in the spring 2021 budget season, they voted unanimously to pilot a non-police first responder program. The mayor ignored that vote and has ignored all the evidence about the efficacy of non-police first responder programs around the country.

If Newton had had a non-police responder program during the Boston Marathon, we could have sent trained non-police to evaluate the situation, see if any intervention was warranted, and, if so, talk with folks neighbor to neighbor. Sending police to a non-police situation will always escalate it and create a new security problem. We know this from the increasing police killings of people in mental health crises, including Newton police's killing of our neighbor Michael Conlon.

DefundNPD concurs with the city councilors who urged the scheduling of a public hearing on the events that took place at this year's marathon so that runners and spectators have a chance to share their experiences."