

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN**

Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

Civil Action No.:

The City of Hamtramck, the Hamtramck
City Council, and Mayor Amer Ghalib,
in his official capacity, only,

Hon.

Defendants.

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COMPLAINT AND JURY DEMAND

NOW COME Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole, pursuant to the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution, and 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988, seeking equitable relief, and compensatory, exemplary and punitive damages against the named Defendants, and state:

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

This lawsuit involves the enactment of an unconstitutional Resolution by the City of Hamtramck, the Hamtramck City Council, and its Mayor. The Resolution rescinded a prior City resolution which had allowed for the display of the Pride flag from a flagpole on Joseph Campau Ave. The Resolution violates the Freedom of Speech and Establishment Clause provisions of the First Amendment, as well as the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This action arises under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, as incorporated with respect to the States by the Fourteenth Amendment, and is brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988.

2. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343, and supplemental jurisdiction over the Michigan state law claims under 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).

3. Venue is proper in the Eastern District of Michigan under 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because the events giving rise to the claims detailed herein occurred in the Eastern District of Michigan.

PARTIES

4. Russ Gordon is a resident and taxpayer in Hamtramck and a former Commissioner on the Hamtramck Human Relations Commission.

5. Cathy Stackpoole is a resident and taxpayer in Hamtramck and a former Commissioner on the Hamtramck Human Relations Commission.

6. The City of Hamtramck is a municipality located in Wayne County, Michigan.

7. The Hamtramck City Council is the governing body of the City of Hamtramck. Its members during the time relevant to this lawsuit were Muhith Mahmood, Abu Musa, Khalil Refai, Mohammed Alsomiri, Nayeem Choudhury, and Mohammed Hassan.

8. Amer Ghalib is the Mayor of the City of Hamtramck.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

9. On May 14, 2013, the Mayor and City Council of Hamtramck passed Resolution 2013-167, which stated in relevant part (copy of the Resolution is attached as Exhibit 1):

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck that

FIRST: The Human Relations Commission is hereby authorized to move forward with their flagpole restoration project.

SECOND The Human Relations Commission is hereby authorized to solicit funds from interested parties, individuals or businesses for the sole purpose of the restoration and maintenance of city flagpoles, purchase of flags and plaques and ongoing maintenance of the project.

10. Resolution 2013-167 placed no limitations on the Human Relations Commission (“Commission”) regarding the character of the flags which it chose to display on the city flagpoles. The Commission was granted sole authority to decide what flags would be displayed.

11. The Commission displayed flags on the flag poles which lined Joseph Campau Ave. which were representative of the residents of Hamtramck who came from different nations. Gordon was a Commission member at the time and he raised the flags in May, and lowered them after Thanksgiving, because the winter weather damaged the flags.

12. On June 8, 2021, the City Council passed Resolution 2021-73 which stated, in relevant part (copy attached as Exhibit 2):

WHEREAS the Arts and Culture Commission wishes to hold a ceremony on June 19, 2021 at the Zussman Park flagpole in recognition of Pride month.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck, Wayne County, Michigan to approve the display of a Pride flag at the Zussman Park flag poles during the month of June, 2021.

13. At the time the Resolution was passed, the Hamtramck administration consisted of Mayor Karen Majewski, and Council persons Al-Marsoumi, Choudhury, Lasely, Almasmari, Alsomiri, and Hassan.

14. A Pride flag was thereafter raised on the Zussman Park flag pole, which is located across from the Hamtramck City Hall.

15. The Chairperson of the Arts and Culture Commission thereafter inquired about

displaying the Pride flag on a flag pole on Joseph Campau Ave. Cathleen Angerer, the City manager, contacted Gordon and asked him if there was a flag pole available on Joseph Campau from which the Pride flag could be displayed. He indicated that there was. The Chairperson of the Arts and Culture Commission then contacted Gordon and specified what Pride flag he wanted to be displayed. Gordon ordered the Pride flag, but it arrived too late in 2021 to be displayed.

16. In the November, 2021 election, Karen Majewski was replaced by Amer Ghalib as Mayor, and Council members Al-Marsoumi, Lasely and Almasmari were replaced by Muhith Mahmood, Abu Musa and Khalil Refai.

17. Gordon raised the Pride flag on a flag pole on Joseph Campau Ave. in May, 2022. He was then contacted by Angerer, who informed him that the new City Council wanted the Pride flag removed. At this point in time, Resolution 2013-167, which gave the Commission sole authority to decide what flags would be displayed, was still in place. Gordon refused to remove the Pride flag, and it remained displayed through Thanksgiving, 2022.

18. Stackpoole became a member of the Human Relations Commission in January, 2023.

19. At the City Council meeting on June 13, 2023, the Council considered passing Resolution 2023-82, titled “Resolution To Maintain And Confirm The Neutrality Of The City Of Hamtramck Towards Its Residents.” The Resolution stated, in relevant part (copy attached as Exhibit 3):

WHEREAS, each religious, ethnic racial, political, or sexually oriented group is already represented by the country it belongs to; and

WHEREAS, the City does not want to open the door for radical or racist groups to ask for their flags to be flown; and

WHEREAS, this resolution does not in any way, shape or form infringe upon the fundamental right of an individual or business in the City of Hamtramck to engage free speech. Nor does this resolution limit speech by public employees provided that such employees engage in such speech in a protected time, manner and place.

NOW, THEREFOE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck, Wayne County, Michigan, that the government of the City of Hamtramck does not allow any religious, ethic, racial, political, or sexual orientation group flags to be flown on the City's public properties, and that only, the American flag, the flag of the State of Michigan, the Hamtramck Flag, the Prisoner of War flag and the nations' flags that represent the international character of our City shall be flown.

Under the terms of the Resolution, displaying the Pride flag on City flag poles would no longer be permitted.

20. During the Council meeting, numerous individuals expressed their opinions, in person and by electronic mail, both in support of, and opposed to, the Resolution. The meeting was videotaped, and can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izxF600qzuo>. (A transcript of the complete proceeding is attached as Exhibit 4.)

21. In the course of the meeting, several individuals who supported the Resolution indicated that they supported it based on religious grounds, two of whom spoke in Arabic, and were translated by Mayor Ghalib. (Exhibit 4, pp. 4, 23, 30, 31, 32 and 33)

22. Several commenters indicated that they opposed the Resolution based on its stemming from religious convictions. (Exhibit 4, pp. 19, 27, 45, 47, 50, 60, and 63) Several opposed it based on freedom of speech grounds. (Exhibit 4, pp. 43, 45, 48, 51, 56, 58, 59, 61, and 65) Two expressed the opinion that it violated the Michigan Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. (Exhibit 4, pp. 50, 62)

23. Of the 37 Hamtramck residents who appeared in person to comment on the Resolution, 19 opposed the Resolution, and 18 supported it. Of the 48 emails/letters which were

submitted by Hamtramck residents, 47 opposed the Resolution, while only 1 supported it. Among the 85 Hamtramck residents who offered an opinion regarding the Resolution, a total of 66 opposed it, versus 19 who supported it. Consequently, of the 85 Hamtramck residents who offered opinions at the June 13, 2023, Council meeting, 77% opposed the Resolution.

24. After the public opinion segment of the meeting was concluded, the Council members offered their opinions. The Mayor Pro Temp, Councilman Mohammed Hassan, gave a fervent and impassioned explanation of the meaning of democracy, invoking the famous words from President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, "Of the people, by the people, for the people." (Exhibit 4, p. 72) He stated: "I am of the people. I am elected by the people, okay? And I am for the people. So, what I'm doing ... what I'm doing because I'm elected, I am of the people and by the people elected, I'm working for the people." In that case, since 77% of the Hamtramck residents who offered their opinions during the public statement segment of the meeting opposed the Resolution, he should have voted to reject the Resolution. He did not.

25. Councilman Choudhury offered the following comment, in relevant part (Exhibit 4, p. 73):

But here's the thing, folks. You guys are welcome to the community. You guys welcome to walk to the restaurants, walk to the grocery store. Why do we have to have a flag flown in the city property to be represented? You already represented. We already know who you are, and we don't have any hate or any discrimination against that. We get along very well. By making this bigotry, making this scene, it's making like you wanted to hate us. It's you versus and others. It's not that. It's everyone included. And this is the community we live. I love where you live. I have no problems. But the community as a whole has this respect that we are raising family. We're doing our best to support the community.

Therefore, you are not unwelcome. You are welcome here. But we have to respect the religions. We have to respect the people around here. Schools, mosques, churches. I won't take any longer than this. It's been a long night. But I welcome every one of you.
(Emphasis added.)

None of the other Councilmen said anything indicating that they disagreed with Councilman Choudhury's invocation of religion as a basis for approving the Resolution. Their silence represented assent. *See Everett v. Everett*, 319 Mich. 475, 481 (Mich. 1947) (silence clearly indicated approval).

26. The Council voted unanimously to approve the Resolution. (Exhibit 4, pp. 78-79)

27. On July 9, 2023, Gordon and Stackpoole raised the Pride flag on one of the flagpoles on Joseph Compau Ave. Councilman Hassan appeared soon thereafter, contacted the City manager, and demanded that the Pride flag be removed. The City manager arrived with the police, and the police removed the Pride flag.

28. On July 11, 2023, the City Council passed Resolution 2023-99, titled "Resolution Removing Russ Gordon And Cathy Stackpoole From Human Relations Commission." (Copy attached as Exhibit 5.) The Resolution was unanimously approved. A video recording of the proceeding may be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izxF600qzu0> (A transcript of the complete proceeding is attached as Exhibit 6.)

The Resolution stated:

WHEREAS, on July 9th, 2023, two members o the Human Relations Commission, Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole, did intentionally violate the laws of the City of Hamtramck by flying a flag in contravention of Resolution 2023-82; and

WHEREAS, in order to maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law, the City must act to remove Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole from the Human Relations Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck, Wayne County, Michigan, that Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole be immediately removed from their membership on the board of the Human Relations Commission to be replaced by candidates appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council at a later date.

29. On July 11, 2023, the City Council unanimously passed Resolution 2023-100,

titled “Resolution To Rescind Authority Of Human Relations Commission To Maintain And Fly Flags On City Property.” (Copy attached as Exhibit 7.) The Resolution stated, in relevant part:

WHEREAS, on July 9th, 2023, members of the Human Relations Commission did willfully and blatantly violate the laws of the City of Hamtramck by flying a flag in contravention of the law designating that no flags of any religion, ethnic, racial, political, or sexual orientation group may be flown inf City property, and

WHEREAS, in order to maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law, the City must act to remove Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole from the Human Relations Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck, Wayne County, Michigan, that the Human Relations Commission of the City of Hamtramck be hereby and henceforth stripped of their authority and control over any and all flag poles on City property and that the City of Hamtramck shall henceforth hold dominion, authority and control over such flagpoles as the sole authority determining compliance under the laws of the City of Hamtramck and State of Michigan.

CAUSES OF ACTION

COUNT I

VIOLATION OF THE FREEEOM OF SPEECH PROVISION OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 1983

30. Plaintiffs incorporate herein each and every of the prior averments as if fully stated herein.

31. The free speech provision of the 1st Amendment of the United States Constitution applies to the States pursuant to the 14th Amendment.

32. 42 U.S.C. § 1983 states, in relevant part:

Every person who, under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, of any State or Territory or the District of Columbia, subjects, or causes to be subjected, any citizen of the United States or other person within the jurisdiction thereof to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution and laws, shall be liable to the party injured in an action at law, suit in equity, or other proper proceeding for redress

33. The Defendants were acting under color of law when they enacted Resolution

2023-82.

34 Municipalities qualify as persons under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. *Monell v. New York City Dept't of Soc. Servs.*, 436 U.S. 658 (1978).

35. A governmental action, including a statute, an ordinance, resolution, or policy, which regulates speech may only do so if it is both content and viewpoint neutral. It is unconstitutional for government to select what speech will be permitted, and what speech will be prohibited, based on the content or viewpoint of the message conveyed by the speech. *See R.A.V. v. St. Paul*, 505 U.S. 377 (1992) (St. Paul ordinance which made it a criminal offense to burn a cross violated the Free Speech provision of the First Amendment because it failed to criminalize all comparable hate speech); *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*, 576 U.S. 155 (2015) (the sign ordinance enacted by the City of Gilbert, Arizona, violated the Free Speech provision of the First Amendment because, while it prohibited the display of outdoor signs, it exempted 23 categories of signs based on their content); *Shurtleff v. City of Boston, Mass.*, 42 S. Ct. 1583 (2022) (City of Boston violated the Free Speech provision of the First Amendment by rejecting the request of a Christian organization to display a Christian flag from the flagpole in front of the Boston City Hall, when the City allowed the display of flags requested by other private groups); *Cleveland Area Board of Realtors v. City of Euclid*, 88 F.3d 382 (6th Cir. 1996) (City's ordinance regulating the size, number, and placement of signs in residential neighborhoods unconstitutional because it was not content neutral); *Thomas v. Bright*, 937 F.3d 723 (6th Cir. 2019) (Tennessee's Billboard Act was unconstitutional because its "on-premise exception" was not content neutral); *Int'l Outdoor, Inc. v. City of Troy*, 974 F.3d 690 (6th Cir. 2020) (Troy's sign ordinance was content based because it treated commercial and non-commercial signs differently and was therefore unconstitutional); *Whitton v. City of Gladstone*, 54 F.3d 1400 (8th Cir. 1995) (City's sign

ordinance was unconstitutional because it placed different time limits on displaying political signs versus commercial signs, and therefore was not content neutral); *Dimas v. City of Warren*, 939 F. Supp. 554 (E.D. Mich. 1996) (Warren’s sign ordinance was not content neutral because it placed different restrictive time limitations on political signs which it did not place on commercial signs, and was therefore unconstitutional); *Fehribach v. City of Troy*, 412 F. Supp. 2d 639 (E.D. Mich. 2006) (Troy’s sign ordinance regulating the display of political signs was unconstitutional because it was not content neutral and was not justified by a compelling state interest).

36. Hamtramck’s Resolution 2023-82 is not content neutral, because it permits the display of the Prisoner Of War flag and nations’ flags which represent the international character of the City, but prohibits displaying all other flags which convey a different message. The Resolution therefore violates the Freedom of Speech provision of the First Amendment and is unconstitutional.

37. Because the Resolution bears on the fundamental right of free speech, it may only be approved if it survives strict scrutiny. *See Clark v. Jeter*, 486 U.S. 456 (1988). The Resolution does not survive strict scrutiny because its distinctions based on content are not justified by a constitutional compelling state interest.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs request that the Court enter a declaratory judgment holding that Resolution 2023-82 is unconstitutional because it violates the Free Speech provision of the First Amendment and order that the Resolution must be rescinded; order that the status *quo ante* is to be restored before the Resolution was passed and that the Pride flag, and all the other flags which were being displayed prior to the Resolution’s passage, be re-displayed; award Plaintiffs their reasonable attorney fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988, and grant whatever additional relief

the Court deems to be just and proper.

COUNT II

**VIOLATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT
UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 1983**

38. Plaintiffs incorporate herein each and every of the prior averments as if fully stated herein.

39. The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment prohibits any governmental entity from enacting any statute, ordinance, resolution or policy in order to accommodate the religious beliefs of its citizenry. *See Larson v. Valente*, 456 U.S. 228 (1982) (Minnesota statute which exempted certain religious denominations from reporting requirements, but not others, violated the Establishment Clause); *Larkin v. Grendel's Den, Inc.*, 459 U.S. 116 (1982) (Massachusetts statute which authorized the governing bodies of churches to prevent issuance of liquor licenses within a 500-foot radius of a church violated the Establishment Clause); *Board of Ed. of Kiryas Joel v. Grumet*, 512 U.S. 687 (1994) (government should not prefer one religion to another, or religion to irreligion); *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe*, 530 U.S. 290 (2000) (School District's policy of permitting student-led and initiated prayer at football games violated the Establishment Clause); *American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio Foundation, Inc. v. Ashbrook*, 375 F.3d 484 (6th Cir. 2004) (Judge's insistence on displaying Ten Commandments in his courtroom violated the Establishment Clause); *Maye v. Klee*, 915 F.3d 1076 (6th Cir. 2019) (Michigan Department of Corrections violated the Establishment Clause by preventing the plaintiff, a member of the Nation of Islam, from participating in Eid-al-Fitr, at the conclusion of the observance of Ramadan, based on the sect of Islam to which he belonged).

