

Michael Demone
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Hamilton, ON [REDACTED]

June 18, 2019

Mayor Fred Eisenberger
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

To: Mayor Fred Eisenberger, City Council

(This is a statement that I delivered in person on June 18, 2019 to the LGBT Community Conversation).

My name is Michael Demone, Executive Director for the Canadian Working Group on Industrial Hemp and resident of the Durand neighbourhood.

I am ashamed to be here today.

I am ashamed to be here because only after a vicious, coordinated, violent attack on my fellow citizens, friends, vulnerable and marginalized communities, did I decide to stand up.

I did not stand up when known extremist and white supremacist groups were allowed to occupy space at City Hall.

I did not stand up when it was revealed that the co-founder of one of Canada's most infamous hate groups was employed by the City, with access to sensitive information, and that attempts to conceal this were made by City staff.

I did not stand up when our Mayor refused to offer his seat on the Police Services Board to a member of a community that might actually benefit from such an appointment.

Nor did I stand up when our Mayor, in complete defiance of the Pride Committee's decision not to raise our flag, did so anyways.

Individually, each one of these items is an assault on those you were elected or appointed to protect. Individually, each one of these is a call to action.

Taken together, they reveal a municipal culture that is completely out of step with contemporary Canada, and one that holds Canadian values and targeted communities with contempt.

You have allowed those recognized as some of the most dangerous elements in our society to invade our public spaces. You have caused your citizens to wonder if they need to carry weapons to feel safe. You have eroded trust and confidence in our elected officials.

You have brought attention of the most sinister kind to our city.

You have allowed children to be hunted like dogs and women to be assaulted for sport.

You have shattered our sense of dignity.

The allegations of questionable police conduct — from the failure to activate the Operational Plan, the written protocols used to ensure public safety, to allegations that the Police Service intentionally positioned themselves in such a way that would restrict their ability to respond adequately and appropriately if needed, to members of the Police Service refusing to do their job even as they witnessed violent crimes being committed — are so utterly obscene, so contrary to the most basic principles of a functioning democracy and human decency.

Should our community determine that the Police Service contributed in any way to these violent attacks, nothing less than an official public inquiry will be accepted.

You have demonstrated repeatedly and carelessly that the government of this city is unable or unwilling to fulfill its duties and responsibilities to its citizens by allowing a sequence of events to occur that will mark this city and those you have injured for years to come.

I assure you that I will pursue every legal and political course of action, and the sustained attention of human rights and other international organizations, to ensure that significant and satisfactory changes are made.

Mr. Mayor, in your statement dated June 17, 2019 you committed to ensuring that the violence visited upon your constituents, your neighbours, would never happen again.

I ask you now, will you dedicate the financial, legal, and logistical tools and resources necessary to keep that commitment?

Signed,

Michael Demone