From: Shane McFarland
To: Sarah Ketron
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]- Concerns about recent decision
Date: Thursday, November 3, 2022 11:51:15 AM

Sarah:

I think that is a very reasonable request.

Thank you!
Shane McFarland
Mayor City of Murfreesboro

From: Sarah Ketron <saraheketron@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2022 11:09:26 AM
To: Shane McFarland <smcfarland@murfreesborotn.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]- Concerns about recent decision

> You don't often get email from saraheketron@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Hello Mr. McFarland,

Thank you for taking the time to reply to my email. While I agree that those types of activities have no place in a family friendly venue such as a park, I have to wonder why the decision was made to ban the event altogether.

Were the event organizers given the opportunity to rectify allowing these behaviors to occur before making that decision? LGBTQ+ events are disproportionately shut down for lewd activity when compared to other events. Why is it that many people are being punished for the actions of a few, whether it was allowed by the event organizers or not?

What are you all doing, if anything, to potentially allow such an event to take place in the city of Murfreesboro in the future? What are we doing to welcome LGBTQ+ folks back into public spaces after sending this message that we are not welcome? Let's be clear, that *is* the message it is sending. In response to this I saw multiple people posting on social media the letter regarding the event being banned and people celebrating in the comments. The decision is creating division and conflict among people and is harmful to any LGBTQ+ folks who come across such resulting discourse. It is my understanding that Boro Pride was banned indefinitely. This seems like a rash and discriminatory action.

Please consider the message you are sending if you all are not willing to work with the event organizers in the future. One option is to allow the event to take place at a future time if those event organizers were to submit a plan of action to you all in order to keep things like that from happening in the future. But please don't take away one of the few events that LGBTQ+ people in the area might have access to.

Thanks,

Sarah Ketron

On Thu, 3 Nov 2022 at 06:53, Shane McFarland <smcfarland@murfreesborotn.gov> wrote:

Sarah:

Thank you for the email and I appreciate your comments.

I have been involved in elected office for almost 20 years. I have tried my absolute best to represent everyone regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual preference, or any other factors. The City's responsibility is to deliver services to our residents and I have tried to do my level best to stay out of all the political chaos that surrounds our world and make sure that every person in Murfreesboro feels welcome, respected and represented.

I wanted to give you that context in regards to BoroPride. I was on record responding to constituents who didn't want the festival to occur that it was not appropriate to deny use of our Parks and Recreation facilities if a group meets the requirements as set forth by the City. It is not the City of Murfreesboro's obligation to determine who can and can't use those facilities based upon whether we agree with their mission, political stance, views or other thoughts. I emailed and told several people that BoroPride had a right to use those spaces as long as they upheld the rules just like everyone else.

Here's where I have an issue. I was sent the videos of the "drag" show at the end of the festival. The videos I saw were not representative of what the event application portrayed or what was billed as a "family friendly" event. This has nothing to do with whether I agree or disagree with the festival, but can we not all agree that having a "show" like this is not appropriate for a Parks and Recreation venue where children are present? For example, we wouldn't allow a college fraternity to have a bikini contest at a family park. The intended use of a parks and recreation venue is not for someone to be performing "mock" sexual acts on stage with children present. I think that is just common sense and something if you asked the majority of the community, they would agree.

I am going to continue to represent ALL residents in Murfreesboro....not just the ones I agree with. I do think we all can make these decisions together and use common sense about what is appropriate and reasonable for use of our parks and recreation facilities.

Thanks again for your email.

Sincerely,

Shane McFarland

-----Original Message-----
From: Sarah Ketron <saraheketron@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 2, 2022 8:48 PM
To: Shane McFarland <smcfarland@murfreesborotn.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]- Concerns about recent decision

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Dear Murfreesboro City Council members,

I heard about the decision that was made recently to ban the Boro Pride event indefinitely for "conduct and speech of an inherently sexual nature".

I am appalled at this gross misuse of power to target an already marginalized and underrepresented group such as the LGBTQ+ community. Pride events are absolutely essential to our community to allow people to express themselves and their identity in a safe, controlled environment.

The existence of gay, bi, lesbian, and other LGBTQ peoples is not inherently sexual and it is not fair for any government to limit our right to assembly. I hope you all will reconsider the choices you made as they have the potential to severely and negatively impact these vulnerable populations. Those in positions of political power should not let their religious morality come into play when making judgments that affect their community.

Sincerely,

Sarah Ketron