

# Students march to amplify black voices

Demonstrations at Del Mar, Redwood schools protest racial bias, inequality



CARRIE JANOT PHOTO

Roughly 40 students and parents walked from Del Mar Middle School to Blackie's Pasture for a 'March Against Injustice' on June 6.

By **EMILY LAVIN** | [elavin@thearknewspaper.com](mailto:elavin@thearknewspaper.com)

A group of about 40 Del Mar Middle School students and parents walked Blackie's Pasture and the Old Rail Trail June 6 to protest racial bias and show their support for the Black Lives Matter movement.

The local event was one of two peaceful protests against racism and police brutality organized by students over the weekend. On June 7, Redwood High School students and community members gathered at the school's Larkspur campus for an event sponsored by the school's Students Organized for Anti-Racism club.

The students joined peaceful protesters across the country who

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## be heard

Tiburon Mayor Alice Fredericks and Vice Mayor Holli Thier ask: "What do you see as needed immediate change? What actions do you see local government taking that effectively address needed change? What can we take on as a community to shift structural racism?"

• **Tiburon:** Email the Town Council at [town@townoftiburon.org](mailto:town@townoftiburon.org), Fredericks at [afredericks@townoftiburon.org](mailto:afredericks@townoftiburon.org), Thier at [hthier@townoftiburon.org](mailto:hthier@townoftiburon.org) and Police Chief Michael Cronin at [mcronin@tiburonpd.org](mailto:mcronin@tiburonpd.org).

• **Belvedere:** Email the City Council at [clerk@cityofbelvedere.org](mailto:clerk@cityofbelvedere.org), Mayor Nancy Kennitzer at [nkennitzer@cityofbelvedere.org](mailto:nkennitzer@cityofbelvedere.org), Vice Mayor James Campbell at [jcampbell@cityofbelvedere.org](mailto:jcampbell@cityofbelvedere.org) and Police Chief Jason Wu at [jwu@cityofbelvedere.org](mailto:jwu@cityofbelvedere.org).

# Police chief apologizes after outcry over protest warning

Reactions mixed when top cop ties Marin City march to potential for local mayhem

By **HANNAH WEIKEL**  
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Tiburon Police Chief Michael Cronin last week apologized for his word choice in a warning to residents that a peaceful protest in Marin City against racism and police brutality could result in mayhem that targeted Tiburon.

Cronin's initial June 1 message drew an immediate and vocal response from the community: Some online thanked the Police Department for working to protect residents and businesses. Others called Cronin's message "inflaming" and "tone deaf" for tying the potential for violence to the march in Marin City, which has the county's largest black population at nearly 40 percent of residents, and for effectively telling Tiburon residents not to participate by advising against travel on southbound Highway 101. Dozens of people called the department to voice their opinions, and at least one Main Street business boarded up its windows.

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# Tiburon makes it easier for businesses to expand outdoor dining and retail

Tables also going up at Fountain Plaza; Main Street-closure talk is next week

By **DEIRDRE McCROHAN**  
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The town of Tiburon will enable daily outdoor dining on Fountain Plaza and make it easier for merchants to do business outdoors amid the coronavirus pandemic — the latter move already paving the way for Luna Blu,

Salt & Pepper and Waypoint Pizza to bring new options to Main Street.

At its June 3 teleconference meeting, the Town Council voted unanimously to temporarily suspend all town regulations that could otherwise prohibit businesses from

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# Town projects \$227K deficit on draft \$13.04 million budget

By **DEIRDRE McCROHAN**  
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After several years of operating with a surplus, the town of Tiburon is projecting a quarter-million-dollar budget deficit in fiscal 2021, largely due to projected declines in sales and hotel taxes caused by the coronavirus-related economic shutdown.

The town's draft \$13.04 million budget projects \$12.8 million in revenue for a deficit of \$227,548 that would require the town to dip into its general-fund reserve to close the gap. However, after reviewing the draft at its June 3 teleconference meeting, several members of the Town Council urged staff

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In his June 2 apology, Cronin stood in support of peaceful protests in Marin City and condemned racism, social injustices and police brutality — but he also couched it in the reader's interpretation of his warning, addressing his apology to those who “construed (his words) as offensive and racist” and “to those I have offended.”

