

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Please submit this letter to the official record and have it read at the appropriate Council meeting.

From: Noelle Allen

Sent: June 26, 2019 11:32 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Please submit this letter to the official record and have it read at the appropriate Council meeting.

Hamilton City Council
C/O The City Clerk

Dear Councillors,

I am writing today to share my deep concern over the events that began at Hamilton Pride on June 15th and that are continuing.

I know that many councillors have received letters about this issue, and I am sure I do not need to go into to detail about how hate groups physically attacked Hamilton citizens and then left the city to do the exact same things in Toronto. I do not need to talk about how these groups brag online about how the police are “probably saluting and cheering for us all right now” for their attacks on Hamilton Pride.

I'm sure council is also aware that Hamilton has the third highest level of reported hate crimes in Canada. These are, of course, only the reported ones. There has been an acknowledgement from the Mayor just yesterday that the city needs to do better. That the City is committed to listening to the 2SLGBTQ community. It would be good if the City started with volunteer advisory committee that is already in place.

But while the Mayor was composing these heartening words, Hamilton Police was arresting another 2SLGBTQ activist. That's the second one. Instead of arresting the members of hate groups who attacked the 2SLGBTQ community, the our police force is arresting members of the community who experienced the violence.

It's no wonder the Yellow Vests believe the police are applauding them.

This builds on Chief Grit's on air statement that if his officers had been invited to Pride he would have deployed them differently. The chief noted the service's request to have a recruitment booth at Pride was denied. I guess in Hamilton, you only get police protection if the police chief likes you and you give him what he wants.

Of course, members of the 2SLGBTQ community have long known they cannot expect protection from the police. A friend shared a heart-rending story of how he and his partner were beaten up after he dared to console him in public. His partner had collapsed in his arms sobbing after learning of a cancer diagnosis and the necessary treatment. When my friend came to with broken ribs in St. Joe's the police officer assigned to investigate his attack told him to "act less gay and maybe you won't get beaten." No charges were laid despite there being multiple eyewitnesses to the beatings.

It is rank hypocrisy for the Mayor to call on members of this community to come forward to the police in this kind of climate.

Right now I know of four young people who are part of the 2SLGBTQ community. They are gifted musicians and artists, they excel academically and they are deeply committed to helping others. They volunteer for their communities, they want to share, they want to make this world a better place. They have so much to give. And their lives are in danger in Hamilton.

Because the Hamilton Police have made it clear it's okay to attack their community here. They'll sit in their squad cars at the far end of the park, and stroll over when the violence starts. They'll ignore the hate crimes reported to them. They'll tell people to not be so "gay" if they don't want a beating.

We need a full review of the culture of the Hamilton Police Department. We need better oversight, and we need a new Chief of Police. Let's do this before one of these bright, bright young people I know are found dead in our streets.

Sincerely,

Noelle Allen