

Statement from Mayor Nicholson:

"Several individuals have reached out regarding holding a vigil in the City with regard to the situation that occurred yesterday on Cherry Street. Due to the fact that the investigation is still ongoing and since the suspect is still at large, at the recommendation of the Police Department, we are asking that no vigils be held at this time. Additionally, the City will not approve or issue any park permit applications for any public spaces for vigils related to this matter until such safety concerns are alleviated and the investigation reaches the appropriate point.

The Gardner Domestic Violence Task Force and the Voices of Truth Inc have been notified of this decision. City officials were informed that they had already been reaching out to their members discouraging any vigils at this point due to the ongoing nature of the investigation. This was being done even before we had reached out. They are in complete agreement with this decision and support it in every way. The Gardner Police Department Domestic Violence Advocate has also been made aware and is in agreement as well.

Gardner has always been a community that has been there for our neighbors in times of trouble, however, these events need to be done at the appropriate time and in conjunction with those who are overseeing the investigation so that the event does not hinder the investigation or cause any additional safety concerns.

As a person of faith myself, I appreciate the way that members of our community want to come together to pray for our neighbors and those impacted by these terrible events. My prayers go out to everyone who was involved and impacted. My heart breaks for the family. However, the Police have a job to do, and we need to let them do it in the most effective and efficient way. We will be planning something in the future at the appropriate time when the situation is no longer in an active state.

We are also asking that residents please stop live posting transmissions over the police scanner onto Facebook and other social media platforms, as this can very easily compromise pieces of the investigation. We understand people mean well when acting this way, but the unintended consequences must be considered as well.

Thank you to the Gardner Police Department, Massachusetts State Police, and Joseph D. Early Jr., Worcester County District Attorney's Office for the work they are doing on the matter."

- Michael Nicholson, Mayor of Gardner