40. The Establishment Clause applies to the States under the 14th Amendment.

41. The evidence indicates that a primary motivating factor in the Council's passage

of Resolution 2023-82 was in order to accommodate the religious beliefs of a segment of the Hamtramck community which objected to displaying the Pride flag based on religion. Councilman Choudhury expressly stated that the Resolution should be approved in order to respect religions and to respect the mosques and churches in Hamtramck. Not a single Councilman expressed disagreement with this rationale, thereby indicating their assent. The Resolution was not passed pursuant to the Free Exercise provision of the First Amendment, since displaying the Pride flag, and the other flags which were being displayed, did not restrict or infringe on the freedom of religion of the residents of Hamtramck to worship as they pleased.

42. Councilman Hassan emphasized that as an elected government official, it was his duty in a democracy to represent the dominant opinions of his constituents. But in voting in favor of the Resolution, he in fact ignored the opinions of the 77% of the residents of Hamtramck who offered public statements in opposition to the Resolution. He instead voted to support the minority opinion of the 23% of Hamtramck residents who offered opinions in favor of the Resolution, including the six Hamtramck residents who supported the Resolution based on religious grounds. Passage of the Resolution accordingly violated the Establishment Clause.

43. Strict scrutiny applies to evaluating whether the violation of the Establishment Clause was justified by a constitutional compelling state interest. It was not.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs request that the Court enter a declaratory judgment holding that Resolution 2023-82 is unconstitutional because it violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and order that the Resolution must be rescinded; order that the status *quo ante* is to be restored before the Resolution was passed and that the Pride flag, and all the other flags which were being displayed prior to the Resolution's passage, be re-displayed; award Plaintiffs their reasonable attorney fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988, and grant whatever additional relief

the Court deems to be just and proper.

COUNT III

**VIOLATION OF THE EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE
OF THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT**

44. Plaintiffs incorporate herein each and every of the prior averments as if fully stated herein.

45. In enacting a statute, ordinance, resolution, or policy, which affects free speech, a government entity may not grant the use of a forum to citizens whose views it finds acceptable, but deny it to citizens wishing to express less favored or more controversial views. Exercising such selectivity violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. *See Police Dep't of Chicago v. Mosley*, 408 U.S. 92 (1972); *Carey v. Brown*, 447 U.S. 455 (1980); *Congregation Lubavitch v. City of Cincinnati*, 997 F.3d 1160 (6th Cir. 1993).

46. Resolution 2023-82 violates the Equal Protection Clause because it favors displaying the Prisoner of War flag, and the flags of nations which are representative of the international character of the City, over all other flags, including the Pride flag.

47. Because the Resolution affects a fundamental right, freedom of speech, the disparity created by the Resolution must be subject to strict scrutiny and be justified by a constitutional compelling state interest. The disparity created by the Resolution is not justified by a compelling state interest, and therefore the Resolution is unconstitutional.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs request that the Court enter a declaratory judgment holding that Resolution 2023-82 is unconstitutional because it violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and order that the Resolution must be rescinded; order that the status *quo ante* is to be restored before the Resolution was passed and that the Pride flag, and all the other flags which were being displayed prior to the Resolution's passage, be re-displayed; award

Plaintiffs their reasonable attorney fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988, and grant whatever additional relief the Court deems to be just and proper.

COUNT IV

VIOLATION OF THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH OF GORDON
UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 1983

48. Plaintiffs incorporate herein each and every of the prior averments as if fully stated herein.

49. Resolution 2023-82 is, and was, unconstitutional on July 9, 2023, when Gordon raised the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave. because it violated the Free Speech and Establishment Clause provisions of the First Amendment, and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In so doing, Gordon was not violating the law. An unconstitutional Resolution is itself a violation of law, and a citizen who violates an unconstitutional, and therefore unlawful, Resolution cannot be violating the law. Rather, the Councilmen who voted in favor of the unconstitutional Resolution violated the law by violating the Constitution. *See Ex Parte Young*, 209 U.S. 123 (1908) (enforcement of an unconstitutional statute is a proceeding without authority and is illegal).

50. By raising the Pride flag in opposition to the unconstitutional Resolution, Gordon was exercising his freedom of speech protected under the First Amendment.

51. The statement in Resolution 2023-99 that by raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave. Gordon did not maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law is false, defamatory, and constitutes libel *per se* under Michigan law. By opposing the unconstitutional Resolution, Gordon was maintaining the respect and dignity of the United States Constitution, and of the rule of law. It was the Councilmen who voted in favor of the unconstitutional Resolution who failed to maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law.

52. By removing Gordon as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission, the Defendants violated Gordon's freedom of speech under the First Amendment.

53. The removal of Gordon from the Commission, in violation of his right to free speech, has directly caused him emotional distress, embarrassment, and humiliation.

54. Since Resolution 2023-100 was based on the erroneous assertion that Gordon failed to maintain the respect and dignity of the law by raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave., the Resolution improperly, and unconstitutionally, stripped the Commission of authority and control over the flag poles on Joseph Compau Ave.

WHEREFORE, Gordon requests that the Court order that Resolution 2023-99 be rescinded and that he be reinstated as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission; order that Resolution 2023-100 be rescinded; that Gordon be awarded compensatory, exemplary and punitive damages; that the Court award him reasonable attorney fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988; and grant him whatever further relief the Court deems to be just and proper.

COUNT V

VIOLATION OF THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH OF STACKPOOLE UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 1983

55. Plaintiffs incorporate herein each and every of the prior averments as if fully stated herein.

56. Resolution 2023-82 is, and was, unconstitutional on July 9, 2023, when Stackpoole raised the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave. because it violated the Free Speech and Establishment Clause provisions of the First Amendment, and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In so doing, Stackpoole was not violating the law. An unconstitutional Resolution is itself a violation of law, and a citizen who violates an unconstitutional, and therefore unlawful, Resolution cannot be violating the law. Rather, the

Councilmen who voted in favor of the unconstitutional Resolution violated the law by violating the Constitution. *See Ex Pate Young*, 209 U.S. 123 (1908).

57. By raising the Pride flag in opposition to the unconstitutional Resolution, Stackpoole was exercising her freedom of speech protected under the First Amendment.

58. The statement in Resolution 2023-99 that by raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave. Stackpoole did not maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law is false, defamatory, and constitutes libel *per se* under Michigan law. By opposing the unconstitutional Resolution, Stackpoole was maintaining the respect and dignity of the United States Constitution, and of the rule of law. It was the Councilmen who voted in favor of the unconstitutional Resolution who failed to maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law.

59. By removing Stackpoole as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission, the Defendants violated Stackpoole's freedom of speech under the First Amendment.

60. The removal of Stackpoole from the Commission, in violation of her right to free speech, has directly caused her emotional distress, embarrassment, and humiliation.

61. Since Resolution 2023-100 was based on the erroneous assertion that Stackpoole failed to maintain the respect and dignity of the law by raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave., the Resolution improperly, and unconstitutionally, stripped the Commission of authority and control over the flag poles on Joseph Compau Ave.

WHEREFORE, Stackpoole requests that the Court order that Resolution 2023-99 be rescinded and that she be reinstated as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission; order that Resolution 2023-100 be rescinded; that Stackpoole be awarded compensatory, exemplary and punitive damages; that the Court award her reasonable attorney fees pursuant to

42 U.S.C. § 1988; and grant her whatever further relief the Court deems to be just and proper.

PENDENT STATE CLAIMS

COUNT VI

**VIOLATION OF GORDON'S RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH UNDER ARTICLE I, § 5
OF THE MICHIGAN CONSTITUTION**

62. Plaintiffs incorporate herein each and every of the prior averments as if fully stated herein.

63. Article I, § 5 of the Michigan Constitution (1963) states:

Sec. 5. Every person may freely speak, write, express and publish his views on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of such right, and no law shall be enacted to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech or of the press.

64. The rights of free speech under the Michigan and U.S. Constitutions are coterminous, and therefore federal case law construing the First Amendment may be considered in interpreting Michigan's constitutional guarantee of free speech. *In re Contempt of Dudzinski*, 257 Mich. App. 96 (Mich. Ct. App. 2003).

65. Federal case law requiring that government restrictions on speech be content and viewpoint neutral therefore apply with equal force under Article I, § 5 of the Michigan Constitution.

66. Resolution 2023-82 is not content neutral and therefore violates Article I, § 5 of the Michigan Constitution.

67. By raising the Pride flag in opposition to the unconstitutional Resolution, Gordon was exercising his freedom of speech protected under Article I, § 5 of the Michigan Constitution.

68. The statement in Resolution 2023-99 that by raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave. Gordon did not maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law is false, defamatory, and constitutes libel *per se* under Michigan law. By opposing the

unconstitutional Resolution, Gordon was maintaining the respect and dignity of the Michigan Constitution, and of the rule of law. It was the Councilmen who voted in favor of the unconstitutional Resolution who failed to maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law.

69. By removing Gordon as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission, the Defendants violated Gordon's freedom of speech under Article I, § 5 of the Michigan Constitution..

70. Since Resolution 2023-100 was based on the erroneous assertion that Gordon failed to maintain the respect and dignity of the law by raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave., the Resolution improperly, and unconstitutionally, stripped the Commission of authority and control *over* the flag poles on Joseph Compau Ave.

71. A court may award attorney fees to redress a violation of the Michigan Constitution. *Schellenberg v. Rochester, Michigan, Lodge No 2225 of the Benevolent & Protective Order of the Elks of the United States of America*, 228 Mich. App. 20 (Mich. Ct. App. 1998).

WHEREFORE, Gordon requests that the Court order that Resolution 2023-99 be rescinded and that he be reinstated as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission; order that Resolution 2023-100 be rescinded; that the Court award him reasonable attorney fees and grant him whatever further relief the Court deems to be just and proper.

COUNT VII

VIOLATION OF STACKPOOLE'S RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH UNDER ARTICLE I, § 5 OF THE MICHIGAN CONSTITUTION

72. Plaintiffs incorporate herein each and every of the prior averments as if fully stated herein.

73. Resolution 2023-82 is not content neutral and therefore violates Article I, § 5 of

the Michigan Constitution.

74. By raising the Pride flag in opposition to the unconstitutional Resolution, Stackpoole was exercising her freedom of speech protected under Article I, § 5 of the Michigan Constitution.

75. The statement in Resolution 2023-99 that by raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave. Stackpoole did not maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law is false, defamatory, and constitutes libel *per se* under Michigan law. By opposing the unconstitutional Resolution, Stackpoole was maintaining the respect and dignity of the Michigan Constitution, and of the rule of law. It was the Councilmen who voted in favor of the unconstitutional Resolution who failed to maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law.

76. By removing Stackpoole as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission, the Defendants violated Stackpoole's freedom of speech under Article I, § 5 of the Michigan Constitution.

77. Since Resolution 2023-100 was based on the erroneous assertion that Stackpoole failed to maintain the respect and dignity of the law by raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Compau Ave., the Resolution improperly, and unconstitutionally, stripped the Commission of authority and control over the flag poles on Joseph Compau Ave.

78. A court may award attorney fees to redress a violation of the Michigan Constitution. *Schellenberg v. Rochester, Michigan, Lodge No 2225 of the Benevolent & Protective Order of the Elks of the United States of America*, 228 Mich. App. 20 (Mich. Ct. App. 1998).

WHEREFORE, Stackpoole requests that the Court order that Resolution 2023-99 be rescinded and that she be reinstated as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission;

order that Resolution 2023-100 be rescinded; that the Court award her reasonable attorney fees and grant her whatever further relief the Court deems to be just and proper.

COUNT VIII

**VIOLATION OF GORDON'S RIGHTS UNDER
THE ELLIOTT-LARSEN CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

79. Plaintiffs incorporate herein each and every of the prior averments as if fully stated herein.

80. Article 2, § 37.2202(1)(a) of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, MCL § 37.2101, *et seq.*, (“Act”) states:

(1) An employer shall not do any of the following:

(a) Fail or refuse to hire or recruit, discharge, or otherwise discriminate against an individual with respect to employment, compensation, or a term, condition, or privilege of employment, because of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, or marital status.

81. Although Gordon was not paid a salary while serving on the Commission, he qualified as an employee, and the City qualified as an employer under the Act. *See James v. City of Burton*, 221 Mich. App. 130 (Mich. Ct. App. 1997) (political appointees qualify as employees under the Act); *Whitman v. City of Burton*, 311 Mich. App. 315 (Mich. Ct. App. 2015) (same).

82. The reference to “sex” in the Act includes sexual orientation. *Rouch World, LLC v. Dep’t of Civil Rights*, 510 Mich. 398 (Mich. 2022).

83. The Pride flag represents the rights and privileges of the LGBTQ community.

84. By removing Gordon from the Commission due to his raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Campau Ave., the City punished Gordon for his expression of support of the LGBTQ community, and thereby discriminated against him because of sexual orientation and religion, violating Article 2, § 37.2202(1)(a) of the Act.

85. As a result of his removal from the Commission, Gordon has experienced emotional distress, embarrassment and humiliation.

86. Article 8, § 37.2801 of the Act, provides that an individual alleging a violation of the Act may bring a civil action requesting injunctive relief and damages, including reasonable attorney fees.

WHEREFORE, Gordon requests that the Court order that he be reinstated as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission; order that Gordon be awarded compensatory, exemplary and punitive damages; that the Court award him reasonable attorney fees; and grant him whatever further relief the Court deems to be just and proper.

COUNT IX

VIOLATION OF STACKPOOLE'S RIGHTS UNDER THE ELLIOTT-LARSEN CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

87. Plaintiffs incorporate herein each and every of the prior averments as if fully stated herein.

88. Although Stackpoole was not paid a salary while serving on the Commission, she qualified as an employee, and the City qualified as an employer under the Act. *See James v. City of Burton*, 221 Mich. App. 130 (Mich. Ct. App. 1997) (political appointees qualify as employees under the Act); *Whitman v. City of Burton*, 311 Mich. App. 315 (Mich. Ct. App. 2015) (same).

89. The reference to “sex” in the Act includes sexual orientation. *Rouch World, LLC v. Dep’t of Civil Rights*, 510 Mich. 398 (Mich. 2022).

90. The Pride flag represents the rights and privileges of the LBGTQ community.

91. By removing Stackpoole from the Commission due to her raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Campau Ave., the City punished Stackpoole for her expression of support of the LBGTQ community, and thereby discriminated against her because of sexual

orientation and religion, violating Article 2, § 37.2202(1)(a) of the Act.

92. As a result of her removal from the Commission, Stackpoole has experienced emotional distress, embarrassment and humiliation.

93. Article 8, § 37.2801 of the Act, provides that an individual alleging a violation of the Act may bring a civil action requesting injunctive relief and damages, including reasonable attorney fees.

WHEREFORE, Stackpoole requests that the Court order that she be reinstated as a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission; order that Stackpoole be awarded compensatory, exemplary and punitive damages; that the Court award her reasonable attorney fees; and grant her whatever further relief the Court deems to be just and proper.

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By: s/ Marc M. Susselman
Attorney for Plaintiffs

Dated: November 6, 2023

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiffs hereby demand a jury trial for all issues triable by a jury.

Marc M. Susselman
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marcsusselman@gmail.com
P29481

By: s/ Marc M. Susselman
Attorney for Plaintiffs

Dated: November 6, 2023

EXHIBIT 1

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

EXHIBIT 2

RESOLUTION 2021-73
APPROVING DISPLAY OF A PRIDE FLAG DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE
AT ZUSSMAN PARK

WHEREAS, the City of Hamtramck Arts and Culture Commission has sought permission to hang a Pride flag during the month of June, 2021 at the Zussman Park flagpole; and

WHEREAS, at the May 25, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting, City Council proclaimed the month of June as Pride month; and

WHEREAS, the Arts and Culture Commission wishes to hold a ceremony on June 19, 2021 at the Zussman Park flagpole in recognition of Pride month.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck, Wayne County, Michigan to approve the display of a Pride flag at the Zussman Park flag poles during the month of June, 2021.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HAMTRAMCK, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN THIS 8th DAY OF JUNE 2021.

