



# Township of Northampton

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## PRESS RELEASE

August 8, 2022

Over this past weekend, the Township Board of Supervisors and several senior Administration Officials began to receive e-mails from concerned residents about a memorial sign erected in 2021 at Northampton's Municipal Park playground in memory of Christian Tyler Murphy, a toddler who had passed away at the age of 1-year old. Christian loved the playground and particularly the swing.

It was only after the reconstruction of the playground was complete, that a Township employee decided to remove the memorial sign because of concerns expressed by some parents about explaining the meaning of the memorial sign to their children playing at the playground. That employee then failed to notify the Murphy family. This decision was made without the knowledge of the Board of Supervisors, Parks and Recreation Board members, or my office. The Board of Supervisors and the Township Parks and Recreation Board never met, discussed, were informed, or took any action regarding the installation or removal of the memorial sign.

Upon hearing about the incident on Sunday, the Board of Supervisors acted swiftly to contact the family. Chairman Adam Selisker spoke with Mr. and Mrs. Murphy, Christian's parents twice on Sunday, advising that the Board members were surprised by the situation and advised the family that the sign would be re-installed immediately.

At the conclusion of these conversations, the Murphy's stated that the family does not want the sign re-installed at the playground. The Township fully respects the family's wishes not to re-install the sign, and will return the sign to the family and reimburse them for its cost.

On behalf of the Township Administration and Board of Supervisors, I sincerely apologize for the way this situation was handled, and deeply regret any grief our actions have caused to the Murphy family and the community. There was never any malice or bad intent on the part of the Township, or any of its employees.

All of us at the Township wish this unfortunate incident had never happened. An internal review of our policies and procedures will be conducted to ensure that something like this does not happen again.

Robert M. Pellegrino  
Township Manager  
Northampton Township