

Pilon, Janet

Subject: The Integrity Commissioner's report on Cameron Kroetsch

From: Myke Hutchings

Sent: September 28, 2020 4:02 PM

To: Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>; Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinder Nann <ward3@hamilton.ca>; clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: The Integrity Commissioner's report on Cameron Kroetsch

Mayor Eisenberger, Councilor Nann and the City Clerk

I am writing to express my serious concerns about the Integrity Commissioner's report recommending the removal of Cameron Kroetsch from the chair of the LGBTQ+ advisory committee over his remarks concerning Hamilton Police Service's failure to protect participants at the 2019 Pride festival.

I am stunned to see that Hamilton City Council is trying to silence an appointed advisory committee member by requesting the Integrity Commissioner to undertake this review. It seems that the City only wishes advisory committees to exist as set dressing for political theater only, rather than engage the actual communities in question in actual dialogue.

In this action, you have shown the citizens of marginalized communities that they are not valued and such engagement can be used against them instead of trying to support and uplift those communities.

There seems to be a case of collective amnesia regarding the reason that politicians are usually described as 'public servants', and the focus now seems to be on only serving the segments of the public who agree with them, and continue to stroke their egos.

I am astonished that with 14 other complaints against Councillors, some of a very serious nature, all still unresolved, this was the Integrity Commissioner's number one priority in the middle of a Province wide lockdown? A complaint that was brought forth anonymously on behalf of "City Council" after an in camera meeting. When members of the public wish to bring forth an Integrity Commission complaint, their names become public record, it is astonishing that Council would rather choose collective anonymity after an in camera session rather than take responsibility for this action by signing their names to it. Whither "accountability"?

And how does Council even go about deciding to censure a citizen volunteer - appointed by council - for polite but firm criticism, when Councillors just a week or so earlier were berating citizen delegates calling them liars and hypocrites. It seems there are two completely different sets of rules when it comes to decorum: One that applies to what is being said to members of Council, and one much more forgiving that governs what is said *by* those same members.

The right to face one's accuser is a fundamental principle of justice, so to have the complaint leveled in an anonymous way by council as a whole – some members of which are no doubt straining under the gag order of an in camera process – reeks of suppression of dissent, and an effort to avoid being the target of political blowback by certain councillors who are clearly past the point of being willing to hear any criticism at all.

I sincerely hope that you appreciate that this Integrity Commission ruling on Mr. Kroetsch appears to be systematic oppression of the city's 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and that the city is actively trying to silence advice, constructive criticism and the voices of the community. The irony of all of this is that it occurs a few days after Council bemoans the lack of response to a survey of marginalized communities respect to the growing epidemic of hate crimes.

This action against Mr. Kroetsch is a shining example as to why citizens of marginalized communities are wary of your attempts to engage us. Because you don't seem to want to listen to what the communities have to say and you won't hesitate to punish us and attempt to publicly humiliate us if you are uncomfortable or disagree with our experiences and voices.

I ask you to please reconsider this reckless and irresponsible move to silence an engaged citizen.

Regards,

Michael F. (Myke) Hutchings
Ward 3