Lake Orion, MI – “For the record, and if it wasn’t clear before, I support Black Lives Matter,” said Orion Township Supervisor Chris Barnett on social media following a protest in Lake Orion Friday.

Hundreds of people marched through Downtown Lake Orion this weekend with messages against police brutality, discrimination, and inequality, including Barnett.

Lake Orion Police Chief Harold Rossman also joined in the march and took time to speak with individuals who wanted to know more about the community’s approach to policing.

“Last night was a picture of the America I want to live in. A country where we are free to express our opinions. A country where law-enforcement and first responders stand beside and in support of peaceful protesters. A country where all men and women are equal. A country where my beautiful African-American niece Shiloh will grow up knowing she is valued and respected.”
Sara Peoples was one of the organizers of the event “Some of the young adults I know wanted to be a part of this movement and wanted to have it in their own community,” she said. “I would like to see truly equal justice under the law. I think that it has become clear to everyone that there are different rules for those with power and privilege and those without. We have seen the police abuse their great power by assaulting and murdering unarmed and defenseless people. We have seen our politicians abuse the awesome power that they are entrusted with by the people and face no consequences.

“We have also seen those without power trampled by those who claim to represent the law. We have seen black men, women, and children murdered by law enforcement and those under the protection of law enforcement. I would like to see those who commit crimes while wearing the badge arrested, tried, and convicted instead of “suspended” with pay or fired to only be rehired at another department.

“I would like to see drastic reform implemented, starting in the local police departments and ending in Washington. I would like to see new accountability measures to ensure that those with the greatest means to abuse their power be held to the highest standards. I want mandated body cameras for all police officers. I want independent oversight. I want prosecutions where crimes have been committed. I demand justice.”

Daniel Joseph Harris attended the rally out of concern for police violence. “It is a shame what happened with George Floyd and instances where law enforcement officers murder an unarmed man/woman who isn’t resisting arrest, was complying with the orders is wrong and need to be stopped. You look at photos and videos of news
teams and protesters being beaten by riot police when they are there peacefully, you see people losing their eyes because of an officer shoots them with a “non-lethal” round like pepper balls, or rubber bullets,” Harris said. “I’ve gone through that sort of training and I can promise you weapons like that they can turn into a lethal round.

“We went to the BLM protest yesterday in Lake Orion to show our support that everyone’s voice should be heard, no matter the color on your skin. Protesting is important to me because it gives us all a voice to be heard,” he said.

This is one of a vast number of protests happening around the world following the death of a black man named George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police on Memorial Day. Protests have been happening in cities large and small. The protest was mild compared to riots that destroyed parts of Minneapolis, Atlanta, New York and other cities around the county and the globe. In Metro Detroit several smaller protests have been up, including in Pontiac, Royal Oak, Ferndale, Farmington Hills, Rochester Hills, Huntington Woods, Clarkston and more.