From: Chelsea Cooper
To: Shane McFarland
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]- Murfreesboro should be a place of PRIDE
Date: Monday, November 14, 2022 8:59:20 AM

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

Mr Mayor,

Thank you for your response, but I'd like to challenge a very important point. What is and is not "Family Friendly" is incredibly subjective. Many of those who disagree with Pride and Drag at all would also argue that Drag Queens reading books to children at a library is inappropriate or not "family friendly", simply because a man in a dress is in the presence of children. Current state legislative efforts are highlighting this, using children as a scapegoat to hide their bigoted opinions.

As I mentioned in my original email, I have no issue bringing my child to drag shows. As a parent, I can make the choice of what is harmful to my child and for me and my family. I know what to expect going into it and for me, Drag is one of the most non-harmful things my son can be exposed to in the public sphere. Parents who do not feel as I do can choose not to allow their children to attend these shows.

I also saw videos from the show and what I saw is very typical of Drag performances. And not just drag performances, but any kind of pop music concert with dancing and so I have to wonder…if it hadn't been drag performers, but rather, biological females doing the exact same thing, would the uproar be the same? My guess is that a similar performance by a biological female would not have gotten any attention simply because it wouldn't have been under intense scrutiny in the first place simply for being LGBTQIA+ focused.

Truly, I hope you are sincere when you say you want to represent ALL residents and not just those that agree with you. Because I am a resident who supports and respects drag as an art form and cannot wait for the next Boro Pride event and drag performance.

Best regards,
Chelsea Cooper (she/her)
chelsea.kloss@gmail.com
734.812.7745

On Nov 8, 2022, at 8:01 AM, Shane McFarland <smcfarland@murfreesborotn.gov> wrote:

Chelsea:

Thank you for the email. I want to make sure you know. I am supportive of Boropride assembling, but I am not supportive of any group that has a "show" with sexual content that children are present. It seems common sense that you could make the one portion of the event age appropriate or modify what types of content will be there if it is billed as "family friendly".

Here is my response I have been sending:

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.

Thanks,
Shane

From: Chelsea Cooper <chelsea.kloss@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 7, 2022 10:38 AM
To: Shane McFarland <smcfarland@murfreesborotn.gov>; bschacklett@murfreesborotn.gov; Jami Averwater <javerwater@murfreesborotn.gov>; Austin Maxwell <amaxwell@murfreesborotn.gov>; mscalesharris@murfreesbototn.gov; Shawn Wright

<swright@murfreesborotn.gov>; Kirt Wade <kwade@murfreesborotn.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]- Murfreesboro should be a place of PRIDE

> Some people who received this message don't often get email from chelsea.kloss@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Mr Mayor and members of the council,

Good morning to you all. My name is Chelsea Cooper and I have, until very recently, been a proud resident of Murfreesboro. While I am still very much a resident, my pride in our community is wavering in light of the decision to ban the Boro Pride festival after the report of city manager, Craig Tindall.

To be perfectly clear, I am a cis-gendered, heterosexual female married to a cis-gendered, heterosexual male, raising a (as far as we know at this time) cis-gendered, heterosexual male. Our son is 10 years old and a 4th grader at Salem Elementary School.

We are raising our son to be inclusive, anti-racist, and kind. Part of these lessons include attending and participating in local pride celebrations. This year we marched in the Nashville Pride parade, enjoyed the Nashville Pride festival, the Boro Pride festival, and SEVERAL Drag Shows in the area. Drag is an art form my son absolutely loves (and as a consequence of poor choices, he actually lost the privilege of attending a drag show, much to his disappointment).

Two of my proudest moments this year came when my son chose to wear his rainbow socks to school during pride month so that "everyone knows I support pride" and when he asked me to never quit my job so that we could march in the Pride parade every year.

Knowing that this body, driven by misinformation, fear, and quite frankly, hate, has banned such an important event makes me sad. It makes me disappointed. It makes me ashamed to be a resident of a city I once thought to be great, because of its commitment to diversity, inclusion, kindness, and love. None of those things are being shown to the LGBTQIA+ community at the moment and it's truly a stain on our city.

I think back to a few years ago when the Murfreesboro Loves campaign flooded our community after plans for a white nationalist rally on the square became public. I was never more proud of the way we embraced our differences - all religions, nationalities, creeds, races, genders - and came together to protect and commit to love over hate. The decision to ban Boro Pride absolutely Descartes the remains of that movement - it exudes the hate we once claimed to denounce outright.

As a governing body, by upholding this decision, you are putting the misguided views of a noisy few above the truth and the values of the majority of the people you claim to represent. You are using religion to drive a wedge between your citizens - when not all of your citizens espouse that particular religion's so-called values.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and welcome Boro Pride back with open arms and a heartfelt apology. Our community should be about love, acceptance, inclusion, kindness and PRIDE.

I am enclosing a few of my favorite images of my son at various pride celebrations this year as well as a few of him with some FABULOUS drag queens. Because you need to see exactly what these events do to children - they elicit joy.

My contact information is below should you be interested in discussing this further.

With regards,

Chelsea Cooper (she/her)
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734.812.7745

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