In a later interview, Cronin said he had to take seriously threatening social-media posts, looting elsewhere in the Bay Area, increasing caution by other departments, the Marin City march's crowd size and the likelihood of it drawing people from throughout the region — and that he wouldn't have changed anything about his response in his duty to protect citizens.

“I'm not willing to change how I do my job,” he said. “What kind of conversation are we going to have if something happens and we didn't do anything about it?”

Cronin's first message was sent to subscribers of the town's Tiburon Talk email newsletter and posted on the community forum Nextdoor.com about 5 p.m. June 1, the evening before a peaceful march planned in Marin City after a weekend of protests around the county, the Bay Area and the nation following the Memorial Day death of George Floyd.

Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, died after a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck for more than 8 minutes. Floyd was handcuffed and lying face down in the street at the time. The official and independent autopsy reports stated the cause of death was homicide, and all four officers who took part in the arrest have been fired and charged.

The incident was captured on video, sparking widespread outrage. In the two weeks since, protesters have gathered and marched in cities and towns across the U.S. to show solidarity for the Black Lives Matter movement, decry racial inequality and demand systemic police reforms. While some of those protests have led to violence, destruction and looting — whether by protesters or opportunists taking advantage of the crowds — the vast majority of protesters have gathered peacefully. Videos and eyewitness accounts at protests have also showed unprovoked police using aggressive tactics, including using batons, firing rubber bullets, using tear gas on peaceful demonstrators and using the same controversial neck hold that led to Floyd's death.

In Cronin's June 1 message, he asserted the Marin City protest was closer to Tiburon than others and that his department had caught wind of social-media posts “encouraging participants to shift their attention to more affluent communities, with specific mention of Walnut Creek, Danville, Sausalito and Tiburon.”

He said those postings “were clearly not written by individuals interested in peaceful protest” and urged Tiburon residents to stay off southbound Highway 101 during the Marin City protest, planned for 1:30 p.m. June 2, because a common tactic at other demonstrations in the Bay Area and across the nation was to block freeways.

“This can escalate into attacks of vehicles and their occupants,” he stated, adding his department would “substantially” increase police presence in Tiburon during and after the Marin City demonstration.

The statement prompted a swift response from protest organizers and many others across Marin, both on social media

and through calls to the Tiburon Police Department, where staff said the phone was “ringing nonstop” the following morning.

Some expressed concern about riots and looting and asked for more details about what preventive measures police were taking.

Others said they were angry that Cronin connected the potential for danger to the protest in Marin City — even if the chief's concerns were about outsiders taking advantage of the event — as he had not issued warnings about the danger of outsiders or protests that had in previous days taken place in predominately white Marin communities, including in Mill Valley, which shares a freeway exit with Tiburon.

While Marin City is 61 percent non-white, including 38 percent black, Mill Valley is just 11 percent non-white, 0.8 percent black, and Tiburon is 12 percent nonwhite, 0.9 percent black, according to 2010 U.S. Census data.

Since then, other marches and rallies — including additional protests in Mill Valley and a June 6 march from Del Mar Middle School to Blackie's Pasture in Tiburon — also did not prompt police warnings about protesters or outsiders.

Lynnette Egenlauf, a Marin City native who helped organize the protest, called Cronin's message to Tiburon residents “disheartening.”

“I laughed even though it's not a laughing matter,” she said in an interview. “It showed the racism that we have been trying to express this entire time, and the stereotypes that are put on Marin City and people of color.”

The Marin chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice, or SURJ, issued a statement on Facebook objecting to Cronin's message after it was widely dispersed on Nextdoor.

“This peaceful protest is being organized by young women of color as a way to honor those who have died as a result of police brutality,” the statement said. “There have been peaceful protests all over the county (the previous) weekend, from Fairfax to Sausalito. The idea that a protest based in Marin City — which has more African American residents than any other locality in Marin — will be violent, and that there is a need for police escalation, is yet another effort to criminalize our black neighbors and friends.”

