

We find your “requests” to be demeaning, condescending and a power play that we won’t play into: (pause, take a breath, then read our response)

Regarding the seemingly personal requests made by council members Marianne McQueen and Kevin Stokes, this is our, the demonstrators, response:

Our purpose is not to heal your hurt feelings or continuously appease your stunted perspectives. Our efforts, time, and demands are to bring awareness to racial issues (covert, overt, systemic, systematic, and industrialized). To push our Village to strive to be a pioneer of Social Justice Reform. Our jobs are to make sure we are continuously raising the bar for what it looks like to be anti-racist and challenge and critique those that fall below it. Our job, not just as demonstrators, but as community members, is to hold our police department and Village officials to accountability and transparency. Our job is NOT to praise you for implementing policies that your community demands, as that is your duty as paid, elected officials. You are OUR public servants. As our collective body progresses socially and ethically the policies, protocols, and procedures should as well. As the face of the community, it is your job to reflect what we believe.

You have repeatedly tried to turn this into an “us” versus “them” battle, by not only putting words into the community member’s mouths, but also asking the community to “stand with you and the YSPD.” We call on you to understand that our position is to unify, not to isolate. WE are fighting for everyone and are not responsible for hurt feelings along the way. It is insulting to be asked to “apologize” for standing up for Black lives. It is insulting that your message is about hurt feelings when Black and Brown people are dying at disproportionate rates.

To the Chief’s statement regarding the passive exchange between him and a purported clan member:

In your request, you stated we owe him, our Chief of Police, a response. To be clear, we don't “owe” him or either of you anything. As Chief Carlson exclaimed to one of the demonstrators, “it’s not about you!” Chief Carlson and Josue tend to conveniently bring up that they identify as “brown people,” as a way to seem relatable to our cause and move us out of the “red zone.” As a person of color, you should understand our, and community members alike, position on the continuous push for accountability during these history-making moments. These are times for change, not times for resistance and push-back.

The fact is, you cannot “bite your tongue” in the face of racism. We cannot hide or shelter our Village from racism, as it is not only surrounding but it is here. We need to be bold and stand together when letting people know that we do not condone intolerance. We do not cower in the face of hate groups, we stand up to them, as Yellow Springs has done for decades. We came together and lined our streets when klansmen paraded through, in 2004. We made them rethink coming back. We didn’t roll out the red carpet so that they could politely leave our village without incident and be left with the impression that they *could* come back. In 1964, one of our own, Mr. Bomani Moyenda, at just 10 years old, was present during a historical protest in order to shut down a barbershop that refused to integrate. That’s OUR history. We are continuing to make history and right now, you are on the wrong side of it. We don’t back down or bite our tongues, and we don’t show respect to members of the KKK; an organization that

hosted lynching parties, burned black people and allies alive, and joyfully dismembered human beings in front of their family. So, no, Chief Carlson, everyone *doesn't* deserve your respect. Terrorists do not deserve your respect nor well wishes for "cooperation."

When working as a public official, your job is to serve and protect the community; your job is not just shielding the white people, but defending the black people. If the clan wants to show up to counter-protest, they have the right to do so, as do we. The police department's role is to keep the peace between both protests--so do that.

In regards to the chants, it is what it is. As a public official, you will face public scrutiny:

We, the demonstrators, will no longer engage in the private restorative justice meetings with the purpose of restoring your pride and egos, and getting us off the streets. We will no longer partake in meetings with the refusal of public record. We will no longer address any of your other counterproductive requests. Josue stated that they, the YSPD, could be "doing other things" and we say "go ahead." Whether you are there or not, we will continue to fight for reform, bringing awareness, and expose the bias, prejudices, and racism within our village, while showing solidarity with the national movement.

Again, it's not about you, and it's not just about Yellow Springs. Our chants are not always directed towards each of the individuals on the force, but reflect the American policing system as a whole--taking offense to certain chants should make you ask where the source of offense comes from.

So, we ask that you quit talking to us about feelings and finances and focus on what really matters: social justice reform and anti-racist action plans. We are not on the streets to tear down our Police Department, as we have stated, we are mostly proud of what they have accomplished within the past few years. We are not calling any individual a racist, we are highlighting the racism that is embedded in the foundation of these institutions. We are not accepting these band-aid solutions, we are pushing for long-term solutions. Most importantly, this is not a "tit-for-tat" battle, this is a call for change, not an argument to be debated.

So, it's not enough and will never be enough until people of color are treated equally. We have made that clear with our demands. We are fighting for the reform of an entire justice system, and asking that our community members join us and our council members and police department back us. We are asking for a community battle against racism and we will not be isolated in this process.

We, as one, can set the bar for other cities and individuals who want to make *real* change through *action*, not just say they do in council meetings. The time is now. We look forward to the next steps on fighting racism as a public health crisis, and moving forward, *together*.