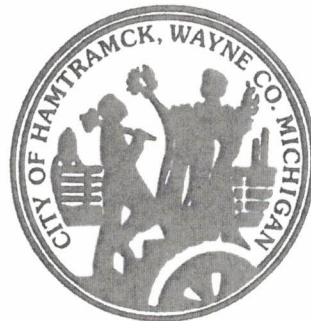
AYES: Al-Marsoumi, Choudhury, Lasely, Majewski

NAYS: Almasmari, Alsomiri, Hassan

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Rana Faraj



Rana N. Faraj
City Clerk

EXHIBIT 3

RESOLUTION 2023-82
RESOLUTION TO MAINTAIN AND CONFIRM THE NEUTRALITY OF THE CITY OF HAMTRAMCK
TOWARDS ITS RESIDENTS

WHEREAS, the City of Hamtramck is one of the most diverse cities in the United States, in which we should proudly promote and embrace its diversity; and

WHEREAS, the City must and will serve and treat its residents equally, with no discrimination, or special treatment to any group of people; and

WHEREAS, the City has authorized in the past, the Human Relations Commission to install nations flags on the City flagpoles to represent the international character of the City, Resolution 2013-102: and

WHEREAS, each religious, ethnic, racial, political, or sexually oriented group is already represented by the country it belongs to; and

WHEREAS, the City does not want to open the door for radical or racist groups to ask for their flags to be flown; and

WHEREAS, this resolution does not in any way, shape or form infringe upon the fundamental right of an individual or business in the City of Hamtramck to engage free speech. Nor does this resolution limit speech by public employees provided that such employees engage in such speech in a protected time, manner and place.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck, Wayne County, Michigan, that the government of the City of Hamtramck does not allow any religious, ethnic, racial, political, or sexual orientation group flags to be flown on the City's public properties, and that only, the American flag, the flag of the State of Michigan, the Hamtramck Flag, the Prisoner of War flag and the nations' flags that represent the international character of our City shall be flown.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HAMTRAMCK, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN THIS 13th DAY OF JUNE 2023.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Rana Faraj

City Clerk

EXHIBIT 4

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Speaker 1:

That's all I got, Mayor.

Mayor:

Thank you. Any more announcements?

Speaker 2:

Yes.

Mayor:

Yes, Mr. [inaudible 00:00:09]?

Speaker 2:

Thank you for everyone that show up today. We receive many, call from the resident. They make a ticket for some no address in the back in the house. Anyone that have, is not a notice, make we fix this issue. We need from everyone, make the clean from in the back and make the address in the back of the house. And everyone that have a ticket is now notice. Maybe we fix this issue. Please, leave everything [inaudible 00:00:39]. Thank you.

Mayor:

Okay, no more announcements? All right, thank you. All right, proclamations, recognitions and presentations, there is none. Any additions or deletions to the agenda?

Speaker 3:

No, sir. No.

Mayor:

No additions or deletions. All right, so we'll move to the public comment. It's expected to be long, and it seems like we have fair samples of the community here. We expect everyone to respect each other. Do not direct your comment to each other... And I can hear myself. But anyways, I hope this meeting will go smooth, and we can start public comments.

Speaker 4:

Thank you. And I ask everybody in the hallway, just a moment, I ask everybody in the hallway to please keep it down so you can hear if your name is called for public comments. Let me go through this real quick. I'm going to go through the people that are here first. Can you please? Thank you.

I'm going to go through public comments of those that are here to speak in public, in person, before I do my email, public comments. As for the public comments that I received through emails today, I received probably about 125 emails. I will not be reading all those because 50-plus or 60-plus of them came after 4:00, and unfortunately our cutoff time is 4:00 for public comments. So, I will be reading every public comment that we received before 4:00 today.

I will start with locals, and I have Luk Mansala. Three minutes, sir.

Luk Mansala:

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Good evening, everyone.

Group:

Good evening.

Luk Mansala:

My name is Luk Mansala. I'm the Yemeni resident. I have been living in the city since 1997. Since that year, the city has been suffering from budget divisions and has declared bankruptcy several times. For the first time in the history in my life in the city, a budget surplus is declared this year.

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to the mayor of the city, Dr. Amer Ghalib, to the City Council and to the City Manager, Mr. Max Garbarino and his team. Guys, give up the [inaudible 00:03:06]. We are proud of your presence in these positions, and you deserve our hope and support. How nice it is to see the right person in the right place. We look forward to seeing our city beautiful, healthy and safe.

And this requires more efforts and continuous work from all of us with sincerity. For resolution 2023-82, we respect all laws supporting political, religious, sexual, and other freedoms, and we hope that everyone will exercise their personal freedom in their private places. And the public places and city property will not be used to support any freedoms of any parties without the freedoms of other parties. Thank you so much.

Mayor:

Thank you, Luk.

Speaker 4:

Thank you. Lynn Blasey.

Lynn Blasey:

Hello, Mayor and Council. First I would like to comment on resolution 2023-74. I'm just looking for clarification on the time for the Hindu rally. In one part of the resolution it says 1:00 to 4:00 PM. The other says 5:00 to 7:00.

On resolution 2023-77, I just want to express excitement for the opportunity for Fatima to expand her home and purchase the neighboring property to add a sunroom. I think that's a really great program, and more approvals of these kinds of projects will really help other people know that that's an option.

2023-78, I support this additional street sweeper purchase. Based on the attachments to this resolution, it will really pair well with the one we just purchased. This one will pick up larger items. The other one will pick up all the smaller debris, and it'll be a lot more efficient for our city.

I also support the extension of the alley contract. It's my understanding that there's only two alleys left, and they've been doing a good job with that.

And I also support the purchasing of new carpet and flooring throughout city hall. It'll really help bring us into this level of prosperity that our city is moving into.

I do have some concerns regarding resolution 2023-81. From reading the attachments, I just want to get some clarification about the taser purchase, and I read in the description of the taser seven that there's an option for the taser to turn off after five seconds automatically or that each different municipality can choose to disable that function. So, I just would like some assurance that we would not be disabling that function for our community.

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Finally, regarding, how much time do I have left?

Speaker 4:

You have a minute.

Lynn Blasey:

Okay. Regarding resolution 2023-82, I'm really concerned about some of the wording of this resolution. As it's stated, I feel like some groups are going to be discriminated against that have traditionally been included in our flags on Joseph Campau. We have flown the Cherokee Nation flag and the African Union flag for several years. Neither of those groups are recognized countries or nations, and under this resolution we would no longer be able to fly that flag.

Also, I'm curious why this would stop at religious, or at flags, when in other areas of our city we are very inclusive and have representation for our religious groups. Can I have just one more minute?

Speaker 3:

All right. Sure. Well, I think you have to ask the elected body, not the clerk.

Lynn Blasey:

I asked the mayor.

Speaker 3:

Okay.

Mayor:

Okay.

Lynn Blasey:

And I'm curious why the rhetoric in this resolution, if it would stop at flags. Because saying that our city is not going to support one religion or anything like that, will this prevent us from having either Christmas decorations? Would this eliminate our free parking for religious holidays? It just doesn't make sense the way it's written that we would draw the line at flags.

And then also, there's a section in the resolution that says each group is represented by the country to which they belong. And I'm curious how we're defining country. Is that the United Nations' recognized countries? Would that include countries that are not recognized by the United Nations? So, I have a lot of questions about the language used in this resolution.

Speaker 4:

Thank you, Lynn.

Speaker 3:

Thank you.

Speaker 4:

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Rose Carver.

Rose Carver:

Excuse me. Thank you for your time. And may I address the esteemed and distinguished Council people here before me. I am here to support resolution 82. Hamtramck may be one of the most diverse cities in the country, but we have to draw the line somewhere. Sure, many Hamtramck residents have fled countries where being gay is a death sentence, but nothing says we have to make it comforting and welcoming here.

While we can't legally discriminate against LGBTQ people in the United States anymore, the City Council of Hamtramck can say, "Ew, no." Be proud somewhere else because that is the meaning of neutrality, my fellow citizens.

Additionally, at a time when all of us feel the burn of inflation, we can't expect to throw cost towards rainbow flags. We have to spend \$146,996 on tasers for the Hamtramck Police Department, and just in case any of these radical gays get out of line during Pride Month, no less. Bravo.

And so, allow me to humbly present a redesign of the Hamtramck City placard to underscore this brave Council's position on neutrality. This new sign will ensure that visitors and residents know that this is a city that stands for diversity so long as it doesn't offend the religious beliefs and backgrounds of others.

The slogan shall now read Hamtramck welcomes you if you're straight. And this is a historic moment, a moment where the basic rights of LGBTQ folks are under attack, and history will look back at these seven brave members of City Council and remember they remained neutral.

The headlines will read heroic Hamtramck City Council votes to stay neutral during Pride Month, bans Pride flags on all city property and instead invests in police tasers. Now, this might be a little on the nose for you, and if you don't like this poster, I do have another one.

Obviously, we'll have to paint over the rainbow on the bureau because that is a little too gay, but we will have the world in two straight miles, so it's a little bit, it's covert. So, it's not right on the nose. Anyway, thank you so much. I yield the rest of my time.

Group:

[inaudible 00:10:45]

Speaker 3:

All right.

Rose Carver:

Thank you.

Speaker 4:

Russ Gordon?

Speaker 5:

Mr. Mayor, can I get everybody to address their city, at least mention their city?

Mayor:

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No. It's okay. It's okay.

Speaker 3:

This is the problem.

Speaker 4:

Please keep it down. Thank you.

Speaker 3:

[inaudible 00:11:15].

Speaker 4:

Please keep it down. Go ahead, Russ.

Russ Gordon:

Okay. I'm obviously speaking about the flag ordinance, the ordinance to-

Speaker 5:

23-82.

Russ Gordon:

... To eliminate the Pride flag. There have been a number of reasons presented for it. Probably the biggest is that some of the flags don't represent flags of nations. Others that the flag selection was done without a quorum. There have been many reasons put forth for this.

We've always had flags that were not flags of nations displayed there, since day one, 10 years ago. That's not new. I think the elephant in the room, the thing we all see, the thing we're not talking about is that homosexuality is a sin, and I think that's what's weighing on people and driving this decision.

And that is an inappropriate reason for banning this flag. There could be many reasons. Gay folks have been sidelined for centuries, okay? Back in the day they were executed. This may be a sin, but it's a reality, okay? And it exists, and there are a lot of gay people in this community, and that flag represents them. It's inclusive. It allows them to feel like they belong in this community. For many, many years, for centuries, they haven't belonged anywhere.

Oh, geez. Okay. I had a real good friend of mine, years ago. He was executive in one of the largest administrator, top administrator in one of the largest medical centers in the country. And he couldn't come out. He got married to a woman just to maintain his cover. This has been the history of gay folks. 40, 50 years ago, folks started coming out. When they did, they lost friends, family. It's pitiful.

Recently, because we live in the United States of America, it's no longer, there's no longer a law against it. No folks can stand up.

Speaker 4:

Thank you, Russ.

Russ Gordon:

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Okay.

Speaker 4:

Thank you so much.

Russ Gordon:

Okay. What it's all about is pride. That's it.

Speaker 4:

Thank you.

Russ Gordon:

And we need to let them have their pride.

Speaker 3:

Thank you, sir.

Speaker 4:

Thank you, sir. Hassan Aoun? Three minutes.

Hassan Aoun:

Good afternoon. Hold on one second. Good afternoon. Hassan Aoun, public activist. I live in Dearborn. I just want to tell every everybody Pride Month, don't put it down our throats. Okay? Because let me say something. That flag, the Pride flag you think you guys want to put down my throat, let me put my Lebanese flag down your throat. Okay?

We're not going to sit here and put the Yemeni flag. We're not going to sit here and put any flag. We're just going to put the American flag. That's what we support. I am a Lebanese person, and I support the American flag. We are not going to sit here and tolerate you guys come in and say, "Oh, it's Pride Month." You're gay? No problem. You be gay by yourselves. Don't sit here, throw down kids' throats, my throat or anybody's throat. This is-

Speaker 5:

Sir, can you address to this way?

Hassan Aoun:

I'm addressing, what's it called?

Speaker 5:

No, this way.

Hassan Aoun:

I'm sitting here talking. I'm addressing you guys.

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Speaker 5:

Yes, [inaudible 00:15:38].

Hassan Aoun:

I ain't addressing nobody else but Council.

Speaker 5:

Thank you.

Hassan Aoun:

Please. But you interrupted, so I get 30 seconds. Anyways, just to let the Council know that the Pride Day or Pride Month or whatever they want to call it, don't put it down our throats. We support the American flag. My parents came to this country in 1972 from Lebanon. You don't see my family standing there putting the flag and say, "I'm going to put the Lebanese flag down your throat."

You keep your flag. You want to put it at your house? Put it at your house. Do not put it on city property, and do not put it in our schools. Nice and simple.

Mayor:

Calm down, guys. All right guys, calm down.

Speaker 4:

Everybody needs to calm down.

Mayor:

Calm down.

Speaker 4:

[inaudible 00:16:29].

Speaker 6:

Actually, you guys got to step out. Everyone, out. Come on. If you're not in a seat, you've got to stand in the hallway.

Speaker 3:

Speak up, please.

Hassan Aoun:

October 10th, I quit the Dearborn School Board. Why? Because they're trying to put sexual explicit materials in our schools. Don't put it down my throat. You want to put that? Read it to your kids at your homes. Don't be reading it to our kids in school. We are tired of this. At the end of the day, we are not going to tolerate nobody putting no flag in city property or anywhere. You want to put the American flag? You want to put the LGBTQ flag? Put it at your house. Don't sit there and try to bring it in our city, in our schools, and teach children something that we do not need around our children. So, I'm asking

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the City Council today to approve a resolution that no flag but the American flag to be in any city or any school.

Thank you, and have a great day.

Speaker 4:

Thank you. [inaudible 00:17:33].

Speaker 5:

Thank you. [inaudible 00:17:36].

Speaker 4:

Three minutes, sir.

Speaker 12:

Good evening. My name is [inaudible 00:17:50], and I'm an immigrant from a small village in a country called Yemen. I came to this great country when I was less than seven-years-old, but I did not always think that this was a great country. In fact, from the time I got here until I graduated college, I was constantly told America is an evil country. America is an unjust country. America is a racist country. I felt like I did not belong here.

Over the years as I grew up in America, I had flashbacks to my early life in Yemen. I remembered that we were so poor, we would have only chicken once in a blue moon. And when we did have the chicken, we ate everything. And I remembered we had no running water, no electricity, and no bathrooms. Yes, I did remember all of this growing up, but you see, it was a faint, distant memory, as if it were my imagination or my dream.

So, for 20 years I never traveled beyond the borders of America. That changed in 2000 when I visited Yemen for the first time, and needless to say I was in complete shock. The level of poverty and chaos that I personally witnessed there was at another level. The effect it had on me was similar to when you're in a nightmare and you suddenly wake up. It was a complete shock.

And [foreign language 00:19:16], praise be to God, now I am thankful that God has blessed me with the opportunity to be and live in this wonderful country where I have the freedom to live my life as I see fit. Where I can worship my creator in peace and tranquility.

Unfortunately, many people in our country don't seem to understand this. They don't know or they don't want to know what it's like to live in extreme poverty, what it's like to live under severe repression where there's no freedom of speech, no freedom of religion.

I owe my success and my livelihood first and foremost to the creator Himself, almighty God, then to this great country. Our soldiers fought, bled and died in the jungles of Iwo Jima and the beaches of Omaha so that you and I can live with peace, prosperity, and freedom. Those soldiers fall under the American flag and no other. It's shameful and embarrassing to have any other flag in public buildings.

You have the freedom to display whatever you wish in your home or your private businesses. We respect all nations, cultures and their flags, but we only salute the American flag. Do not waver, and do not flinch. You are doing the right thing.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

Speaker 4:

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Mike Hashem. I need you to keep it down out there. Sir, in the red shirt, if you keep that up, you're going to leave. The guy in the red shirt.

Mike Hashem, please.

Mike Hashem:

Yes, [inaudible 00:20:57].

Speaker 4:

Thank you.

Mike Hashem:

Good evening, Council.

Mayor:

Good evening.

Mike Hashem:

My name is Mike Hashem. First thing I want to say, all of us are immigrants. All of us came from countries to respect this flag, and there should be no other flag in this country other than the American flag. We have civil wars in our countries. We have famine in our countries.

But to come to a country to display a colorful flag that means nothing to us? I mean, that's a disgrace. It's a disgrace to the people that lost their lives for these countries in wars. It's a disgrace for this flag for people who lose their lives just across the border to have a better life in this country.

And let me tell you something, I'm all for removing the Gay Pride flag, because you know what? Let me tell you something. This is America. I have the right to say I'm against the Gay Pride flag. If anyone has an issue with it, they could go kick rocks. But in that end of the day, this is the flag that should be up. No other flag.

Speaker 4:

Khalil [inaudible 00:22:04]? Khalil [inaudible 00:22:09]?

