

Correspondence received by the Concord Select Board  
Week Ending – September 23, 2024

1. Joe Palumbo Concord 250 Event Planning
2. Joe Palumbo 90 Black House Place
3. Paul Macone 33 Grove Street

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Subject: Concord 250 Wins Grant of 25k for A Fight for Freedom: Honoring Patriots of Color

Please spread the work with your colleagues as you see fit and many thanks for all your support of Cocnord250 and our ongoing work.!

Concord 250 Wins Grant of 25k for A Fight for Freedom: Honoring Patriots of Color

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sep 17, 2024

The State House, Boston, MA

Today The Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) announced the recipients of the Massachusetts 250 Grant Program. This program, awarding a total of \$1.5 million, aims to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in a vibrant and engaging way. Awarded projects highlight the themes of revolution and independence and tell a more expansive story of all people who helped build our great nation.

The Town of Concord and Concord 250 was honored to be announced as a recipient and was awarded a total of \$25,000 for the project "A Fight for Freedom: Honoring Patriots of Color". This was one of only 37 projects that was funded out of over 180- applications from communities throughout the state.

Concord's project is in alignment with the Healey-Driscoll Administration goals of ensuring all peoples stories are celebrated in the upcoming Massachusetts 250 and Concord250 celebrations as with our local Select Board's charge to have the the work of Concord250

"include reference to new historical research and the contributions of Indigenous and Black Concordians in the founding and development of our country"

A Fight for Freedom: Honoring Patriots of Color: Project Overview

Between twenty and forty colonists who fought along the Battle Road on April 19, 1775, were of African descent or Indigenous people. Although excluded from required militia service prior to the war, these individuals of color were the first of many to take up arms between 1775 and 1783. By the end of the conflict, an estimated 5,500 African and

Indigenous men served on the colonial side. Unfortunately, systemic racism and historical bias have erased or buried many records of Black and Indigenous people who played a prominent role in the founding of the United States. Through this ongoing series of programs we will examine the known history and stories of these Patriots of Color who fought for freedom locally both during the American Revolution and beyond. Minuteman National Park, Robbins House and Concord Visitors Center and others will lead these programs examining the incredible stories of individuals who risked everything during their struggle for liberty, equality, and freedom for all.

#### Program Components

- Opening Fight For Freedom Presentation with a live interactive discussion in Concord venue and available virtually and remotely.
- Program launch and activation of Weekly low cost/no cost walking tours of key sites related to the Fight For Freedom Program through the 2025-2026 celebration season
- Professional production and wide distribution Virtual Video Fight For Freedom Tour available online and at select venues

Gary Clayton , Chair of Concord250 and Joe Palumbo, Chair of the Concord250 Event Planning group were in attendance and were honored that Concord's good work was recognized and rewarded with the most generous grant from the Commonwealth.

For more info on A Fight for Freedom: Honoring Patriots of Color Project please contact :

Joe Palumbo

Concord 250 Event Planning

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To The Select Board

Thank you for your continued support of Concord Pride. Thank you for the work you have done these past few months as you have modified the flag raising policy.

It is appreciated that the policy being proposed will still allow for the Juneteenth and the Pride Progress to have the opportunity to be flown. These are important steps as we work to continue to show Concord as a welcoming community.

Concord is a community that is intent on expanding the franchise of freedom, liberty and equality by welcoming all and always working to broaden and strengthen that welcome.

As discussed at your last meeting, Item 4 in the policy had not been clarified. I hope that no unnecessary controversy will be created by stopping the PRIDE flag decorations on the lamp posts during the festival. As you remember they were SUPER popular and beautiful last year and were authorized by the Town Manager. So many folks in the community commented on the power of that action and the positive message it sent. That is one of the most powerful aspects of leadership.

I hope that you solidify the language that will keep this process in place. My friend and colleague Jennifer Kelly has shared with you some language that I repeat below. We hope you would approve language such as:

4. Light Post Flag Usage: Light posts in Concord and West Concord town centers may be decorated for seasonal holidays and celebratory events. The posts are equipped with small flag brackets for this purpose. The Town Manager has discretion to order decorations to be hung on these light posts and such decorations may include any flags that have otherwise been approved by the Select Board pursuant to this policy, including American and ceremonial flags.

Concord has made great progress in a short time sending new signals of welcome and opportunity for all to participate in the joys of freedom, equality and welcome. Let's keep that momentum going!

Thanks so very much.

Joe Palumbo

90 Black House Place

Concord, MA 01742

Members of the Select Board:

The agenda for your meeting this evening includes an item on the upcoming Town Manager's yearly evaluation. It's worth noting that the Town Manager's evaluation should have been completed prior to July 1st of this year and that the Town Manager's contract automatically issues a significant pay raise on July 1st in the event the evaluation wasn't completed on time, which it wasn't. In effect, according to the contract, the pay raise isn't tied to the evaluation as should logically be the case. It raises the question as to what is the point of the evaluation? I think this setting a bad precedent. Was there any outreach by the Select Board to solicit input from citizen's regarding the evaluation as there has been in the past Town Manager evaluations?

I think following the Town's policies is also another goal to be set for this already in effect year. One policy I already contacted the Board on months ago is APP #27, Authorization for and Use of Town Vehicles. This policy is still not being followed. There are still town vehicles being taken home by employees outside of this in effect policy. #4. of APP #27 states, "All vehicles (except police vehicles) shall be identified with the Town seal and the department. The only department's that are in compliance with this are CMLP and the Police department. The reasoning behind this requirement is obvious. This is but one of several policies not being followed.

With regard to communication between the Town Manager and citizens, this is an area that needs significant improvement. Getting information on, and the status of Gerow Park has been more than troubling. The simple act of a payment from the Town to CMLP for services rendered (installation of the electric service) at Gerow was almost an effort in futility. It took almost a year for the town to acknowledge this simple contractual obligation and I was stonewalled multiple times. The Gerow Park project has been abysmal and communication regarding multiple aspects of the project has been equally bad. On October 11, 2023 I sent an email to the Select Board (and others, see attached) and Ms. LaFleur and I were going to meet, at my request, at Gerow Park to discuss some of the outstanding problems with the project. As you can read from the attached email string, this meeting was interfered with by a member of the Select Board and the meeting never took place because of this interference. I also point out that it was inferred that meeting with me, a taxpayer, would slow the project down (see attached email string).

Since this evening's Board meeting will include an item regarding the Town Manager's evaluation, it's my opinion that many problems still exist, including communication and transparency with the taxpaying public.

Paul Macone

33 Grove Street

Concord