

From: [Carson, Katie](#)
To: [Kolar, Loren](#)
Subject: FW: Open letter to Mayor Eisenberger from concerned citizens
Date: July 5, 2019 9:31:30 AM
Attachments: [Open letter to Mayor Eisenberger from concerned citizens June 30.pdf](#)

GIC – July 8/19

From: C.A. Borstad Klassen
Sent: July 4, 2019 8:00 AM
To: clerk@hamilton.ca; Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>
Cc: Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Farr, Jason <Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca>; Nann, Nrinder <Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca>; Merulla, Sam <Sam.Merulla@hamilton.ca>; Collins, Chad <Chad.Collins@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Danko, John-Paul <John-Paul.Danko@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Pearson, Maria <Maria.Pearson@hamilton.ca>; Johnson, Brenda <Brenda.Johnson@hamilton.ca>; Ferguson, Lloyd <Lloyd.Ferguson@hamilton.ca>; VanderBeek, Arlene <Arlene.VanderBeek@hamilton.ca>; Whitehead, Terry <Terry.Whitehead@hamilton.ca>; Partridge, Judi <Judi.Partridge@hamilton.ca>; Natalie Lazier
Subject: Open letter to Mayor Eisenberger from concerned citizens

Dear Mayor Eisenberger, Members of Council, and Clerks,

Please see the attached letter from myself and Natalie Lazier (cc'd), as well as 70 of our fellow Hamiltonians expressing our concerns about your leadership around Pride events and developments since.

Sincerely,

C.A. Klassen
 Natalie Lazier

June 30, 2019

Dear Mayor Eisenberger,

As concerned citizens made up of members of 2SLGBTQ+ communities and allies in Hamilton, we write to add our voices to the many others to express our concerns with the response from you and the Hamilton Police Service to the hate-motivated violence that took place at Hamilton Pride on June 15, 2019.

In your June 28, 2019 statement marking the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots you said, “On this day, and every day, I stand in solidarity with our 2SLGBTQ+ communities,” but many of your words and actions since Hamilton Pride contradict this claim. Instead you have been divisive and dismissive of 2SLGBTQ+ communities, and you’ve tried to shift responsibility from you and the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) to 2SLGBTQ+ community members. This is not solidarity; this is victim-blaming.

Your recent comments have made many in 2SLGBTQ+ communities feel less safe in Hamilton. On June 22, 2019 you said on Twitter that “the police [at Pride] did not decline to assist [Pride-goers being attacked by hate groups], and they continue to investigate participants. This false narrative is very unfortunate.” These comments dismiss the experiences of the many Pride-goers and defenders who experienced these hate-motivated attacks. It also suggests that you know the narrative of that day’s events, despite your lack of attendance. Your comments and actions following delegitimize the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ people and allies present at Pride. Solidarity would be speaking out directly against these hate-based attacks on 2SLGBTQ+ communities. The absence of this emboldens hate groups to continue to perpetrate homophobic and transphobic violence in Hamilton.

On June 28, 2019 you stated on CHCH “The groups are intertwined and are pretending to be anti-establishment, along with pretending to be representing the queer, trans group”. Many 2SLGBTQ+ people and allies - some anarchist, some not - put their bodies between people filled with hate and generations of 2SLGBTQ+ folks and families, chosen or otherwise, celebrating Pride that day. Some defenders were wearing pink masks to protect themselves from possible future violence and doxing¹ from right-wing extremists. Regardless of ideology, they tried to keep Pride-goers safe when the HPS took fully 30 minutes to do so. You, the Chair of the Hamilton Police Services Board, said nothing for days; your long silence and subsequent rhetoric implies consent for continued violence against our communities.

Additionally, your appointment of “special advisors” for the 2SLGBTQ+ community initiatives suggests you are not willing to work with pre-existing community groups such as the City of Hamilton’s own LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee, which has 9 citizen members who have applied and been appointed to the committee by members of City Council². This action further suggests you are trying to control and define the narrative as opposed to listening and working with the mechanisms already in place.

¹ Doxing: “Using private information gleaned from the internet to attack someone with whom you disagree, often by publishing their person[al] info, opening them to abuse and possibly, danger.” Source: <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=doxing>

² It is important to note we are not speaking against the character of those who were appointed but rather the lack of democratic process followed.

We ask, how do you discern between legitimate and illegitimate concerns of 2SLGBTQ+ community members? Making this distinction is not your job; that is the job of our 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Your job is to take action to address and prevent homophobic and transphobic violence in Hamilton, which to date you have failed to do in any meaningful way.

The most egregious action that contradicts your claim of solidarity with members of 2SLGBTQ+ communities is your lack of comment or action related to the arrest and incarceration of Cedar Hopperton, a trans person. Hopperton, who was found guilty on charges related to the incidents on Locke Street last year, was arrested for allegedly violating parole conditions by being present at Pride. No evidence has been presented publicly that suggests that Hopperton was at Pride, while numerous credible sources have stated that Hopperton was not there³. You and the HPS have been trying to conflate what happened on Locke Street last year with the violence at Pride, but they are different. You may not like Cedar, and you may not like what they have said about you or the HPS, but nothing Cedar said at City Hall on June 18, 2019⁴ was illegal. Cedar's subsequent arrest and incarceration makes it difficult to interpret these developments as anything other than punishment for speaking out against police. We sincerely hope that Hopperton will not be among the 33% of trans people who have been incarcerated in Ontario to experience violence in prison because of their gender⁵. Hopperton's arrest and incarceration undermine public trust in the police's commitment to serve and protect all of the public, not just those who are supportive of all police actions and statements.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, call on you to demonstrate your solidarity with 2SLGBTQ+ community members by:

1. Doing everything possible in your role as the Chair of the Hamilton Police Services Board to speed the process of releasing Cedar Hopperton from prison;
2. Dropping all charges against Pride defenders; and
3. Discontinuing the recently created roles of "special advisors" and instead working genuinely with the City of Hamilton's existing LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee.

If you will not take these actions, we ask for your resignation given your lack of engagement and solidarity with the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Sincerely,

CA Klassen

Natalie Lazier

Pike Krpan

³ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/cedar-hopperton-is-on-a-hunger-strike-in-jail-supporters-say-1.5188153>

⁴ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/pride-community-conversation-1.5180950>

⁵ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277558920_Transgender_People_in_Ontario_Canada_Statistics_from_the_Trans_PULSE_Project_to_Inform_Human_Rights_Policy

James Diemert
Caroline Neufeld
Ruth Pickering
Jonathan Armstrong
Grace Evans
Shahzi Bokhari
Frances Neufeld
Sonny Mills
Jyssika Russell
Catherine McCormack
Dr. Lisa Droogendyk
Anna Borstad
Jenny McFadden
Sashaina Singh
A. de Bie
Scott Dobbin
Faye Thomas
Pike Krpan
Emily Groom
Sage RavenStar
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Dana Weistra
Sean Cullen
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Daphne Reed

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Os Paredes

Abra Bergen

Marlon Picken

Heather Cronkwright

Luna Jasz

Anne Barberi

Diane Sharp

Laura Kooji

Rachel Cope

Serafina Aquino

Tai-Lynne Askew

AJ Widdershins

Carla Tompkins

Jennecka Stovell

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