Khalil:

Good evening, Mayor and City Council members. I would start, I had the privilege and the honor to work in this great city for four years. And this great city embraced diversity despite the fact in the past years has suffered so many economic hardships.

While we celebrate the budget balance and the surplus that this leadership introduced under their leadership within one year, and that surplus will continue for many years to come, I do believe throughout my time here working with different minorities, different culture, different, the city got along really, really good.

People lived here for many years, and they got along really good. Entertaining or introducing or start getting the communities or segregating the communities based on ethnic and racial or groups or political affiliations, this is just going to create hate. This is going to create division. This is going to create so many things for the city.

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If we take a step back and celebrate what this leadership has achieved today and what's coming in the upcoming years for the city, it's much better than focusing on something that's really going to defy the city. I do support the proposal and the resolution that's you guys are proposing.

And I do believe one flag, the United States of America, should be the only flag that's sitting or standing in the city properties. Thank you.

Speaker 4:

Thank you. Stephanie Butler?

Stephanie Butler:

Today I want to stand here and talk about something that wraps around this proposal you guys have. I'm a member, fairly new member of a Facebook group for Hamtramck. And I have to tell you that the Yemenis are being so targeted on this page by members of the LGBT community. They're being baited. They're being put in traps to say things. They're being threatened to be sued for talking about their religion, this, that and the other.

It's relentless attacks on this community, and we're sitting here talking about flying flags. That has nothing to do with making peace in this community. It's unacceptable to witness the targeting of individuals based on the religious beliefs. Such acts of discrimination and mistreatment undermine the principles of respect, tolerance and human dignity that are essential for a just and inclusive society. The deliberate harassment and mockery inflicted upon the Yemeni community by individuals on this Facebook group are reprehensible.

No one should be subjected to such degrading treatment because of their faith. It is a violation of their fundamental rights and an assault on the principles of religious freedom and coexistence. We stand here and we talk about coexistence, but it's okay for one group to attack another group because those people want to stand by their faith. This is America. We don't fly heterosexual flags. We don't fly any of these other flags.

That doesn't mean that people aren't free to exist. They are, but we don't have to fly a flag on city property, next to the United States flag, that slams in the face, goes against things that people do not believe. If we're going to respect one side, we're going to respect the other. And that's all I have to say.

Speaker 4:

[inaudible 00:26:24]?

Speaker 3:

They need to stop inside. Oh, sorry.

Speaker 7:

I rise today to speak against 22, the flag resolution and the lie that it's based upon. This resolution is brought about through a bold-faced lie. This resolution has zero to do with hate groups flying a flag unless the city administration fully and truly believes that the LGBTQI community of Hamtramck is a full-fledged hate group.

Though from what I can see that this gathering, there's only one hate group listed by the Southern Poverty League here tonight. And that's Moms For Liberty.

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Speaker 5:

[inaudible 00:27:16].

Speaker 7:

I challenge the Council to return with a resolution that is transparent and name their real target for erasure, which is the LGBTI community. If the Council chooses to carry through with this lie, they are doing a disservice to Hamtramck and the community they claim to serve.

Mr. Mayor, you should be ashamed for this. You should be ashamed for this farce and for having Muhammad bring this forth. When you said four days ago in reference to flying the Pride flag, "He doesn't have to worry. There is a higher level decision coming." That isn't democracy, sir. That isn't the America I fought for. That's fascism.

It is clear that you are either ignorant or hateful and spiteful. The clear and abundant desire to shove this community back in the closet is seen by all of us, and I leave you with the history lesson. The rising of Stonewall was in response to hate, and my community will rise again.

I fought for your right to hate me. And you're welcome.

Speaker 4:

Joey Roberts.

Group:

Boo.

Speaker 6:

Please. [inaudible 00:28:40]. Folks, we will clear this room.

Speaker 8:

Everyone has the right to speak. [inaudible 00:28:45]

Mayor:

All right, guys.

Speaker 6:

That was not respectful. [inaudible 00:28:48]

Speaker 8:

Everyone has the right to speak whether you agree with them or not.

Speaker 5:

Yeah, please don't-

Speaker 4:

Joey Roberts.

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Speaker 6:

Folks.

Speaker 5:

Thank you.

Speaker 6:

If you don't keep it down, we will clear the hallway.

Speaker 5:

You need another officer out there?

Speaker 9:

Yeah, this officer is there.

Speaker 6:

Joey Roberts.

Speaker 10:

Joey Roberts. Come on. Drop.

Speaker 9:

Yeah, that's [inaudible 00:29:10].

Joey Roberts:

Hello, Mayor, City Council members, change the subject and all that. My thing is about the police policy. Police have policy in Hamtramck, but the citizens don't know what the policy is. Police violate the policy every day. What they expect are superiors to sit there and exclude them on that. But hey, how do the people know what policy they are breaking?

My brother was beat up two weeks ago. They broke three thresholds. My gate, my screen door, and my door. And beat my brother up in my house. I asked for the policy twice, was rejected, because they said it jeopardizes their procedures. I don't want to know the procedures. I just want their policy.

Are they able to smoke on the job? Are they able to drink on the job? Are they able to run red lights? Are they able to just be rude to a citizen for no reason at all? That is my thing. The citizen needs to know the policy of the police so we can hold them accountable because they get away with way too much. They sit there, they disrespected me. They disrespected my mom. My mom is 85 pounds. She's a little short lady. A six-foot five, seven lady told her she's going to take her to jail. My mom said, "No, you'll take me to the hospital." She's 85 pounds.

I'm asking for the policy to be released to the citizen of Hamtramck. The police policy. Not the procedures, not to jeopardize their integrity or their safety. The policy, the rules they have to follow. How can we hold them accountable if the citizens don't know what rules they've got to follow? We have to wear a seatbelt. Do cops have to wear a seatbelt? Can cops smoke in a police car? Can cops just pull up and question you for no reason?

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I'm asking for the policy to be released to the citizens of Hamtramck. The police policy. Not the procedures, the policy, the rules. And the rules they have to follow. I see cops. I see police blow through red lights all the time. I see police make red U-turns all the time. I see police not wearing their seatbelt all the time. I see police drive around with cracked windshield all the time, but don't hold them accountable.

The citizens of Hamtramck, we're held accountable when they threaten a citizen of Hamtramck should they be held accountable? That's what I was stopped from today. But I'm asking for the release of Hamtramck police policy. I requested it twice. I was denied twice.

Speaker 4:

Thank you, Joey.

Joey Roberts:

I just want to know their policy.

Speaker 4:

Thank you, Joey.

Joey Roberts:

Thank you, ma'am. That's all I want to say.

Mayor:

Thank you, Joey. Thank you so much.

Speaker 5:

Thank you, sir.

Speaker 4:

I have Ekamara Keju. Ekamara Keju?

Speaker 5:

Ekamara Keju?

Speaker 9:

Ekamara Keju?

Speaker 6:

[inaudible 00:32:32] Keju?

Mayor:

How do you pronounce that name?

Speaker 4:

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Ekamara. Ekamara.

Speaker 5:

Ekamara.

Speaker 9:

Ekamara?

Speaker 6:

Ekamara Keju?

Hassan Aoun:

I'm so angry right now.

Speaker 6:

No, no, sir. No, no.

Speaker 4:

Thank you.

Speaker 11:

I expected to be going at the end. My mistake.

Speaker 4:

Three minutes.

Speaker 11:

I definitely don't want to talk for three minutes. So, my concern, I really want to stay in my lane. And it is about the way the policy regarding the flying the flag reads. But I'm an artist, and I'm not a poli-sci major or anything like that.

So, I want to talk about specifically my concern about the wording and how it's going to relate to art in the city. Sidewalk chalk murals are a really great way for emerging artists to get kind of experience. It's a great way for small business owners to get artwork, and it's temporary. It's kind of tradition in Hamtramck. We have children who come out for events and do sidewalk drawings and all this kind of thing.

And I'm just concerned by the way that it reads that that won't be something that's allowed to be diverse in nature and celebratory of pride. And so, I would like for the City Council to just think about that and maybe take some time to reword it, and consider how it's going to impact how we express art and diversity in the city, specifically, when it doesn't pertain to a flag flying on a pole. Right?

So, I know we're talking about flags specifically. That's been the hot topic online. But the way it reads, it talks really about images, and those can be really powerful and important for visibility. The queer community is prone to suicide. So, when it comes to art and expression, I would really like that to be considered and maybe to consider rewording the ordinance.

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That's actually it. Thank you.

Speaker 4:

Thank you, Mr. Bill Meyer.

Speaker 6:

Mr. what?

Speaker 4:

Mr. Bill Meyer.

Speaker 6:

Bill Meyer.

Bill Meyer:

I'm already here. Hello, Council and Mayor. Bill Meyer from [inaudible 00:34:55] Hamtramck. So, we all have one enemy that we all have to fight here. We're all the same. The enemy is hate.

PART 1 OF 8 ENDS [00:35:04]

Speaker 13:

...fight here. We're all the same. The enemy is hate. We have hate on all sides. We have hate to deal with every issue we have. We have to conquer hate.

Love is the answer. We have to respect every human being. As far as the religious friends of mine, I think you all believe, you should believe that every human is made in the image of God. We're all important. Every one of us, regardless of what our sexual orientation is, what our gender is, whatever. We're all human beings and we're all in this ship together and we're all going to go down together if we don't watch it.

So the first thing I'm sure religious people should respect everybody is a human being first. We don't have to agree with everyone's sexual orientation and gender, whatever, but you still have to respect people as human beings, and I see nothing but love from this council. I don't see any hate coming from this council or mayor. I've watched you for a long time, that's why I say I support this council.

I think you're trying to find a solution, and the most difficult thing to do is to find a way for people to live with other people that they don't agree with. That's the hardest thing to live with. I've been doing this a long time and you don't want to get an argument with people because it's over with. Once you start fighting, you're not going to find a solution. You have to find solutions and I know you're trying to do it.

Thank you for that, but I'm not here to talk about that. I'm here to talk about something else. So can I have an extra minute?

Speaker 14:

Yes, mayor.

Darren Shelton:

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You can.

Speaker 13:

Oh, I'm sorry. Okay. And by the way, you're supposed to address the mayor, not the council.

So I'm the chair of the Michigan Peace Council, which is the chapter of US Peace Council, which is a member of the World Peace Council, which is the largest peace organization in the world, and we have a chapter here in Michigan.

And we have a project coming up, I want to give you a heads-up because I'm going to the Michigan Peace Council going to presenting to you Move the Money resolution to the city Councils coming up soon and I want you to know about it. It's the call in Congress and the president to move significant funds away from military spending for military budget, which is now close to a trillion dollars. In order to fund social services and to hold in-depth public hearings in each city, in our city on basic human needs of Hamtramck residents that are unmet because of government appropriations towards the Pentagon. We have to start spending wisely, instead of funding wars all around the world. That's killing people. We have to find a way to save people and help people, and I know you're all for that, so we're going to present that to you later.

Also, we're going to urge our mayor to join a group called Mayors for Peace, which was started in 1982 in the UN by a mayor from Nagasaki, the first city that was bombed with the nuclear bomb, one of over two cities. The goal is to join the solidarity with over 8,000 cities in the world. Mayors from 8,000 cities are getting together to work together to press for nuclear abolition, nuclear bombs, to contribute to the attainment of lasting world peace and to solve vital problems for the human race such as starvation and poverty, the plight of refugees, human rights abuses, and environmental degradation.

This is what we need to do. We have to be known as a peace city. We have to be inclusive. We have to include everyone in the city, and I know you want to include the LGBTQIATS community as much as anybody else. You respect them. I feel that. I know that the flag issue is a tough thing to deal with. We have to find a way for everybody to accept the compromises upset. Thank you very much.

Speaker 14:

Thank you, Bill. Darren Shelton? Three minutes, yes.

Darren Shelton:

Second row. I don't know how. It's underneath the chair. I do not know.

Man 1:

What's that?

Darren Shelton:

I apologize. I didn't know how to address it. I saw it on the floor.

Speaker 14:

Three minutes. Yes.

Darren Shelton:

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Mr. Mayor, council members, thank you for being here today. My name is Darren Shelton. I am Executive Director of Planet Ant Theater just down the street on Caniff. We're a nonprofit performing arts organization that has been here in the city of Hamtramck for, it'll be 30 years on Labor Day. We're an institution in the city long before my time and I'm here today to say that the LGBT community is the lifeblood of our organization and of arts and entertainment in general. I understand everybody that's coming up here today and saying things along the lines of, it should only be the American flag. I understand that, but the fact of the matter here is that it's not just the American flag. There are plenty of flags represented because this is a diverse city. It's a great city and the diversity is what makes it great.

I'm here on behalf of allowing the LGBT communities' voices' to be heard as well alongside because I do believe that's what makes this city great. I've worked my entire adult life here in the city. I don't think sexuality is a political issue. The LGBT community deserves their presence and contributions within this community to be acknowledged alongside all of the other great populations here because together is what makes this city great. It's why I believe in this city. It's why I work every day here to try to improve this city. This resolution to me feels like a thinly veiled attack on one flag, I understand. Mr. Mayor, I implore you to strike down resolution 2382 and allow the LGBT members of this community, that are here, that are working every day for this city, to be acknowledged, to have their contributions highlighted alongside everyone else doing wonderful things in this city.

I'm hopeful that you will choose to put political views aside and do the right thing and lead with love for humanity and give a voice to a group of people that have been systematically held down and voiceless for forever. That being said, I am not naive, I understand that this vote has all but passed and I am here to say, Mr. Mayor and council members that this battle did not start today and it will not end today. I thank you.

Man 1:

All right sir.

Speaker 14:

Thank you. Matthew Piziali.

Man 2:

Matthew. Matthew.

Woman 1:

Matthew.

Speaker 14:

Matthew Piziali?

Emelyn Rutowski:

Matthew Piziali?

Man 2:

Matthew Perialis?

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Speaker 14:

It's okay.

Man 2:

Cue ball left.

Man 1:

I'll wait. Come on. I'll wait. Sir, Matthew Piziali.

Speaker 14:

No? Okay. Emelyn Rutowski. Rutowski. Emelyn Rutowski.

Man 1:

Emelyn?

Speaker 14:

Emelyn Rutowski.

Man 1:

Emelyn Rutowski. Emelyn Rutowski. Got her.

Speaker 14:

Okay. Three minutes.

Emelyn Rutowski:

Okay. Thank you. Hello.

Speaker 14:

Please keep that down.

Emelyn Rutowski:

Down. Hello, Mr. Mayor. Hello, counsel. As a resident of Hamtramck, hearing about resolution 2023-82 before council today makes me ask, does Hamtramck not want to maintain a reputation of being a welcoming city to one in all? Is it not proud of the many groups and individuals and community of individuals that are pertinent to its nurturing growth and ultimate success? Does it believe in upholding the separation of church and state? I believe this is an issue of human rights. The reason behind this resolution seems reminiscent of fear mongering, manipulating the city's citizens to think they're in potential danger if this doesn't pass.

I believe it's the opposite. If this resolution does pass and pride flags are banned to fly on city property, I think it sends an open message to those who are against the rights of LGBTQI folks and encourages harmful, intolerant and most of the time false perceptions of the community. I want to live in a city where I know my friends and family feel safe, seen and heard. This is a basic right that should be extended to all well-meaning citizens and to this, passing today's resolution would display an act of

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disagreement. I think. I really hope you, Mr. Mayor, and this counsel takes these words into consideration. Thank you for your time.

Speaker 14:

Thank you. Cindy Louise?

Man 1:

Cindy Louise?

Speaker 14:

Cindy Louise?

Man 1:

Cindy, Cindy Louise.

Man 2:

Cindy, Cindy, Louise.

Man 1:

She's coming. She's coming.

Speaker 14:

Welcome Cindy. Three minutes.

Cindy Louise :

Do I need to-

Speaker 14:

No, just keep it there.

Cindy Louise :

Okay. This isn't even thinly disguised. This is an attack on LGBTQ people. And let's be real about what's going on here. You have joined, added one more on top of the more than 500 resolutions and laws that have been proposed and or passed in this country attacking LGBTQ people, making it illegal for people to be, forcing situations in which LGBTQ youth are very much in danger of suicide and other forms of self-hatred for no damn reason other than the fact of some old, male supremacist religious ideology. Now, you got to face that. That's what that is. This is saying no, not here. Either. We join with what DeSantis and Donald Trump and Greg Abbott. Congratulations people, that's inclusive to you? So that's one thing. The other thing I have to say is, this thing about inclusion under the flag. People have raised that. I'm someone who is not included under the American flag. On June 24th, the people who run this country made it that we women have no longer the right to control our bodies.