In an emailed statement last week, Tiburon Mayor Alice Fredericks stood by Cronin's warning and his apology.

“The chief did his duty in warning about a possible freeway blockage, in reaching out to the organizers of the protest and in issuing an apology to them,” Fredericks said.

On June 8, Fredericks and Tiburon Vice Mayor Holli Thier issued a joint statement saying they were “appalled” at the manner of Floyd's death. In addition, they've asked the Tiburon Police Department to post a web link to their police training and protocol on the town's website by the end of the week “to ensure that our officers are protecting and serving in safe and respectful ways.”

They also asked residents to email them with ideas about how the town can “effectively address needed change” and “shift structural racism.”

### Community sounds off

On social media, reaction to Cronin's initial statement was mixed. Many Tiburon residents responded with anger and incredulity, while an equal measure expressed

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gratitude amid concerns looting or vandalism could occur in areas near the protests.

The Police Department received emails and calls from people thanking them for the early warning even though no vandalism or property damage occurred, including a letter from Jerry Horn, the owner of Tiburon Wine on Ark Row.

"Thanks to your early warning, we were prepared with plenty of advance notice in the event we had to shore up and protect our properties against looting and vandalism. That it did not actually happen could just be by chance," Horn said in an email. "The way you handled it, from my point of view, was what we would and should expect from a vigilant, prepared police department."

At least one downtown business, Koze, a women's boutique on Main Street in Tiburon, boarded up its windows the morning of the June 2 march in response to Cronin's warning.

Koze owner Darla Fisher said her decision was out of an "abundance of caution" and to ensure the safety of her employees.

"When the police chief sends out a note, I think it's best to heed that," she said.

Fisher's husband, Jon, said in a separate email interview that he had also seen threats on Tiburon Nextdoor — after Cronin had issued his warning — in which people appeared to be encouraging the looting and burning of local businesses. Those posts have since been removed from the site.

CVS/pharmacy on Tiburon Boulevard also closed down early in response to protests in the Bay Area. It was one of more than 200 of the chain drug stores to shut down across the country June 1-2.

On Nextdoor.com, several Tiburon residents shared Cronin's warning, defending his message and urging others to take it seriously.

Kristin Nelson of Tiburon said she had seen tweets and other social-media posts from people outside of Marin that encouraged looting and violence in Corte Madera, Sausalito and Tiburon. She pointed to looting that took place May 31 near Walnut Creek's Broadway Plaza shopping corridor. A woman was shot in the arm during the frenzy.

"The police are taking precautions because of these social-media posts," she said. "These social-media posts are similar to social-media posts about rioting and looting in Walnut Creek, and we all know what happened there. The police are just watching out for us."

Tiburon resident Christi McElreath said that if violence or rioting did occur in Tiburon and the police had prior knowledge but didn't tell the public, they would be condemned for not issuing a warning.

"The police are obligated to keep the public informed of any possible risks even if they don't come to fruition," McElreath said. "Based on the non-peaceful protests that have occurred in the Bay Area, the police had a legitimate reason to alert the public to the possibility."

Meanwhile, others said they were upset the message seemed to point a finger at the Marin City protest without clear information substantiating the social-media threats.

Ruby Monte, a Tiburon resident, posted on Nextdoor criticizing Cronin for not differentiating between peaceful protesters in Marin City and groups unaffiliated with protests that have been looting and causing



PROVIDED BY LYNNETTE EGENLAUF

**More than 1,000 people marched June 2 from Marin Gateway Shopping Center to Bridge the Gap College Prep on Drake Avenue in Marin City in a peaceful protest organized after George Floyd was arrested in Minneapolis on Memorial Day and died after a police officer knelt on his neck for more than 8 minutes.**



ELLIOT KARLAN / FOR THE ARK

**The owners of Koze clothing boutique on Tiburon's Main Street boarded up the shop early June 2, the morning of the Marin City protest. They say they did so out of an abundance of caution after Tiburon Police Chief Michael Cronin issued a warning to residents that social-media posts suggested participants 'shift their attention to more affluent communities' like Tiburon, adding that the posts 'were clearly not written by individuals interested in peaceful protest.' After the chief's statements were posted on Nextdoor.com and residents began to react to the warning, Koze's owners said they saw posts there that appeared to suggest people loot businesses or even set them on fire.**

violence elsewhere.

