From: Shane McFarland
To: Alexandra Knox
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]- Banning Boro pride
Date: Thursday, November 3, 2022 1:31:06 PM

Alexandra:

Thank you for your email. 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.

I believe we can all work together and find ways to make sure everyone can be accommodated.

Thank you!
Shane McFarland
Mayor City of Murfreesboro

From: Alexandra Knox <alexknox2995@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2022 1:19:18 PM
To: Shane McFarland <smcfarland@murfreesborotn.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]- Banning Boro pride

> You don't often get email from alexknox2995@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Hello, my name is Alexandra Knox. I've been a murfreesboro TN resident for 28 years (my entire life).

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

As someone who is a part of the LGBTQ+ community, this decision feels like an attempt to make me feel ashamed of who I am. To make me feel as if who I chose to love is perverse or inappropriate. I deserve to feel included, loved, and seen by my community. Whether you personally believe in the way I live my life or not, it's not fair for you to decide who gets to be included or respected.

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, trans, 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 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.