There's tens of thousands of people who are immigrants on the border who are suffering terrible conditions at the hands of this country. There was a Muslim ban at the beginning of Trump's regime in this country. That will be reimposed. There is a trajectory going along here and you have the choice to

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either stand up to it and do something about it or join it like you're doing right now. I don't accept it. Myself, I'm a revolutionary. I'm a RevCom and I will say this, that the government that I'm going for and fighting for is one that, not only allows the oppressed people and different things, but actually teaches them the history and leads people to stand up to this kind of BS. No respect to you at all for even bringing this here.

Man 3:

Go Trump.

Speaker 14:

Caitlin Drinkard. Caitlin Drinkard. Caitlin Drinkard?

Man 2:

Caitlin? Caitlin?

Speaker 14:

Ellia Marissi is next. So be ready.

Caitlin Drinkard :

Thank you. Hello. I'm here to comment on resolution 2023-82. My name's Caitlin Drinkard and I've been a Hamtramck resident for 10 years. I'm also a high school counselor and have been for most of the last 10 years. Over the years, I have worked with a number of LGBTQ students who have been rejected by their own families and their own communities for simply being who they are. I've had students kicked out of their homes, threatened with violence and even death and faced incredible adversity solely because of who they are and who they choose to love. According to the CDC, LGBTQ youth are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers and more than four times as likely to be the victims of violence. The rates are even higher for LGBTQ Youth of Color. In the US alone, one LGBTQ youth attempts suicide every 45 seconds.

So in the time I've been up here, an LGBTQ youth will have attempted suicide. On average. One of the biggest protective factors keeping LGBTQ Youth Alive is acceptance. LGBTQ Youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people report much lower rates of suicide attempts. Hamtramck is a community that has since its beginning, welcomed outsiders, immigrants new to this country, people with all kinds of traditions and beliefs, values and outlooks. Flying the pride flag at City Hall is not going to encourage people to be gay. It's not going to corrupt anyone's children. It is merely affirming the fact that LGBTQ people have a right to exist and a right to belong in the city where they live.

For LGBTQ youth who are rejected by their families, seeing that pride flag flying in our city might give them one small glimmer of hope to hold on and not to give up. As a citizen of Hamtramck, I would hope that the council would consider the lives of our most marginalized youth and the effect that decisions like these have on their mental health and wellbeing. Your actions tonight speak volumes about who in this community you choose to represent and who you don't represent at all and we will all remember that when we vote on August 8th. Thank you

Speaker 14:

Ellia Marissi?

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Man 2:

Ellia Marissi? She left.

Speaker 14:

Asir Naboulsi.

Man 2:

Asir Naboulsi. Not here.

Man 1:

Not here.

Speaker 14:

Ash Porter?

Man 2:

Ash Porter? Ash porter?

Man 1:

You guys show seats here. You guys got to come out. Come out. Come out. Sir. Come out. When seats are open and you guys can come back in. Okay. Just right on this side. Side. Step back on this side. All right. Step back over here. You do it from right there. Okay.

Speaker 14:

No Ash Porter?

Man 2:

Ash Porter.

Speaker 14:

Craig Brown?

Man 2:

Craig Brown?

Speaker 14:

Thank you. Welcome Craig.

Man 2:

Asir Nabousli? No?

Speaker 14:

And she'll be next. Oh, he'll be next.

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Craig Brown:

Next?

Speaker 14:

Yes sir.

Craig Brown:

Thank you for having me here. I would like to address the main issue I was talking about with the flag and all that. Okay. I've rented here for 10 years. I love Hamtramck with all of my heart. I just purchased a home. I will be a resident here for a very long time. I'm very proud of that fact. Why would our town one of the most unique and diverse cities in the world put an ordinance to make any group feel unwelcome or not accepted? That is why I'm here and I'm here to ask why.

This has nothing to do with a personal viewpoint on sexual orientation. And if it does, then this council is filled with nothing but bigots. I'm sure others here will have better and more articulate viewpoints on acceptance and diversity than myself. Even though that is my main reason for coming here, I have perhaps an unpopular viewpoint on why putting a band on a flag with a rainbow on it is completely ridiculous. If we can't change your bigoted viewpoints on acceptance, maybe I can convince you to vote with your wallets. The LGBTQ community is the single best thing for property value in the history of the world.

Ferndale was nothing but a Redford or a Warren or a blue collar town when I was a kid. The gay community came in and painted that town with a rainbow brush and look what happened. It's stunning. The gay community are fearless risk-takers. Throughout history as a community, they have turned cities around single-handedly. Palmer Woods, Indian Village and Boston Edison are filled with rainbow flags. San Francisco was a bunch of dirty hippies. San Francisco is now the most sought after real estate in the history of the world. In the entire world. Sorry.

Big tech may have caused that too. But that would've never... If it wasn't for the fearless risk-takers painting San Francisco with the rainbow brush, that would've never happened. It never would've been big tech. Hey, what's up? Okay, look at the lower west side of Manhattan. The list goes on and on. I can't believe this is even up for debate in my beloved city of Hamtramck in 2023. This is a step 70 years backwards and you all in opposition should be embarrassed. If we didn't already have a constitutional standard separating church and state, I would get into how nothing in the Quran has scripture that has issues with homosexuality, so I don't have to go there.

The Empire State Building has rainbow lights on it during Pride month. Hamtramck has been, is, and shall continue to be a place of diversity and acceptance. It is the very foundation of what makes us great. Thank you. [Foreign language 00:54:13].

Speaker 14:

Thank you. Asir Naboulsi? Naboulsi? What's your name?

Speaker 15:

My name is Asir Naboulsi.

Speaker 14:

Okay. Go ahead. Three minutes.

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Speaker 15:

Salam Alaikum. My name is Asir Naboulsi. I am a convert. I took my Shabbat at the [inaudible 00:54:39] Center. I'm an Ex-Nuke with the United States Nuclear Power Training command. I'm a citizen scientist, an anti-oppression activist, and I'm a transgender man. I want to keep this really brief. Equating the oppressed with the oppressor is definitionally and fundamentally dangerous. It wasn't just the Jews that they kept. It was genuinely every demographic in this room. There's no safety from the trivialization of violent hatred and none of us are safe besides the oppressors in our midst.

Speaker 14:

Thank you. Hassan Ali Shabbi. Hassan, three minutes.

Hassan:

Okay. Salam Alaikum. I want to speak I think in Arabic because some sentence, I don't know exactly how I'm going to explain to you, but I think I'm going to speak in Arabic is better. Can give you what I mean exactly.

Speaker 16:

[inaudible 00:55:59] Explain, translate. Thank you.

Hassan:

[Foreign language 00:56:18]

Speaker 16:

Should I just translate? So basically he said he has been living here in this city for the past 21 years and he as an individual and his community have cared for this city economically and for the safety of the people in the city. And he thinks that the flying the flag, the LGBT flag is something unacceptable and it's odd, he said to humanity and to the nature of people and he thinks it will destroy the new generations by implementing or imposing this agenda on them. And he's calling the council to vote in support of this resolution to ban any flag from flying. Basically that's the main idea for this.

Speaker 14:

Thank you. Jamal Al-Turke. Jamal.

Jamal Al-Turk:

Good evening everybody. My name is Jamal Al-Turke. I'm a Hamtramck citizen since 2004 and I used to be a lawyer in Yemen and assistant of reserve of study follows. So when we speak, it's going to be include some legal rules. I hope everybody understand this. All of us, now that Hamtramck is a welcoming city, what is free clear that the LGBT community is aggressive on the legal rules for exercise their rights, throw their endeavor to exercise their right outside of the special scope defined by the law. We see them liken themselves to the civil rights movement that completed the liberation of black citizen. But they forgot that the nation was not divided about that movement. And that it didn't have flag to be raised everywhere since only states and international organization raised their flags. While I call our representative in the municipal council to issue a decision banning the raising of flags other than the city or state or the US flags on the city property, recall all member of the gay community and it's

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supposed to stop this matters, which not only include wrongful exercise of the rights, but also written the unity of the city of Hamtramck. Thank you.

Speaker 14:

Thank you. Ellie Martin.

Man 2:

Ellie Martin.

Speaker 14:

Ellie Martin. Jessica Quick is next. Ellie Martin.

Man 2:

Jessica Quick. Ellie Martin.

Speaker 14:

Ellie, not Ali. Not Ali. Ellie.

Woman 1:

27. 21 down. 27 to go. 27 left.

Speaker 17:

Hello, my name is Ellie Martin. I'm both a Hamtramck resident and a member of the transgender community, which I'm sure many here will be horrified to know. Before I moved to Hamtramck while visiting here, I felt very welcomed by the LGBTQ representation provided by both city government businesses and the general community. I'll be deeply saddened to see this resolution passed and firmly believe there will only deter future residents from moving to the city.

Speaker 14:

Thank you, Jessica Quick.

Man 1:

Jessica Quick.

Man 2:

Jessica Quick.

Jessice Quick:

Hello, my name is Jesse Quick. I am a resident of Hamtramck and I'm here to speak in opposition to resolution 2023-82. This resolution claims to maintain neutrality towards Hamtramck residents in order to embrace the city's diversity and avoid discrimination or special treatment of its residents. While I agree with this sentiment in its truest form, I would like to make it clear that this resolution does quite the opposite of establishing neutrality. Instead, this resolution sends a clear message about what group city leaders do not want to see represented, specifically the LGBTQ community, the African Union, and

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the Cherokee Nation, each of whose flags would be prohibited from being flown on city property under this new rule. I'm going to focus my concerns with prohibiting the representation of the LGBTQ community because that's a place that I can speak from. I would like to remind the council that this action does not exist in a bubble.

This year alone, the United States has seen over 650 anti-LGBTQ bills introduced in state and local legislatures. And yet this resolution implies that the American flag should represent this community. This includes legislation that prevents public recognition of the LGBTQ community. It is disgraceful that this city claims to celebrate its diversity while its leaders proposed legislation that adds to this horrifying statistic and which cherry-picks which aspects of the city's diversity you determine to be acceptable. Let me make this clear. That is not diversity. Diversity is not a passive label that you get to proclaim based on limited qualifications. Diversity is achieved when all residents are celebrated and supported equally. Diversity is when messaging from city leaders cannot be used to fuel attacks or vandalism against any community in the city. Diversity is when legislation is used to protect the dignity and safety of all groups that make up the community, not when it's used to remove representation of certain groups from the public eye.

That is diversity. Let me remind you of the 650 pieces of anti-LGBTQ legislation that have been introduced. Let me also introduce the fact that with this legislation LGBTQ, people are now nine times more likely to be the victim of a violent hate crime than non-LGBTQ individuals. We've already seen several acts of vandalism targeting the LGBTQ community this month. Mayor, I believe you issued a statement denouncing one of these acts, but trends across the country make it clear that with legislation such as this, targeted hateful acts will become more likely. This resolution makes the city far from neutral towards its residents. Instead, this resolution is the city's way of removing equal representation of groups which add to the vibrant fabric of the city, groups of people who make up your neighbors, your business owners, and your loved ones who make Hamtramck what it is just as the people who would find themselves represented by international flags.

All residents deserve to be recognized by this display and your attempt to pick and choose who deserves recognition undermines the inclusivity that Hamtramck promotes and the name of diversity which this resolution claims to want to promote and embrace, I urge you to vote against this resolution. Thank you.

Speaker 14:

Thank you, Haley Kain? Haley Kain?

Man 2:

We can't hear you.

Speaker 14:

Haley Kain.

Man 2:

Haley Kain.

Speaker 14:

And then I have Theodore. Where am I doing right here? I think is Theodore Matusik is next.

Haley Kain:

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Just speak?

Speaker 14:

Yeah, just speak.

Haley Kain:

Hi, my name is Haley Kain. I relocated from California to Hamtramck. That's really far away. And I did it because I thought it was a diverse community. I knew this was a diverse city unlike anywhere in the world. And now I'm questioning whether it is, whether it is that diverse city. The city should reflect the community and this resolution does not. Many of the people who are bringing the most value, not all of it, but quite a bit of it, are from the LGBTQ family. They are our neighbors, our business owners. They're artists, they're musicians, they're parents, they're teachers, and their local leaders. There is absolutely nothing neutral about banning rainbow flags on city property. It sends a clear message of discrimination. LGBTQ rights are human rights and it is a huge disservice to the entire community and Hamtramck to send this message, that you are only welcome here if you're straight.

I personally don't want to live in a place like this, and this is not what I thought I was getting into when I moved here, honestly. This resolution is thinly veiled hatred. What message? I'm going to close this with our kids. Are we sending to young gay kids? This is not about making children gay. There are gay kids everywhere in the world. Being gay is natural. It's beautiful. Being trans is natural and it's beautiful and it's normal. And the pride flag represents making space for all humans on all the spectrums. And this is where we're going as a human species. You can't stop that. And the fact that we're even having this discussion about a rainbow flag in the city of Hamtramck is just honestly very sad to me. And that's all I have to say.

Speaker 14:

Thank Theodore Matusik. Theodore. And then Stephanie is next.

Man 1:

Stephanie.

Man 2:

Stephanie, Stephanie's next.

Theodore Matusik:

Hello, my name is Theodore Matusik. I grew up in this town. I lived here off and on for the last 43 years. I grew up on Belmont Street between [inaudible 01:07:51]. 38, 66 Belmont. I went to Hamtramck High. I love this city and this whole resolution is Haram. I feel like. Remember when people said that people like you and you and all of you shouldn't belong here? That you don't belong here. I remember that you don't deserve to be recognized in this community. When the word effing Arabs was thrown around with the casualness that made me sick. Oh my God. I prayed with my Muslim brothers on my sports teams at Hamtramck High. We all prayed to the same God.

I remember having conversations with my Muslim friends and they talked about me. I was a Christian as a people of the book. They told me that hate is haram. They told me that hate is a sin. We were neighbors, we were friends, we were kids and didn't care about the racist, bigoted rhetoric that many of the grownups around us were using. We were friends. Now, here we are decades later and you're acting

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like the same bigoted people wanting to codify the discrimination against another group. People didn't want you to be here. People didn't want you to be here. Yeah, you know what? You don't talk to me. The hypocrisy is so apparent. You are using the resolutions of force your religious beliefs on an entire city. You are not fooling anyone. The LGBTQ-I community belongs here. The LGBT community deserves visibility. The LGBTQI plus community are human beings. If anything, I'm willing to bet that the loudest people voicing their favor this resolution are gay themselves. I oppose this resolution and I oppose you bigots and your bald face attempt to make the city a place of hate. Hate is haram.

Speaker 14:

Thank you. Stephanie. Stephanie here?

Man 1:

Stephanie.

Speaker 18:

... in here.

Speaker 19:

Stephanie. Stephanie.

Speaker 25:

Stephanie.

PART 2 OF 8 ENDS [01:10:04]

Speaker 18:

Aaliyah Schneider. Aaliyah Schneider.

Speaker 19:

Aaliyah Schneider.

Speaker 18:

Alice. Oh, Alice Schneider. Hi Alice.

Alice Schneider:

Hi. Okay, this is an interesting day.

Speaker 18:

It is.

Alice Schneider:

All right. I am the current Director of Public Pool Art Space, its right here on Kenneth and Gallagher. I was not born in Hamtramck. I moved from a small-minded town in southeast Michigan. I moved to Hamtramck because I love the community. I love that we are all welcomed and celebrated, no matter

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who or what we identified our... Or religion, sexuality, any of that. With what this is proposing, it feels like this town is small-minded, what I moved from. I also feel like this is like a hate speech telling us we can't be represented. It should never have gotten this far.

Please do not pass this. Bi-annually we, at Public Pool, curate an LGBTQIA+ exhibition called the Mighty Real/Queer Detroit and are proud to do so. This is an event that is throughout Detroit and other venues throughout Hamtramck. How can I explain to my artists that this once rich and inclusive community isn't welcoming them? This will affect my business and it breaks my heart that Hamtramck is leading with hate and not understanding. Leading with exclusivity, not friendship and tolerance. Let's not be small-minded, Hamtramck. And please do something about tearing down our flags on private businesses and residence. It feels terrible. Please. Okay? Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Thank you. Eloise?

Speaker 19:

Eloise.

Speaker 18:

Wait, is that Eloise or Eleanor?

Speaker 20:

It's Eleanor.

Speaker 18:

Eleanor.

Speaker 19:

Eleanor.

Speaker 18:

You don't know an Eleanor?

Speaker 19:

Eleanor?

Speaker 20:

Eleanor.

