

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Pride and City Processes

From: Frances Murray

Sent: June-26-19 10:08 AM

To: Eisenberger, Fred <Fred.Eisenberger@hamilton.ca>

Cc: Farr, Jason <Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca>; Pilon, Janet <Janet.Pilon@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Pride and City Processes

Dear Mr. Mayor,

It is with great disappointment that I witness the deteriorating situation in Hamilton specifically regarding the City's failing relationship with the 2SLGBTQ Advisory Committee, Pride Hamilton and the increased bravado of Yellow Vests (among other groups') demonstrations at City Hall.

I believe partial blame rests with myself and other residents who attempted to ignore the weekly demonstrations in the City Hall forecourt by Yellow Vests and other nationalist groups. It was hoped they would halt their activity if they did not get attention. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

The escalation of their activities to violence at the Pride Festival was to be expected, and indeed was warned about by the Pride Committee Chair, Cameron Kroetsch. The HPS handled the event very badly -- there is no getting around that fact. The subsequent arrest of Cedar Hopperton at the peaceful demonstration on Saturday, June 22 was a disgusting display of ignorance by the HPS.

I question the role the City has played in the increasing tension with its utter obliviousness to the inequity and discrimination suffered in the 2SLGBTQ community. The following are examples of the lack of leadership displayed by City officials:

- The continued employment of [REDACTED] in the city's I.T. department (who may indeed have access to read this email before it reaches your inbox);
- The secrecy around [REDACTED] employment, including the absence of his name from staff lists -- who was responsible for that cover-up?
- The decision to appoint Fred Benninck to the citizen seat on the HPS board despite calls from the community to revisit the decision and appoint a community member from a marginalized group;
- The arbitrary decision to cap the membership of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee to nine members;
- Not conducting interviews with applicants for the LGBTQ Advisory committee;
- Raising the Pride flag at City Hall despite the LGBTQ Committee's request not to do so.

There is a lot of work to be done. Passing statements about "solidarity" and claiming to "not tolerate hate" will not repair the damage that has been done.

I contend the root of most issues within the relationships between the leadership at City Hall and marginalized communities is the continued mishandling of our own procedural by-law, specifically Bylaw 18-270, By-Law to Govern the Proceedings of Council and Committees of Council and the refusal of Council and the Acting City Clerk to strive towards more transparency and accountability in city governance.

Who made the decisions to cap the membership of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee and to not conduct interviews? Who made the decision to appoint Fred Benninck to the HPS board? These decisions and the process for arrival at the

decisions should be evident in the public record. The longer this city continues to refuse to follow its own rules and procedures, the more relationships with citizen groups will suffer. We have seen the effects in the last couple of years as tensions rise and residents become angrier about the underhandedness of city governance.

I love my city, as you are probably aware, however, during the last couple of weeks, it has been impossible to maintain my support for city politicians and the HPS.

You have made the first step in issuing your statement on Tuesday. But the work to repair relationships will not be completed within a short time frame. I recommend humility and willingness to learn and listen to what needs to be done. Listen with your whole heart and mind to the voices of the communities you, and other city leaders, have ignored.

Sincerely,

Frances Murray