

Hate crime investigation launched following graffiti incident

By Brock Weir

York Regional Police are treating an incident of racist graffiti on McClellan Way as a hate crime.

A racist slur, as well as swastika, were found spray painted on the southwest Aurora street over the weekend, leaving area residents shaken, and prompting neighbours and municipal staff alike to spring into action to remove the offending words.

An investigation was launched on Monday.

‘Specially-trained 5 District hate crime investigators have been engaged in this investigation while our central Hate Crime Unit will be monitoring the case as it progresses,’ says Constable Andy Pattenden. ‘York Regional Police will not tolerate hate crime in any form. These kinds of crimes not only hurt the community that has been targeted, but they hurt us all. We take great pride in being one of Canada’s safest and most inclusive communities and we remain vigilant in our fight against prejudice, discrimination and hate in our community.’

Mayor Geoff Dawe was on the scene Monday morning and denounced what he saw.

‘Sometime on Friday, June 16 or early Saturday, June 17, a hateful, racist slur was painted on one side of the roadway near McClellan Way and Loraview Lane, and a swastika was painted on the other,’ he said. ‘It was reported to my office on Monday morning, June 19, and I immediately went out to visit the site.

By the time I had arrived, someone in the neighbourhood had painted over the slur, but it was still somewhat obvious. Our roads crew were dispatched immediately to correct this.

‘As Mayor, I am shocked and deeply saddened by this act. Aurora is a community that embraces diversity, and I believe, takes great pride in cultivating and celebrating an inclusive Town, where all are welcome.

‘Just in the last two weeks, I have had the privilege of welcoming a revered Buddhist spiritual leader to our community, raising the Pride flag at Town Hall, and of attending a Ramadan Iftar Diner. Perfect examples of how an inclusive community can and should act.

‘There is no room for hate and discrimination in Aurora, where all our residents have the right to live in a community where they feel safe.’

Anyone with information is asked to contact York Regional Police’s #1 District Criminal Investigations Bureau at 1-866-876-5423 x7141. They can also leave an anonymous tip through Crime Stoppers by calling 1-800-222-TIPS, or doing the same online through www.1800222TIPS.com or by texting your tip to CRIMES (274637) starting with the word YORK.

‘I have personally spoken with senior members of York Regional Police, and will continue to stay engaged with them throughout their investigation,’ said Mayor Dawe. ‘And, finally, thank you to the community-minded resident who painted over the slur.’