

**From:** [Carson, Katie](#)  
**To:** [Kolar, Loren](#)  
**Subject:** 5.2 Correspondence from Myke Hutchings respecting 2SLGBTQIA+  
**Date:** July 2, 2019 9:28:06 AM

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GIC – July 8th

(I will provide the hard copies momentarily)

**From:** Myke Hutchings [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** June 27, 2019 8:54 AM  
**To:** Office of the Mayor <[mayor@hamilton.ca](mailto:mayor@hamilton.ca)>; Nann, Nrinder <[Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca](mailto:Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca)>; Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinder Nann <[ward3@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward3@hamilton.ca)>; [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)  
**Subject:** The June 26, 2019 Council Meeting

Dear Mayor, Councillor and City Clerk,

I awoke this morning to the sound of closet doors slamming shut throughout Hamilton.

I watched, with great anger and horror, last night's council meeting on the live stream and followed the various twitter feeds of media and attendees.

I am ashamed to call myself a citizen of Hamilton.

I am ashamed that I have given the past 20 years of my life advocating for this city as a musician and as a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

I've given 20 years of my life to this city, organizing, starting LGBTQ friendly events and groups, advocating for transit and accessibility - and last night was the best display that Hamilton City Council can do to show the city is "The Best Place to Raise a Child."

Apparently not children who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ or the children of parents who do.

In 2007, my husband got the news that he had cancer and would need a transplant or else die. We received this news and went out for a walk, ending up on Locke St. (we live in the Stiplely neighbourhood by the stadium). He broke down in front of a church and I put my arm around him as he wept.

I woke up bleeding with broken ribs in St. Joe's ER, with the instructions from officers telling me to "act less gay and maybe you won't get beaten." No charges were laid despite there being multiple eyewitnesses to the beatings Larry and I received.

This was the second beating we received. The first was on Hess St where we made the mistake of holding hands in public.

Our house was vandalized multiple times when we first moved in.

Each time we reported these incidents the police did nothing, beyond nod and say there was little that they could do. They didn't even crack their notebooks and take names/details.

This aspect isn't limited to Hamilton - members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community always must be vigilant about public displays of affection (holding hands, touching, walking close) which is why we guard Pride festivals and our safe spaces so ferociously.

With each of these events and the relative inaction of Hamilton Police Services, I've had to modify my expectations about policing. Make no bones about it - as a cisgender middle age caucasian male, I have it FAR easier than my BIPOC, Trans and female identifying friends.

My last glimmer for Hamilton being a welcoming city for BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ people disappeared when police stood by while a 15 year old girl got her face smashed in by a man wielding a military helmet. An assault shown on video, an assault witnessed by many, including Hamilton Police Services - who were at Hamilton Pride on June 15, 2019.

After June 15, I can say that I no longer feel safe or welcome in my city for the first time in a long while.

This is why I am being harsh on the "powers that be"

This is why I take issue with police forces being allowed, in uniform, in our safe spaces and events. There is a VAST divide between the two sides and communication has been decidedly one way...there have been a lot of demands broadcasted to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community but precious little listening, hearing, consideration, concession or compromise from the police.

Yes the last assault took place in 2007 - none happened afterwards because my husband and I no longer felt safe in our own city so displays of affection were limited to in private and we even changed how we walked together. He succumbed to cancer in 2013. The vandalism continued and the person who did it still spits at me when she walks by my house to this date - I just stopped reporting because reporting these incidents to the police is a waste of my time.

My point is things HAVEN'T changed for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Hamilton, just as things haven't changed in Toronto - it took a dead white heterosexual female to get police to investigate a serial killer in Toronto while cops were busily trolling parks for people having sex.

Hamilton only has a Pride festival because the 2SLGBTQIA+ community took then mayor Bob Morrow to the Human Rights Tribunal and we fought and won our right to celebrate in the city.

In 2017, Pride Hamilton was forced to switch venues because the city "accidentally" issued a second permit to the Sons of Odin to stage a protest at the exact same time

and location as Hamilton Pride. We felt unsafe with this as the timing of this protest was clearly aimed at putting us in our place.

In 2018, the Wolves of Odin were joined by professional Evangelical Protesters from Texas and Montana who disrupted Haldimand Pride and attempted to disrupt ours. Matthew Green Hamilton Centre led a counter protest which worked against them, however they vowed they'd be back.

In 2019, the protesters from Texas, Montana, "Nouns" of Odin were joined by the Yellow Vests and several "known individuals". Who responded to the counter protests with weapons, sucker punches and garden sprayers filled with noxious unknown fluids.

Police asked in the 11th hour to place a recruitment tent in the festival, Pride organizers said "let's talk" and then heard radio silence. This is far different than the "No Police at Pride" narrative being given.

That being said Pride started as a protest to heavy handed policing coming into our safe spaces, in New York City, in Toronto and in other cities. Society forced the 2SLGBTQIA+ community into a corner, behind closed doors and then decided that that wasn't good enough.

Last night certain councilors and even you, Mr. Mayor seem to want that to happen again.

I am an employee of the Ontario Government, I am a musician who supports the community by performing at and producing events year round. I am an organizer who was a founding member of the Hamilton Gay Men's Chorus, I have helped advocate for accessible transit and worked with the YesLRT campaign, I have helped organize the Hamilton Pagan Harvest Festival for the past 5 years and Hamilton Pride for the past 3 years.

I was planning on retiring and opening a business and had started looking at potential properties that would allow me to do so. However after last night, I feel that if this city will no longer support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, it won't support me as a citizen or a business person.

I'd like to thank Councilors Nann, Wilson, Danko and Clark for their words of support and actual allyship. I am proud to say Councilor Nann is my representative on City Council and thank her for attending Hamilton Pride. I thank her for her statement on CHCH and continued allyship.

I call out the councilors that sat in silence through the entire charade. In the 2SLGBTQIA+ community the statement "Silence equals death" is often used, while it is heavy rhetoric, I've buried friends who committed suicide due to stigmatizing language, buried friends who were beaten and murdered for being queer and buried friends who died during the AIDS crisis. Those who remain complacent show their tacit approval of the status quo. Period.

I express my utmost disappointment in Councilor Merulla and Mayor Eisenberger for continuing the rhetoric of victim blaming and the "two sides" fallacy.

I thought Hamilton could do better. I guess I was wrong.

Yours Sincerely

Michael F. "Myke" Hutchings, BAA  
Hamilton, Ontario