Speaker 19:

No Eleanor. If there's not an Eleanor, she'd know if she was here. No Eleanor. Okay. Vendel Whitney. Vendel Whitney? Venel Whitney.

Vendel Whitney. Vendel Whitney.

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Speaker 18:

No? Hamid Al Hajaji.

Speaker 19:

Hamid Al Hajani.

Speaker 18:

Al Hajaji.

Speaker 19:

Hilnaji?

Speaker 18:

Al Hajaji. Okay.

Translator:

[inaudible 01:13:01].

Speaker 22:

Amen. Nice.

Translator:

Or a megaphone.

Speaker 22:

Have the surgeon [inaudible 01:13:07] to take care of it.

Speaker 18:

Did you want to speak again at the end?

Translator:

I have the surgeon take care of it, but not you. Don't get me started.

Speaker 22:

As-salaam alaikum. [Arabic 00:03:1].

Translator:

Should I go ahead?

Speaker 18:

I'm sorry?

Speaker 23:

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He's going to translate what he said.

Speaker 18:

Oh yes. Yes.

Speaker 24:

He's going to translate.

Translator:

Yeah. So basically he said that God has created human from male and female, from male or male or just female and female. And he's talking about his own religious philosophy that it is unacceptable in Islam and he does not hate others, but he's sticking to his values and he does not support flying the flags in public properties. Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Thank you. I believe it's Rin Al-Hassani. Al-Hassani. Last name Al-Hassani.

Speaker 19:

Al-Hassani, last name. Al-Hassani.

Speaker 22:

Al-Hassani.

Speaker 18:

No [inaudible 01:15:08]?

Translator:

[inaudible 01:15:08] or Al-Hassani?

Speaker 18:

Al-Hassani.

Translator:

Al-Hassani. Somebody call Al-Hassini.

Speaker 19:

Al-Hassini?

Speaker 18:

No.

Speaker 22:

Next.

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Speaker 18:

Ahmed [inaudible 01:15:20]?

Translator:

He's right here.

Speaker 18:

No. Ahmed? Did you want to speak at all, comments also or just this one time?

Translator:

I'll speak at the end too.

Speaker 18:

Okay.

Speaker 21:

I want to speak [inaudible 01:15:38].

Ahmed Tabbath:

As-salaam alaikum. My name is Ahmed [inaudible 01:15:43]. I'm a resident of Hamtramck for over seven years. Hamtramck is known as the whole world in two square miles for its culture, for its religion, diversity, and for a lot of many things. Most people had true and dear to their... They hold truth and dear to their culture and values and religion beliefs. And we elected you representatives, the mayor and the city councils, right? Elected you to represent us and our interests, not other people that does not even live in this city. Represent us and our interests and only, right. Okay. I'm sorry... Because we accept, I'm sorry.

Because we will not accept being imposed on this. And that's why we here today. We are standing here for our values and beliefs for not only the future of my city or the future of the next generation, but for the future after my children and the next. Please. I would like to thank everybody for having this proposal and I agree with you guys. Thank you so much.

Speaker 18:

[inaudible 01:16:56]. Do you also wish to speak again at the end? Okay.

Speaker 26:

As-salaam alaikum.

Speaker 22:

alaykumu s-salam.

Speaker 26:

[inaudible 01:17:09] Blessings and solicitation, upon to our beloved, Prophet Muhammad [inaudible 01:17:14].

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Speaker 22:

[Foreign language 01:17:13].

Speaker 26:

Respected mayor and counselors, and all of the attendees for today's meeting. Ideology and country. Two different things. If we allow ideology in our community, in our city, then a lot of ideologies are coming to you and they're trying to get their approval for so many things. Some of the ideologies are good, some of them are very bad. The ideology everybody is talking about it. No religious support on behalf of them. There is nothing. None of the religion support them. I received so many calls, even the friend, the church people, they contacted me. They're arranging a rally against all that. There's some people is here maybe today, they said they're going to come here.

But we respect all of the human beings. But the natural thing is very important for our community. Allah created us men and women, which is natural and the beginning of the creation to the end of the world, people will practice that and people will gain the benefit out of that. That's why our city officials, you made good decision. I appreciate you. And the second thing before this city council is now, people is Muslim, Islam like this. Before I lived this city like 25 years and we faced so many problems with other religion council members and the mayors. Then we did not hated them and called them like you are the racist. And we did not criticize their religion. We respected them.

Now we need to respect our council members and the mayor. They're representing our community, our city. They are not representing the religion of Islam. No, they're Muslim. This is true, but they're representing the community, the city of Hamtramck.

Speaker 18:

Thank you.

Speaker 26:

Thank you so much. Thank you.

Speaker 18:

I believe it's Tasmar.

Speaker 19:

Tasmar? Tasmar?

Speaker 18:

Gilan Jeffrey?

Speaker 19:

Gilan Jeffrey?

Speaker 18:

Do you also want to speak at the end or is this what you're talking?

Speaker 27:

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This is what I'm talking.

Speaker 18:

Okay, go ahead.

Speaker 27:

As-salaam alaikum. We, the youth of [inaudible 01:20:37] stand against flying the LGBTQ flag in the city property. I call on all the city council members that represent us to make us, to protect us and protect our values. I just want to point out a few stats based on CDC, the LGBTQ males account for 82% of all HIV diagnosis. 82% of all the males among the males with the HIV diagnosis and many more stats, that would make us... They make us rethink about the propaganda we are trying to normalize among our community.

If the LGBTQ members want to deal with these issues of their own, I think it should be kept to them. We as a youth do not want to associate with anything that has been proven to be immoral and unscientific. Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Thank you. I believe Lisa Eunice.

Speaker 19:

Lisa Eunice.

Speaker 18:

It's either Eunice or Lisa Youngs. Lisa Youngs?

Speaker 19:

Lisa Youngs?

Speaker 18:

No Lisa Youngs. Okay.

Lisa Youngs:

Lisa Youngs.

Speaker 18:

Youngs? Oh [inaudible 01:21:47]. Three minutes, lisa.

Lisa Youngs:

My name is Lisa Youngs and I am a resident and service worker and a social worker living in the city of Hamtramck. Inclusivity and acceptance is something that LGBTQ folks have always fought for. LGBTQ folks, especially gay and trans folks of color, have been at the forefront of our social movements. Social movements which benefit all people and the safety of all people across the country, queer communities, especially trans folks, are under attack legislatively and for Hamtramck to attempt to equate the LGBTQ

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pride flag with hate symbols when it's a symbol of progress. And love is now a local attack on our community and it is a lockstep with the conservative white nationalist extremists in our country.

Today, I ask, what is it that is so threatening about a community of self-expression, love and inclusivity? Why is it that a symbol of overwhelming acceptance is being treated as a hate symbol? To me, the answer is fear. Fear of the most loving, accepting folks. Fear of our neighbors because of difference. Where else does the need to repress a message and symbol of love come from? We are a city of many different communities and now we should resist the urge to other each other and let a spirit of love and acceptance guide this moment instead of hate and fear. Please say no to Resolution 2023/82. Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Whitney Greer.

Speaker 19:

Whitney Greer.

Speaker 18:

Greer.

Whitney Greer:

Okay. I'd just like to say thank you for just the time to speak today. I appreciate it. I'll try to be quick. I'm sorry. It's hot. So I've heard many speakers tonight each distinctly contrasting in either support or opposition of this ordinance. And I would just like to use my time here tonight to simply ask everyone to consider what it takes for a melting pot society to effectively co-exist. And I personally believe that neutrality is crucial for that. I believe that's the foundation that genuine and lasting equality is built upon. Nowhere in this legislature is it even implied that LGBTQIA+ plus would be attacked or not tolerated. And I feel that there's a lot of misinformation and not proper education, in the hall, conversations I've had, many people here don't even understand the details of this law. I wish we would just as a whole consider a more moderate approach. I feel like neutrality is what allows us all to exist. And peacefully. And I guess that's all I really wanted to say. Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Thank you. Hannah Jones.

Speaker 19:

Hannah Jones.

Speaker 18:

Hannah Jones. [inaudible 01:25:05] you're next.

Speaker 21:

[inaudible 01:25:05] you're next.

Hannah Jones:

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Hello, my name is Hannah Jones. I'm here to speak on the flag issue as many people are. I would like to take it back to Russ Gordon. He spoke earlier. His initial plan with these flags and that he shared with me we are neighbors, is that he wants children, immigrant children, to look up at these flags and see a piece of home, see something that feels familiar. And I feel the same type of way about the LGBTQ community looking at these flags. They need to see a piece of home here. And this flag to me shows me that I'm in a place that I am safe and that I'm welcome and that my fiancé is safe and that she is welcome and that so many people who visit for the arts and who live here are safe and welcome.

And if you remove this flag, you are removing their feeling of safety and the way that they feel welcomed in this community. So I urge you to please, please let us fly our flag just like all the other countries, or not other countries, but just like all the other flags get to be flown. And I think that it's really important that people see a piece of themselves on city property and around the city in general. So thank you for your time.

Speaker 18:

Thank you. Hamir? Hamir?

Speaker 19:

Hamir?

Speaker 18:

Yeah, Hamir? You're next. And then I have Ahmed [inaudible 01:26:54] next.

Translator:

[inaudible 01:26:54] is next.

Speaker 18:

Yeah, no, you're now.

Hamir Jammali:

As-salaam alaikum.

Speaker 22:

Alaykumu s-salam.

Hamir Jammali:

Hello, my name is Hamir Jammali. I'm an interim president and a member of the Women Relations Commission. The reason I stepped up to talk today was to say that I don't support the raising of the LGBTQ flag or any other flag that's not an international flag. That's on city property and the city flag, the flag poles that are on [inaudible 01:27:11]. The resolution that was passed in 2013 clearly states that no other flag other than an international flag shall be raised. And that's including LGBT flag, LGBTQ flag or if I want to raise the Islamic flag or any other flag.

So today is just to kind of confirm what was already voted in 2013. So there should not be any discussion on this, but even if we are discussing it, it's very clear. It's already a law and we're just confirming that law into order again. It never went out of order or it never went out of, I don't know how you would say

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it, but it never stopped being enforced or maybe it wasn't enforced, but it should have been enforced. And I think it was a year ago when they raised their flag, the LGBTQ group. It should have been enforced then.

And today we're just confirming what will be enforced in the future. So that it's just clear to everyone. And yeah, that's pretty much it. I think whether you support the LGBTQ group or not, it doesn't matter at all. What we're discussing is the legality of any group's flags being flown. And from my understanding, it's just to basically confirm what happened in 2013 and just to make it more clear to everyone.

And I think that one other thing that we should be doing is making it more accessible to anyone. Because I was trying to look up the resolution in 2013. I honestly could not find it until I had to ask the mayor and I think he asked Max for it. So I think that we should be making it more clear after to look it up or if there should be a... There might system I don't know about, but I think there should be a system to make it more clear to citizens to find any resolution, the agenda minutes and all this. It should be more accessible to citizens. Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Thank you. [inaudible 01:29:01]. Are you Ahmed? [inaudible 01:29:05]?

Speaker 19:

[inaudible 01:29:08]? [inaudible 01:29:12]?

Speaker 18:

No? Hamid [inaudible 01:29:25]? Hamid? Brezek [inaudible 01:29:39]?

Speaker 19:

Brezek [inaudible 01:29:44]?

Speaker 18:

No? Abdul?

Speaker 19:

Abdul?

Speaker 18:

Abdul Am?

Speaker 19:

Abdul Am? No? What about Abdul [inaudible 01:30:16]? Abdul Alieafi. Which one?

Speaker 21:

The M is missing.

Speaker 28:

Thank you.

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Speaker 18:

Thank you.

Speaker 28:

He say he doesn't want people around his kids because they'll be influenced by them.

Speaker 18:

Okay. I have Mohamed. I think it's [inaudible 01:31:20] or [inaudible 01:31:20]?

Speaker 19:

Mohamed [inaudible 01:31:20] or [inaudible 01:31:20], whatever. [inaudible 01:31:27].

Speaker 18:

Nothing? Forest Hughes?

Speaker 19:

Forest Gump?

Speaker 21:

Forest Hughes?

Speaker 18:

Forest Hughes. Yeah. Three minutes, Forest.

Forest Hughes:

Thank you. Hello, my name is Forest Hughes-Dees. I am a very proud queer citizen and resident of Hamtramck. First, I want to say to everyone that's here tonight, happy pride. It's pride month, it's June, which means that... Please don't laugh, sir. The reason, I should be at home or at a party celebrating with my queer friends and family. And instead, I'm here trying to stave off discriminatory attacks against my community. And that's horrible because I look forward to June all year because it's a time where I get to feel celebrated and safe and instead I have to deal with this which sucks.

This resolution is a bald move to disempower me and my fellow queer citizens of this city. And I'm here to speak out against it and speak out against the people who support it. First, I want you all to understand that removing flags from the city property will not diminish the queer population of this city. We're here, we're everywhere. We're living beautiful, joyous, fantastic lives and you can't make us go away. Removing the symbols that celebrate our existence and pride will only serve to harm our community, especially our youth who are very vulnerable and to make Hamtramck a less safe place for us and potentially embolden people in this city to contribute to the rising statistics of violence against our community.

If this is your desire through this resolution, shame on you. And if you're ignorant to this reality and this impact of this resolution, shame on you. Speaking of statistics, your resolution has this funny thing. It states that through the country's flags that are on Joseph Campo, each group is quote-unquote is already represented. Let me tell you that of the countries whose flags are flown, at least four of those

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countries criminalize queerness in various forms through prison or physical punishment. How can you say that those flags sufficiently represent queer citizens of Hamtramck from those countries.

In this country, America, whose flag you say sufficiently represents me, a member of the LGBTQ community is three times more likely to attempt suicide. How can you say that that flag represents me? You can pretend that this resolution is meant to protect diversity, but you know very well that all it will do is to encourage discrimination against the LGBTQ community. And I have two last things to say. One, I'm here, I'm a voting citizen and I have a lot of friends. If you pass this resolution in order to harm my community, I will do everything in my power to make sure that none of you is ever re-elected in this city.

And secondly, if this resolution passes and it means that queer pride flags can't be flown on public property, on private property, I will start a fund and fundraise from my friends all over this country to buy as many queer flags as I can and put them on every bit of private property that exists in the city that someone will let me. You can't make us go away. You can't eliminate queerness by eliminating this flag, it will only hurt us. Please don't do this. But either way, there will be pride flags all over this city one way or another. I promise. Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Thank you.

Speaker 22:

Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Hannah, I think it's Manila? Hannah Manila?

Speaker 19:

Hannah Manila?

Speaker 18:

Yeah.

You don't have to hold that.

Hannah Manila:

Okay, thank you. Hello everyone. My name is Hannah Manila. I lived in Hamtramck a couple years ago and I had to leave because of housing issues, but I came back because it is, as you all know, one of the most incredible places on this earth. Historically, Hamtramck is and has been a safe haven for immigrants. You all know this. It is one of the only places in the country where displaced folks are not only welcome, but are able to celebrate their cultures and identities. That's what we all love about it.

Council members. There is another community that is desperately seeking asylum. Queer and trans people are at extremely high risk for homelessness, murder, suicide, and mental health struggles. 82% of transgender folks considered suicide in 2022, and unfortunately, 40% of those people attempted their life. Whether you believe that gender non-conforming people are valid, I know that you believe in the sanctity of life. LGBTQ young people are 120% more likely to experience being unhoused. Whether you believe being queer is valid, I know you believe everyone deserves a home.

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You do not have to agree with your neighbor to love and respect them. Bengali, Polish, Pakistani, Yemeni, Ukrainian, white, black and LGBTQ folks can and have all thrived here for years. This city has never been neutral. It is loving, vibrant, unique, and that is what the pride flag represents. Hamtramck has gone down in history books for its diversity and acceptance. So say no to resolution 2023/82 and let that legacy continue.

Speaker 18:

Thank you.

Hannah Manila:

Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Christina Constance?

Speaker 19:

Christina Sanguiez?

Speaker 18:

She's right here.

Speaker 19:

Oh.

Christina Sanguiez:

Sanquez Christina. Ola.

Speaker 18:

Three minutes.

Christina Sanguiez:

Three minutes.

Speaker 29:

Oh, I'm so sorry. I did not know the rules.

Speaker 18:

No, you're good. You just to have sit behind on the floor.

Speaker 29:

Oh, I'm so sorry. I apologize. What can I...

Speaker 22:

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Three minutes.

Speaker 29:

But I can just talk?

Speaker 18:

If you want to not talk and stay standing there, you're more than welcome, but you stay behind the podium and address the council.

