

Pilon, Janet

Subject: LGBTQ+ advisory committee

From: Jessica Claus

Sent: September 28, 2020 4:53 PM

To: Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>

Cc: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: LGBTQ+ advisory committee

Mayor Eisenberger

Due to the short timeline, I don't have time to write anything extensive or thoughtful. And since my fellow concerned citizen Jason Allen has already said it so eloquently, I have quoted his email below. I fully support everything he says below and I am greatly concerned about this decision by council.

Best regards,

Jessica Claus

Ward14

I am writing to express my serious concerns about the proposed 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.

We live in a world where democracy is constantly under attack from people who wish to silence dissent. We are seeing the worst of it unfold in real time just south of the border, but in Canada we are not immune. Whether it's powerful charities filing SLAPP lawsuits against people seeking the truth, or peaceful indigenous journalists being arrested, there appears to be a consensus among those in power that dissent will not be tolerated.

We have seen that creep into the culture of City Hall as well, with people like Councillor Merulla complaining that his other members of Council were more beholden to "keyboard morons" (which is a funny word for 'engaged citizens') than they were to their colleagues.

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 public that agree with them, and continue to stroke their egos.

The circumstances of Mr Kroetsch's removal are also egregious to say the least. With 14 other complaints against councillors, some of a very serious nature, still unresolved, this was the Integrity Commissioner's number one priority in the middle of a Province wide lockdown?

And how does Council even go about deciding to censure a citizen volunteer 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.

And finally, 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.

Please reconsider this reckless and irresponsible move to silence an engaged citizen, and keep Mr Kroetsch as chair of the LGBTQ+ committee.

Regards,

Jason Allen

Ward 1.