

Morin, Lois

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From: PFLAG Niagara <niagara.pflag@gmail.com>
Sent: July-10-19 1:11 PM
To: Morin, Lois
Subject: attn. Don MacVicar re. The Hamilton Pride celebration in Gage Park on June 15, 2019.
(open letter)

Dear Mr. MacVicar:

PFLAG Niagara wishes to voice our shock and concern about the events and subsequent responses to the violence at the Hamilton Pride celebration in Gage Park on June 15, 2019.

PFLAG is a national organization that offers peer support to parents, families and friends of the sexual- and gender-diverse community. The Niagara chapter has operated for decades. Because our cities are neighbours, Hamilton residents sometimes attend our monthly meetings.

The Gage Park brawl initiated by extremists against some of society's most vulnerable and marginalized citizens was very disturbing. The delayed response by Hamilton police to break up what was clearly an escalating situation was alarming. Hamilton City Hall added fuel to the situation by not immediately and officially condemning the hatred expressed by the radicals, and further intensified the damage by claiming witnessed events were a "false narrative."

A full accounting of actions, and inactions, is necessary if any meaningful healing is to take place. Such violence reminds us that we all need to work harder and be better allies to members of the Pride community. Sitting down and genuinely listening to their concerns would support the diversity that should be a city's strength.

To paint a rainbow crosswalk or raise a rainbow flag means nothing if 2SLGBTQ citizens aren't valued, respected, and protected. In 2019, the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Inn riots, it is distressing and frustrating that our friends and families are still fighting these battles.

Yours truly,

Joanne Theobald
chair Niagara chapter of PFLAG Canada