Christina Sanguiez:

Okay, I've got to address the councilor?

Speaker 18:

Yes.

Christina Sanguiez:

All these people here? Is this who I'm talking to? And the people behind me just see the back of my head.

Speaker 18:

Yes.

Christina Sanguiez:

That sounds great. I was 17 years old and I was working in the Royal Oak, Michigan and I came here the first time and I stopped at the mobile gas station. I was a little scared when I came into town and then I realized, wow, oh my, what a beautiful place. So I decided I was going to move here and then I decided I was going to stay here. And then no work, exit. Work arrived back 2008 with a dream, not only for Hamtramck but for the state of Michigan, for the film incentive, a new beginning. And I said anywhere but Hamtramck. Anywhere but Hamtramck, I'll buy property.

And guess where I ended up? Right on the main drag, right at the traffic light. Right dead center on accident. One minute, 15 years later have gone by. You can find me tonight on, maybe they'll air me. Maybe they won't.

Speaker 18:

Just wait, please.

Christina Sanguiez:

God. I know. I'm so sorry. My apologies. I should be taken off my hat. Respect. I respect you. You respect me. I eat at your restaurants. We walk the same streets. 30 seconds. Should I put it up for sale? When I came here in 2008, there was a pamphlet on my thing is that if you're gay, we can't rent to you. So I decided I will buy and I will rent and I will house and I'll open up my house for free for any flag that stands for freedom, love, and compassion. Thank you very much. Thank you all.

Speaker 18:

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Frank Noel.

Speaker 19:

Frank Noel.

Speaker 18:

Frank Noel.

Frank Noel:

I can begin?

Speaker 18:

Yes.

Frank Noel:

All right. So in relation to the resolution on flying pride flags or flags in general, the question to be answered on the resolution of flying pride flags is that of neutrality and diversity. But the higher question here is that of rights, of human rights and identity, of liberty itself. What is the pride flag but a symbol of a given human community? A community faced every day with countless discriminations and attacks, unlike with other flags, this is not some kind of banner of the limiting and hatred of peoples and their full flowering and multiplicity. It is in fact the symbol of liberation. And of many ways and of the many ways human beings can be.

We are speaking here on the rights of people to exist and to be proud of their existence, which when denied a symbol of themselves within government is their erasure and merely a small step on to the way of their genocide. A genocide we see being attempted all across the country. We see an example of this overseas in the banning of flying Palestinian flags in the false state of Israel. Who here would deny that the banning of flying a flag of your people isn't but a part of the continued attempt at erasing and destroying said Palestinian community and identity?

So to now here with the queer community, we have the choice here of standing with human liberty and rights, of flying proudly a flag of our people or choosing to instead, in some false excuse of neutrality, hide and kowtow to those forces that seek the disruption of our fellow human beings. Thank you.

Speaker 18:

Thank you. Mr. Mayor, that's all for in-person public comments. All right, I'm going to start reading emails.

Mayor:

All right.

Speaker 18:

First one, please everyone. Thank you. Council members, my name is Adam, and on April, 10 I started working in the DPW for Hamtramck. I've never fallen in love with a job in a city like I have for Hamtramck. I would like to thank all of the council members, Max and John DeAngelis for making the

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city such a great place to work and commend you all for striving to improve and make this great city flourish. Adam Van Toile, this is [inaudible 01:42:53].

If you think flying a pride flag is special treatment, then you do not deserve a position in public office. You are either cowards, bowing to fastest intimidation or you're bigots who wish to push the LGBT community back into silence and chain. I hope that some of you have the spine to do what's right for marginalized groups of people who are currently under attack by far right maniacs that paint us as dangerous sex criminals. How far are you willing to let them go?

I have Jacob and Allison Frizzle. They sent the exact same emails. I believe they're husband and wife, so I'll just read one of them. I want to voice my vehement opposition to resolution 23/82. The pride flag represents love, acceptance and inclusion. These are cornerstone ideals to have any community as diverse as Hamtramck and the ones we should celebrate, not hide. Allowing the pride flag to fly does not open the doors to hateful, extremist, racist, or homophobic flags. Rather, is a message that all people are welcome and valued in this community and that those types of exclusionary principles are not represented by city leadership.

I beg that you vote against resolution that would aim to silence the progress made by long-targeted and marginalized groups. The majority of Hamtramck citizens know what it's like to be part of such groups and the damage that is done by acts like these. Thank you for your consideration.

Andy Hunt. The only flags that need to be banned are the confederate flag and the Nazi flag. The meaning of the pride flag is the exact opposite of the previous mention. What the hell are you thinking all thinking?

Sorin Hotter. Good evening. I hope this email finds you all well. I'm writing with great concerns regarding a supposed inability to recognize the difference between flying the flag of a radical or racist organization and flying flags that show solidarity and respect for groups in parts of the diversity of Hamtramck. This idea that the city of Hamtramck has to remove all flags from public buildings that are not the American flag flags, POW flags or the flag of the city of Hamtramck is not conducive to the indicated aim of both neutrality and city unity.

It is easy for there to be a process where buying a flag is approved by the appropriate boards and committees while also maintaining...

PART 3 OF 8 ENDS [01:45:04]

Speaker 30:

...Flag is approved by the appropriate boards and committees, while also maintaining good order and neutrality. When it comes to diverse and racist entities, they ask for their flag to be flown. Resolution 2382 says that the people of various religious groups, ethnicities and sexual orientation groups are represented by the flag of their nation. I don't think that we can logically agree that this is true. There are 417 anti-LGBT plus pieces of state legislation that are being considered at this moment, in this country. You're twice as likely to be murdered by the police if you are black than if you are white in this country. Where the representation of ethnicity and of sexual orientation in the American flag flying it flag for a specific group is much more than just putting the flag up and singling it out. That group of singling out that group of people, it's about highlighting that the group of people are supported and loved by their government.

It is about visibility is about much more than just the flag flying. It's about the 38 people who were murdered last year for not conforming to their assigned gender at birth. It is about the unity and recognition of uplifting those voices, choosing to not fly a flag due to the fear of a slippery slope towards

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radical and racist groups asking for their flags to be flown is not the answer in the face of bigotry and state sanctioned violence across the world. The opportunity exists here to ensure that Hamtramck remains a welcoming and open place for people of all ethnicities, of all sexual orientations, of all religions. Choosing to avoid the opportunity to say no to racist groups is detrimental to the unity and good order of the city of Hamtramck. Thank you for reading.

Catherine Faco. My name is Catherine Faco and I regularly participate in activities, classes, and contribute economically at least on a weekly, often more basis to the Hamtramck economy. I'm extremely disturbed by hearing of the resolution that will be up for discussion pertaining to the banning of LGBTQ plus pride flags. As a member of the L-G-B-T-Q community and a frequent patron of the city of Hamtramck and its businesses, I'm horrified, offended and extremely angered by this. Every human deserves to feel safe not only where they live, but everywhere they go. How many of your residents do you wish to see targeted by that anti-LGBTQ plus bigotry? How many hate crimes do you want to encourage because this is exactly what you are doing with this. This is absolutely infringing on your residents First amendment rights on top of discriminating against an already targeted community. Stop persecuting the LGBTQ plus community under the guise of inclusion. You aren't fooling anyone. Sincerely, Catherine Faco.

Sean Bazin. Hi there. I have been a Hamtramck resident for over half a decade now, and I have loved living in such diverse and welcoming community by banning this flag. You spit on every idea. You spit on the very idea of tolerance and acceptance. I'm going to keep this short because I think if you are small-minded enough to enact this change, you aren't going to be willing to listen to any reason anyway. Just know that people like me see through your bigotry and I'll encourage whoever I can to vote you out on the next election.

Speaker 31:

Let us know when you want to take a break.

Speaker 30:

I will. Oh definitely. I'll let you know.

Sage Sherlock. Hello. I think it would be horrible not only for our immediate community but also for the national eye of the wonderful city of Hamtramck to ban the pride flag. That's backwards. Y'all don't want to do that. Do you know how many lawsuits you would have on your hands? Also, it would really send a message that the city is not a safe place for queer people. Don't go down the bigoted road. You're better than that.

This is from Jen Cecile. To whom it may concern, I'm writing this email to share my perspective on resolution 2382 as a frequent international visitor of your city, Hamtramck. I'm from a small town in Ontario, Canada. It was over a year ago that I was first introduced to Hamtramck. Friends brought me to a soccer match at Keyword Stadium and I'll be honest, I knew nothing about soccer at the time.

Yet, I immediately felt a new world open up to me and it wasn't the sport that drew me in. It was a community, your community. Since then, I've made dozens of trips to Hamtramck and this year I even purchased season tickets to DC FC for both me and my best friend. We like to meet up with our other friends at Foing Warehouse before DCFC matches, shop at the merch pens and enjoy food from one of the many food trucks at Keyword Stadium. Sometimes we find somewhere nearby like the Painted Lady Lounge to grab a drink or a bite to eat with friends after. What made this community so special to me was feeling safe. What told me I was safe was seeing pride flags like the ones in Keyword Stadium or

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Usman Park. It let me know that I was sharing space with people who were ready and willing to see me, include me and stand up for me in the face of hatred or opposition.

For the first time in my life I could stand in a crowd and not hide. I could meet new people and make friends as my true self. A queer asexual woman who just wants to love and be loved the same as everybody else. Cities all over the US have pride flags hanging on street poles and parks, schools, and other publicly owned properties and that attracts visitors like me and my friends. It makes me feel safe to visit. It tells me the majority of the individuals voting on matters such as this have the courage and willingness to stand against exclusionary and hateful vitriol that homophobia and transphobia are comprised of and often lends itself to other issues like racism, sexism, xenophobia. Seeing pride flags on publicly owned spaces make me want to celebrate those cities as safe and inclusionary and welcoming to people from all walks of life.

Hamtramck happens to be the one I visit and celebrate most frequently on an almost weekly basis. Hamtramck's acceptance and inclusionary standards are and have been very much so a part of our international character and I ask that you vote accordingly. Please vote against the resolution, vote against what it stands for and the harmful message it will send to your residents and your visitors. "If you are neutral in situations of injustice," this is a quote, "you have chosen the side of the oppressor." Thank you. Gen C.

Norman Roswell. Norm Roswell. While I am not currently resident of your fair city is an area I'm strongly considering buying a house in over the next few couple years. I spend a lot of time in Hamtramck right now, mainly attending DCFC matches. Like you say in your statement regarding this resolution, Hamtramck is a city that seeks to embrace diversity that includes people from all walks of life.

As a queer person myself, I can assure you that this is the way I was born. I spent a lot of time dealing with family and friends who told me that being queer is not okay, that it's a sin against God. This is not make me any less queer. Being queer is not a choice is how I was born. Seeing pride flags one in our city tells me that this is a place I can feel welcome and safe. In to Ban pride Flag would do exactly the opposite of what you claim to do in seeking out diversity inclusion in our city and if there's indeed symbols of hate that you are worried about putting your city focus on removing symbols that represent the hate and not the symbol that represent love and inclusion. You do not fight hate by denouncing love. It's only through embracing love and understanding that you can eradicate hate. So I ask you to embrace said love so that people like myself can continue to feel welcomed in your city and you can further add that to your diversity. Thank you. Norman Roswell.

Dustin Eui. I would like to submit public comment in regards to Hamtramck not wanting to open the doors for radical racist groups and apply their flags by denying the ability to fly. The pride flag implies that the city believes that the LGBTQ plus communities on the same level as the radical or racist groups. The city seems to want the authority to deny this specific flags and if it were to exercise that power, I believe it should do so on ones that stem from hatred and prejudice instead of inclusiveness and diversity. Denying the pride flag, a flag of love and inclusiveness would set an uninviting tone across the city. Please don't shrink the duty of handling radical and racist groups by throwing a handle all blanket over every group. It is the entire community's job to oust hatred and create a welcoming environment.

Will Sulac. I'm a regular patron of Hamtramck business and is an establishments in this new resolution is absolutely sickening. It's very obvious that this new law stemmed out of homophobia and hatred. I sincerely hope that you know how many people you'll negatively impact by your blind hatred in bigotry. Best, Will Sulac.

Anton Fulyaya. I recently saw that there was a resolution trying to ban the pride flags from public places in Hamtramck. Please don't ban the pride flag from public places. It really makes the city a beacon for

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diverse thought and helping art thrive here. I moved here five years ago in 2018 because I'm a musician and producer who played often here in Hamtramck and since 2019 I have owned a house on Klinger. I love the diversity and artist community that lived here and has always been a staple of Hamtramck.

I'm a proud first generation Ukrainian immigrant as well as being bisexual, therefore, a member of the LGBT community. Hamtramck has always had a rich artist community, which often includes many members of the LGBT community. This art brings a lot of revenue and patrons for the city who inhabit our venues, bars, galleries, restaurants, and shops. I chose to make Hamtramck my home for the last five years and I feel at home when I see the pride flags along Joseph Campo Street and proud to be a part of this place. Again, please don't ban these flags from our public space. It would be a huge disservice to the people who bring a lot of revenue and culture to the city when we call home.

Justin Vieira. That you are passing this resolution pride month. When LGBT LGBTQIA plus flags are overwhelmingly flown and in which the Hamtramck Council has declined to and resisted officially flying Any pride flags or making any statement of support speaks volumes. The community will see this for what it is, a power display in our refusal to stand in support of those in our community who are most vulnerable, especially in these times, the council is choosing to tolerate and in effect help cultivate object tolerance of L-G-B-T-Q individuals and as Carl Popper has taught us, this is a deplorable action.

Jason Portier. Word it any way you want. The anti pride flag resolution is repressive, homophobic, bigoted, outdated, disgraceful.

Ashley Hughes. Please do not make it illegal to fly pride flags on public property. This resolution is absolutely the cowardly thing to do. All it does is suppress the voice of the plus community, a group of people that is already under attack from so many other places. Don't be another area of suppression and hate. I implore you to think about your own identities and what it would feel like for you if you were in the shoes of the plus community. Don't be in the wrong side of history. Don't support the hate. Stand up to the hate. Stand up to the bullies. Be brave. Thanks.

Greg Tilly. I'm not going to address you with respectful title because you and your local authoritative community have felt the need to diminish others with your ideologies. I've long been a prominent and champion of the Middle Eastern community, proponent and champion of the Middle Eastern community in the Detroit area. My wife's family is Lebanese and now so are my children. I've been exposed to many great things as a result of different cultures coming together with mutual respect. So why, I asked myself, would your local government look to destroy that mutual respect? Make no mistake you're afforded respect in this country, only when you give it.

Your community has been given a great deal of respect locally. Don't make the mistake of thinking people will tolerate a collective intolerance based on some disgusting religious basis. It's a lack of respect in most cases. In this case, however, it is most incredibly ignorant and a hundred percent stupid. It ruins years of assimilation and creates a divide. I choose to invest a little of my time and money every year attending soccer games and patronizing other local companies in Hamtramck. I can tell you that those days will be done for me if you choose to ban the pride flag and I'll push to have DCFC leave your town and everything they brought to the neighborhood. Make the right decision. Prove you can do it right by everyone, not just the loudest religious zealots.

Justin Carver. I have been a resident of Hamtramck for nearly 10 years. One of the reasons I choose to live here as well as raise my daughter here is because I value the city's vibrant diversity and representations of what America is. A melting pot of cultures, creeds, colors and beliefs. We should embrace freedom of expression so long as it is not hateful and ostracizing. I am very ashamed to see the city I love trying to shut out pride flags due to fear of offend people. I sincerely hope the city Reconsiders Hispanic acknowledges the diversity of the city they represent.

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This is from Joseph Straka. I take issue with the proposed resolution regarding flying of the flags flown on public property. I encourage you to vote no. I take issue with the statement each religious, ethnic, racial, political or sexual orientation group is already represented by the country it belongs to.

This statement is confusing as it is unclear what is meant by represented by the country it belongs to. This is made even more complicated by the addition of the verbiage nation's flags that represent the international character of our city. Is it the intent of the council to limit flags to the 193 countries that are member states of the United Nations or does it also include the two non-member observer states of the Holy Sea and the state of Palestine. As the US doesn't recognize the state of Palestine, would the council support the flying of the Palestinian flag contrary to the US foreign policy? Then there's the issue of Taiwan. Taiwan is not recognized as a nation, however it does have a flag. Does the council believe that the people's republic of China adequately represent the people of Taiwan or should the Taiwanese flag be allowed to be flown? If the intent of the council to allow a Palestinian or Taiwanese flag to be flown?

