

NEWS

Lowell solidarity event: 'This is what democracy looks like'

By **KORI TUITT**UPDATED: July 11, 2019 at 12:00 AM EDT

LOWELL — Dissatisfaction and alarm following the presidential election results prompted some Lowell residents to come together Sunday afternoon for a solidarity rally to stand against hate and discrimination.

Roughly 100 people gathered outside Lowell City Hall to voice their thoughts on the election before marching down to Mill No. 5, at 250 Jackson St., for an organizing meeting.

Sue Kim, an English professor at UMass Lowell, became one of the leaders in the event once she found out it was planned.

"After the election, like many people, I was surprised, scared and confused," Kim said. "We don't know necessarily what's going to happen, but the signs aren't great and a lot of people are very scared.

"We really wanted to come together and make a strong stance that we, as a community, we reject all forms of hate and discrimination," she said.

Lowell is a city of immigrants, she said, with a rich and diverse history. She hoped people who came out were given the opportunity to process what is happening and decide on what the next steps should be.

Lynne Lupien has organized in Lowell for a number of years on issues of politics, war and more. Although she stepped out of activism for a while, she said the presidential election inspired her to get involved again.

“I want to reaffirm Lowell’s commitment to immigrants and to multiculturalism and to being a welcoming place for all kinds of people,” Lupien said. “Given that we’ve seen so many of these stories, there’s so much of an increase in hate crimes and people being attacked for who they are. So I think that reaffirming that as sort of a first step is really important.”

Others, like Martin Grondin, hoped that this event would mobilize people to build a new political party — one he said that would not be tied to corporate interests.

“We want to start building our own representation, our own way, build our communities the way we want to build them,” Grondin said. “And I think we should do that by staying strong, keeping your friends and family close and love each other.”

Residents began their march chanting “Tell me what democracy looks like. This is what democracy looks like,” with handmade signs and flags in hand.

“We’re not going away any time soon, and we want to be here for solidarity for Lowell,” Lupien said.

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