Response from Council Members Marianne MacQueen and Kevin Stokes to YS Black Lives Matter

Dear Julian, Julia, Alaina, and Nya:

We appreciate the time that you have spent with us in an effort to reach some point of healing and reconciliation during the two recent Restorative Justice Circles. It is our hope that the healing that has begun will reach fruition soon. We have begun several conversations around the various requests that were made of us. As we noted it will take some time to respond to the requests and to institute appropriate policies and programs to address your concerns. Marianne has committed to getting the full document with requests and responses to everyone by the end of August.

In the spirit of healing and reconciliation, we, as members of Village Council and the community-at-large have requests of you.

* Regardless of how you feel about Chief Carlson’s call to the former KKK member (he advised that he was not a current member, but investigations proved that he had been a member of the KKK in Indiana), we had hoped for a more gracious response after the Chief explained his position and offer his apologies for offending your sensibilities.
  + We would like for you to publicly acknowledge and accept Chief’s rationale for handling the call the way he did. While Chief Carlson’s actions were part of his responsibility to serve and protect the residents of the Village, he allowed that some of you might have taken personal offense, and he offered the apology. You owe him a response.
* It is, in our opinion, unacceptable that protesters as part of your marches have been allowed to display placards and chant “YSPD and KKK. Who are you protecting?” This happened while YSPD officers were literally carrying out their duties to protect *you*! Allowing this inflammatory rhetoric to go on unchecked as part of your protest has been an affront to the Chief and the Officers of YSPD.
  + We believe you owe the members of the YSPD a public apology for the messaging that appears to be sanctioned by the leadership of your group
* We acknowledge that you did express some appreciation for the things that the Village Manager, YSPD, and Village Council had already accomplished in our work to be a welcoming community and to live out our other Village values. For you, however, this long list of accomplishments over a considerable period of time seemed to pale in comparison to your demands being met.
  + We would like you to publicly acknowledge the work that the Yellow Springs Police Department, Village Council and Staff have done in the vein of anti-racism and equity over the last several years and continue to do this work in line with the concerns you have expressed.

Just as we have made a commitment to you as allies in this work, we ask that you reach out and join us by responding to our requests.

In Solidarity,

Marianne MacQueen and Kevin Stokes