"You are inflaming the situation by lumping the two groups together and needlessly sending the message that Tiburon residents should fear all protests," Monte wrote. "Instead, with all due respect, sir, try to be better and less tone-deaf with police warnings and fear mongering."

In a similar post, Tiburon resident Nick Shorten asked why Cronin hadn't issued a warning when protesters gathered in the nearby communities of Mill Valley, Sausalito, San Anselmo and San Rafael in the previous days.

"There's a stigma toward Marin City in Tiburon, and it's always kind of been that way," Shorten said in an interview. "I think part of the fear of the Marin City protest is because it's Marin City and a black community, and that's sickening."

Shorten, who attended the Marin City protest, said Cronin's message to the community might have been different if he had spoken to the protest organizers ahead of time.

"It was clear the police chief did not have any correspondence or conversations with the organizers of this event," he said, adding that if police believed there was a real threat to safety, they had the responsibility to share that information without stoking fear.

Karen Schuler Hill, a Tiburon resident, said on Nextdoor that she sent an email to the town of Tiburon and to Cronin expressing her concern about the local police response.

"It seemed like our town officials were just itching for something to happen, staffing up to do what?" Schuler Hill asked, adding Cronin had issued an apology shortly after her email. "I'm happy that the tone changed, but still, that first one came from a place of privilege. We simply cannot abide racism in any shape or form, nor take away anyone's right to peacefully protest."

### Police chief apologizes, explains response

About an hour after the Marin City protest began, and nearly 22 hours after sending

out his initial warning to Tiburon residents, Cronin issued his apology to the community.

In it, he noted he had spoken to one of the organizers and that "unequivocally we stand in support with the Marin City community and condemn the recent actions of the police officers in Minneapolis."

"My statement yesterday was construed by many people as offensive and racist. I realize I am a leader in this community and my words have power," Cronin said. "The Tiburon Police Department does not want to defame the reputation of or contribute to a negative narrative about our neighbors in Marin City. It is apparent today I should have found other words to express my concern. To those I have offended, I offer my sincere apologies."

Cronin also signed a joint statement from the Marin County Chief's Association supporting the peaceful protests and denouncing the actions of the four Minneapolis police officers involved in Floyd's death. Though Cronin said the statement had been in the works, it wasn't released until later June 1, after Cronin's initial warning and after residents already began to react.

In the later interview with The Ark, Cronin said he had spoken with one of the protest organizers to hear her concerns and explain his intention wasn't to offend the Marin City community. During their conversation, Cronin said he asked her to send ideas of what he should include in his public apology.

"All that Marin City means to me is a geographical location on a map," he said. "People who are trying to put words in my mouth are off the mark."

Cronin said he didn't want to offend anyone. "If I offend anybody, I'm more than willing to apologize."

According to Cronin, a Twitter post brought to his attention on May 30 mentioned bringing protests to Tiburon and other affluent towns was what ignited his concern.

The Ark was able to recover an archive of the tweet, which was shared more than 500 times before it was deleted.

"We need to stop protesting in Oakland. We need to bring this s--- to Walnut Creek, Danville, etc.," it read, continuing in a follow-up tweet: "Or the North Bay with all their racist asses (i.e. Sausalito & Tiburon)."

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The original poster was a San Francisco resident, and no context of that tweet suggested any connection to the peaceful march in Marin City.

Cronin said he didn't think much of the post at first but then heard news reports of people attacking cars and businesses in Walnut Creek during otherwise peaceful protests.

"I can't calculate the veracity of these posts, but I can't ignore them either," Cronin said.

