

Depiction of Native Americans in Public Markers in Sudbury Letter from Sudbury Clergy Association

January 25, 2022

Dear Members of the Sudbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission,

As members of the Sudbury Clergy Association, we are concerned about the representation of First Peoples (Indigenous People) in public markers in Sudbury.

Three of Sudbury's public markers (see #1-3 below) suggest, without providing any context, that during the so-called King Philip's War, colonial settlers were defending their land from attacks by First Peoples. Through our 2021 eyes, the conflict between colonials and Metacomet (King Philip) and his people can be understood quite differently. Since First Peoples resided on this land for thousands of years before colonial settlers arrived, in the broader context, they can be understood to have been defending *their* ancestral land from invasion by colonial settlers. A fourth marker (see #4 below) states that the Town of Sudbury was "settled" in 1638, rendering invisible the presence of First Peoples on the land prior to the arrival of colonial settlers.

1. [Sudbury Fight](#)

Inscription: "One-quarter mile north took place the Sudbury Fight with King Philip's Indians on April 21, 1676. Captain Samuel Wadsworth fell with twenty-eight of his men; their monument stands in the burying ground."

2. [Haynes Garrison House](#)

Inscription: "One-Eighth of a mile north is the site of the Haynes Garrison House, the home of Deacon John Haynes. Here the settlers by their brave defense saved the town when King Philip and his Indian warriors attacked Sudbury in April, 1676."

3. [The Goodnow Garrison House](#)

Inscription: "Portion of the Goodnow Garrison House in which the settlers took refuge from King Philip's Indians during the battle of April 18-21, 1676."

4. [Sudbury](#)

Inscription: "Settled 1638 by a company of Puritans who arrived in the ship "Confidence" and were attracted by the meadows on the Musketaquid River. Named after Sudbury in Suffolk."

We write today to ask that the Sudbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission consider exploring and opening a conversation about public markers in Sudbury and their depiction of

First Peoples. Recently, the Wayland Public Library hosted a panel discussion titled *The Public History of King Philip's War*. A recording of the program is available [here](#). The Library panel, which included First Peoples scholars, offered insights on initiating public conversations about historical events involving First Peoples and centering the voices of present-day First Peoples in those conversations.

We thank you for your consideration, and look forward to your response.

Respectfully yours,

Rabbi Joshua Breindel, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley

Reverend Tom O'Brien, Pastor and Teacher, Memorial Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

Reverend Dr. Marjorie Matty, Senior Minister, First Parish of Sudbury, Unitarian Universalist

Rabbi Lisa Eiduson, Congregation B'nai Torah