Cronin also pointed to a memorandum sent out to merchants at Greenbrae's Bon Air shopping center by the center's management on June 1. The flier said management had been notified by the Central Marin Police Authority that the authority had picked up "radio chatter" about a parade of approximately 100 cars with four to five "agitators" in each planning to target retail centers in Marin.

"They believe that the cars will come over the bridge and hit one or more of the four shopping centers in our area," the memo said. "They are threatening looting and fire and tend to target jewelry stores, CVS (because of the drugs) and Target."

Seemingly in response to information coming from the Central Marin police, Bon Air and other shopping centers closed down entrances, and several car dealerships in Southern Marin moved their inventory to storage June 1-2, including Porsche Marin

in Strawberry, along the Redwood Highway frontage road.

A Central Marin police spokeswoman did not respond to The Ark's request for comment on the "chatter" picked up by the agency.

Cronin said he was also receiving information from local police departments about increasing security during protests, as well as news from police in other parts of the Bay Area about violent protests and warnings about firearm dealers being looted across the state.

"What we are seeing in other jurisdictions are lawful demonstrations by peaceful people who are rightfully angry about what's going on ... then as the day wears on, very often these other people show up and try to infiltrate the crowd or attack businesses," Cronin said. "They have nothing to do with the legitimate protesters."

Cronin said he issued a warning ahead of the Marin City protest but not before any of the other protests in neighboring communities because the Marin County Sheriff's Office had notified him the Marin City protest was expected to draw a large crowd, including people from outside Marin.

The Sheriff's Office did not respond to The Ark's request for comment.

"Large peaceful protests usually evolve into something more dangerous and violent," Cronin said. "If you see that as a pattern and couple that with information you're getting, there's a lot of different ways you can connect those dots, and I have to err on the side of caution."

In Marin, where numerous protests of different sizes have been held, no looting, riots or vandalism has been reported. The county has not issued a curfew, as has been seen in cities and counties across the Bay Area and the rest of the country.

### Thousands gather for Marin City protest

Last week's protest in Marin City drew more than 1,000 people for a march June 2 from the Marin Gateway Shopping Center parking lot to Bridge the Gap College Prep on Drake Avenue, where about 15 people of all ages gave speeches, including one man who drove down from Sacramento.

While most attendees were Marin City residents, protest organizers said people came from across Marin, as well as from outside the county. The protest, which began about 1:30 p.m., had ended and people had cleared out by 4:30 p.m.

Egenlauf, a physical-education teacher at Willow Creek Academy in Sausalito, helped organize the event along with two other young women, Mikyla Williams and Ayana Woodard.

"We noticed there were individual protests going on around Marin, but with Marin City being the only predominately black town in Marin County ... we wanted to make sure our voices were heard as a Marin City community," Egenlauf said. "You can't really have a Black Lives Matter protest without black people."

They spread the word over Facebook and other social media and communicated with

the Marin County Sheriff's Office to advise the agency that the protest would be peaceful and not disrupt traffic.

"Our entire point for this protest was for it to be peaceful," she said. "There was a prayer over our protest to make sure people knew this would not be (a destructive) kind of gathering, we would not allow it."

On the day of the march, the Ross and Target stores at Marin Gateway closed down, which Egenlauf suspected was due to the local police reaction.

"We have these huge corporations in our neighborhood, and they just shut the doors on us and didn't even give us the chance," she said.

Longtime Tiburon resident Jarvis Jones was among the residents posting about the chief's statement and about the Marin City protest on Nextdoor.com.

In an interview, she said she wasn't able to attend the Marin City march, but she said she believed in the message the protesters were sending.

"This is bigger than George Floyd. This is a worldwide reaction to everything that's going on," she said. "George Floyd is what set it off, but it's a reaction to injustice, to economic injustice and the pandemic. ... People are just fed up with everything; it isn't just the police. The police reacted, they should have sat down and thought about it, but it's bigger than them."

*Reporter Hannah Weikel covers the city of Belvedere, as well as crime, courts and public safety issues on the Tiburon Peninsula. Reach her at 415-944-4627.*

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