What is the position of other so-called nations not recognized by the US such as Somalia, Tanzania, and Tri apia? I am not going to waste time trying to pronounce these. The second and perhaps more concerning issues, the idea that these groups are represented by the country they belong to. The United States is a leader in promoting the rights of LGBTQ plus people around the world. This is because many countries criminalize homosexual behavior. Alyssa, those countries can be found here included a link. In fact, homosexual behavior is 13 of those countries can be punished by death including Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, and Somalia. The execution of homosexuals is a real issue as demonstrated by the estimated over 7,000 people executed in Iran who were suspected being homosexual as well as reports of suspected homosexuals thrown off of rooftops to their deaths in Syria. Given these facts, I do not think that homosexual minorities are adequately represented in countries they belong to, nor do I think the council does either.

I understand that flying flags representing minority groups can lead to uncomfortable conversations for everyone involved given the treatment of minority groups around the world, in particular sexual minorities who are subject to execution. Perhaps these uncomfortable conversations need to be had and the flying of flags or presenting those groups will facilitate those conversations. I would like to end by stating Hamtramck as a great community and has always welcomed the disenfranchised. This live and... This live and let live attitude is one of the reasons Hamtramck survives today. Why the surrounding communities have struggled Resolutions of this nature regarding the flying of public flags do nothing to advance the issues that really matter to residents such as crime, speeding, litter and roads. Those issues would only be solved by residents working together, not by pitting groups against each other by poorly wording resolutions regarding the flying of flags. I strongly encourage the council to reject its resolution and concentrate on issues that matter most to us residents. Sincerely.

Hi, my name is Ahmed Ali living on Home street. First an important note. I would also like to inform you that many of the email comments that you get and read from the emails are from those living outside of the city. We saw a few campaigns from the opposition to get their allies to send comments when they don't even live here. I'm writing this to inform my support for resolution 2382 to maintain and conform the neutrality of the city of Hamtramck towards its residence. I would like to thank Councilman Hassan, the rest of the council members and the mayor on getting this done. The city should not be in position to pick sides and flags besides the US state, city country flags on government property. Please listen to the people who actually choose to show up to the meetings and are part of the community, not those who live outside of it. Thank you.

Kelsey Davinsky. I'm writing to submit my opinion on the resolution that will be voted on tonight to maintain the neutrality and confirm the neutrality of the city of Hamtramck towards its residents. As a

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resident and voter, I oppose the resolution. I presume the resolution will prevent the city from flying the pride flag at City Hall. I understand the language of the resolution aims to prevent radical or racist flags to be flown, but the city ultimately has a choice in the matter and this isn't the case of a slippery slope situation. The pride flag is more than just a flag for the LGBT community. It's a symbol that the city welcomes and it is a place of safety for all people. By removing the flag, the city's making a choice against their representation. Thank you.

Kira Thomas. I live on Norwalk Street and I do not agree with banning the pride flag, especially during the month of pride. All should be accepted everywhere and always.

Alex Myer. I'm Alex. My family's Polish American and has lived in Detroit Hamtramck since the 1930s. Hamtramck has always been an oasis of multiculturalism in the metro area. This resolution is a threat to the multiculturalism that makes Hamtramck a role model for other cities across the nation. L-G-B-T-Q people not only are a part of every immigrant and ethnic community but will offer distinct cultural contributions to our communities as well, particularly in the arts, health field and education. This resolution is divisive at a time when our communities are under real threats like Aus budgeting, gun violence and a cost of living crisis.

It does not demonstrate respect for the inherent dignity of all people. It objectifies L-G-B-T-Q people and pretends that a rainbow flag stands for only stand only for sex when it symbolizes, when it is a symbol of cultural resilience, resistance to the state violence, and a recognition of a community's history. Please vote no for this resolution. It is a threat to the multiculturalism and love across the board as it makes Hamtramck a great American city.

Christina Ano. As a Hamtramck resident since 2017, I have always loved the city and celebrated its true diversity unlike anywhere I've ever lived. Only until recently do I feel homophobia and disrespect seeping into local government. Under the guise of respecting diversity and religious differences, is respect only allowed for the citizens who hold the majority? The emboldened disrespect to the LGBT plus community who don't conform to the majority of citizens' religious beliefs is outstanding hypocrisy considering those same people stood alongside the religious majority to empower their beliefs not long ago. I would hate to see the city I once nearly enjoyed nationally embarrassed itself in the eyes of Michigan and the United States because of its hypocritical lack of empathy and respect to the diversity it's known for. Do better for all citizens, not just the majority.

Elizabeth Stapleton. I'm a Hamtramck resident and a member of the lgbtq plus community is beyond offensive that the mayor and city council compared the pride flag to not seeing white supremacists. The pride flag is a symbol of our existence in the love that we have for our community. The resolution proposal says that we will be represented by our country. However, currently in the USA, state governments are trying to oppress the transgender members of our community more than ever. The effect of these actions and the message they send has caused the murder rate of transgender people to double. The USA flag does not represent me as a queer person because a large part of the USA hates and wants to oppress my existence. It saddens me to learn that Hamtramck my home is a part of that group. Please, this resolution as it sends a message of hate and oppression to our L-G-B-T-Q residents.

George Alkine. As a longtime Hamtramck resident homeowner of the area and advisory member of the City's Arts and Culture Commission. I'd like to register my opposition to the passage of resolution 2382 while talking around what explicitly it seeks to ban. The resolution clearly aims to remove any existing signs of LGBTQ plus support on city property while suggesting that such affirmative displays are aligned with radical or racist sentiments. This could not be further from the truth. Treating LGBT plus rights as a subject fit for reasonable debate is itself a reactionary regressive position and removing flags and pride displays in private businesses and public spaces has been a project of right-wing racist and anti-immigrant activists throughout the past year. This move will only embolden them to demand more. This

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alignment of anti-LGBTQ plus with conservative forces is not a coincidence. All those who attack or erase the needs and rights of society's most vulnerable are taking part in the same regressive project. Not flying a flag again over city hall is one thing, but banning such displays going forward is an entirely different matter and one which may fly legally.

Of all the state's recent amendment to E-L-C-R-A at present, LGBT plus rights across the country are under attack and flags on private property even with Hamtramck have been met with targeted acts of vandalism. L plus rights are far from safe in Michigan, and within Hamtramck, and to suggest this proposition is neutral is to promulgate any absolutely flagrant falsehood by no stretch our members of the community covered by state, national, or other flags. This variety of representation is and remains important in making our city and world more accepting free environments. Please do not take this step to make Hamtramck a more reactionary, less tolerant and deeply divided place. It accomplishes nothing and will result in harm to members of our community. A community made up of diverse people council, city council mayor, and city of Hamtramck are all meant and I'd argue bounds to serve sincerely, George.

Elizabeth Allen. My name is Elizabeth Allen and I thought I am, and although I'm not a resident of Hamtramck, I spend a great deal of time and money on local hamtramck businesses and events and proposed resolution to limit flags flown on public properties is a clear and obvious violation of free speech. The resolution's assertion that it does not violate the free speech of individuals of businesses in the city is false, damaging and frankly insulting to intelligence of the residents and participants in the community. The assertion that each religious, ethnic, racial, political and sexual oriented group is already represented by the country it belongs to is also demonstrably false in an era where governing entities are actively attempting to legislate marginalized groups out of existence. The increase in hate speech and anti-LGBTQ plus sentiments both in Hamtramck and across the nation make community organizing and solidarity vital to the continued existence of marginalized community members, many of whom are deeply involved in the betterment of hamtramck and flags are an important visible marker of that solidarity.

Erasing the visibility of Hamtramck's queer community will only embolden those who seek to erase us from existence. Hamtramck strength lies in its diversity of residents and community participants. Is it clear from the resolution allowance towards the international character of the city? The city of Hamtramck exists to support its constituents and any celebration of the diversity of the city will ring hollow if its residents are reduced only to their countries of origin. Given that the mandate of the city government is to support the safety and wellbeing of its citizen, the government of Hamtramck would do far better to alert residents of actual impending threats such as the recent incinerator implosion than spending their taxpayer funded time attempting to police their community through unconstitutional resolutions. Thank you for your time.

Board and Widener. Hamtramck's best aspect is the open arms with which it welcomes the world. Adopting this resolution would signal that our city is now against its history, only interested in supporting some of its residents instead of all, only interested in some of its visitors instead of all, and actively discouraging businesses from taking place in the city. Make no mistake, all flags are political, whether the US flag, other nation's flags and state flags, all of these have something to say with the resolution as presented. You have what the city flag also stands for is a commitment to accepting all of your residents and visitors and the contributions to our community. If that most American of ideals is what you wish to affirm, you cannot in good conscience support this resolution. Thank you.

Mark Navarro. I'm writing today in opposition of resolution 2382 for the city of Hamtramck, which would ban the flying of non-national flags from Hamtramck City property. The fact that the resolution is even consideration is a disgrace to the welcoming community that Hamtramck is. Hamtramck is one of the most diverse cities in Michigan and that diversity extends beyond national origin. People from all

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different gender identities and sexual orientations call Hamtramck home, refine refuge and community and Hamtramck where they are accepted, loved, and cared for by residents, businesses, and organizations alike.

By not allowing pride flag to fly on the city property is a direct message to those groups that the city government undermines their presence. While not a resident of Hamtramck, I spend a great deal of time, money in the city. I have seen a vast number of local businesses be accepting and welcoming to all members of the LGBTQ plus community. Even walking down the street, I see pride flags probably displayed from homes, businesses, and other institutions. For the city government to not participate in showing love and humanity to the LGBTQ plus community would be shameful and against the rich diversity of Hamtramck. June is LGBTQ plus pride month, a time when members of the community are uplifted, celebrated and honored, but this year pride takes on a deeper meaning. As anti-queer and anti-trans legislation is passed nationwide sending the message to the LGBTQ plus community. They are not wanted or welcomed in certain parts of the country.

By outright banning pride flags on city property, the city is sending a similar message to the LGBTQ plus community in and around Hamtramck at the time when LGBTQ plus people hear for their lives and their safety, hamtramck should show they are welcome in the community by actively and openly banning flying pride flags on our city property you would be sending the opposite message. I hope the council will do right thing and vote. This resolution down is disgrace of the diversity community reputation of Hamtramck. At a time when and trans people are under attack in this country, Hamtramck should be loudly, proudly showing that members of the LGBTQ plus community are loved and welcomed in the city be they neighbors, friends, business owners or patrons or anyone else looking to find a home and a community in Hamtramck. Best, Mark Navarro.

Sam Griffin. I'd like to comment n the resolution to ban the flying of pride flags on public property in Hamtramck, which I find to be incredibly disheartening. The case for pride flags is made in the first line of the resolution. The city of Hamtramck is one of the most diverse cities in the United States in which we should proudly promote diversity. LGBTQ plus people are not only a part of the diversity, their contributions to our city are something to be proud of too, and then second quote, whereas each religious, ethnic, racial, political and sexual orientation group is a right represented by the country it belongs to is patently false. According to this study, Yemen is one of the most unsafe countries for L-G-B-T-Q travelers because homosexual activity is punishable by lashes and years in jail, LGBTQ plus Yemenis are not represented by their government. Additionally, anti LGBTQ plus legislation has been passed recently in Poland and Hungary as part of a wider anti-gay movement in Eastern Europe.

Therefore, people from the two most prominent nationalities in Hamtramck are potentially safer here in Hamtramck than they are in the countries where their family is immigrated from. Sadly, that does not mean that they're welcome here in the United States where the human rights campaign has recently released a warning and a guidebook on staying safe in the USA as the L-G-B-T-Q person and a climate where hostility towards a group is the norm. Neutrality towards that position only serves as a co-signing of the ongoing violence and oppression. Does Hamtramck wish to participate in this trend of alienating, threatening and punishing members of the LGBTQ plus community, or does it wish to embrace our diversity as touted in our model, the word world in two square miles, the world has always and always will include people, so let's please allow those here who wish to assert the LGBTQ plus people are welcome here to do so. This naive radical stance is simply one of acceptance which fits in so well with our identity as Hamtramck. Thank you. Sincerely, Samantha Griffin.

Paul Wesvicki. I would like to have this comment. Please see below text. Esteemed members of the city council, members of the community. I write to you today to address resolution 2382 and advocate for an inclusive and welcoming environment for all residents of the city of Hamtramck. First and foremost, I

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want to acknowledge and appreciate the city of Hamtramck for its rich diversity, the community, the tapestry of different cultures, religions, ethnicities, and identities, and it is something we should be proud of. Embracing this diversity not only strengthens the fabric of our city, but also showcases our commitment to equity and fairness. However, I must express my concerns regarding the limitations set forth in this resolution. While I understand the intent behind this resolution, there is a clear difference between intent and the impact of this policy. I believe it is crucial to emphasize the importance of disability and representation at the community level.

Our city should be a place where everyone feels seen, valued, and heard. These qualities are what vibrant and successful communities are based upon. Aforementioned values can have a positive effect on community members, mental health throughout inclusivity and empowerment. By limiting the display of flags to only the American flag and those representing the international character of a city, we inadvertently silence voices and experience of certain groups within our community, which research demonstrates is detrimental to mental health as well as community engagement. Basically, people do not want to contribute or be seen in places where they are silenced and feel discriminated against. We must remember that visibility matters. For many individuals, especially from those marginalized communities, seeing symbols that represent their identity can be incredibly empowering. It sends a message of acceptance and inclusion, fostering a sense of belonging and pride. By allowing flags that represent various religious, ethnic, racial, political and sexual orientation groups to be flown in our public properties, we demonstrate our commitment to embracing the diverse identity of our residents.

Furthermore, this resolution should not be seen as opening the door for radical racist groups. We can establish clear guidelines and criteria for the flag that can be displayed, ensuring that they align with our community values of inclusivity, respect, and non-discrimination. By actively engaging with our residents and seeking their input, we can create a framework that accelerates diversity while guarding against any potential misuse of this privilege. While it may be uncomfortable for some residents to view a pride flag silencing voice of marginalized and oppressed communities detrimental and fundamentally unsaid. There is a course of separation between church and state that along with the recent amendment to the Elliot Larsson Civil Rights Act agreement guarantee many minority people population rights in Michigan. While this resolution does not perhaps violate the letter of the law, it certainly impedes on the spirit of it. Let us be a city that takes a stand for equity, not just in words through our actions.

Equality by itself does not alone produce progress. It is each according to their need and in time of history where LGBT members are being actively oppressed in need for visibility in paramount. By allowing the display of flags representing different religious, ethnic, racial, political and sexual orientation groups, we send a powerful message of unity and support. Couple sentences I can't read.

Speaker 31:

You read all three minutes of four minutes.

Speaker 32:

Drink some water.

Speaker 30:

Yeah, let us... By allowing the display of flags representing different religious, ethnic, racial, political and sexual orientation groups, we send powerful message of unity support, we've become a city where all individuals, regardless of their background, can feel proud of their identity and confident in their place within our community. Together let us choose a path that celebrates the beauty of diversity, promotes

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visibility and prioritizes representation at a community level. By doing so, we create a city that is not only welcoming, but also serves as a shining example of progress and exclusivity.

Tammy Bork. It is with deep feelings, and grown adult behaviors, people serving in positions of power in your neighborhood hub. I stress the word serve as a business owner in Detroit. I'm embarrassed of such terrifying politics and policymaking with glaring sides of Hitler era thinking and acting. It changes my view on doing business in Hamtramck where the patron of your local businesses, this radical decision affects absolutely everyone's family, everyone's friends, everyone's colleagues, everyone. Tammy Ford.

Dr. Vatas Ash, I think that's how you pronounce it. I apologize. I'm writing out of concern regarding a recent Hamtramck city resolution, seeking to ban the flying of a pride flag of international or international display. Upfront, I will acknowledge that I'm not a resident of the city of Hamtramck. I'm a Michigan native living in Florida, who regularly visits regular vacations in the Detroit area. Hamtramck, they must visit destination for me for excellent culture and light life. I am an ardent A-D-C-F-C supporter and my match day experience always involves a leisurely day spent visiting Hamtramck business and spending time with the city's residents.

To put it simply, Hamtramck is one of my favorite places on earth, but it is one of my favorite places because it is a spirit of openness and inclusion. I've heard the argument that allowing the pride flag will somehow open the floodgates up for all sorts of other flags to be flown. I would hope that this is where the city can take a stand to embrace the paradox of tolerance. Let love win the day and to make clear that banners celebrating love, inclusion, equity, and diversity will all be allowed, while those imposing contrary values hate, oppression, exclusion will be banned.

The opportunity to demonstrate that Hamtramck is a city so full of love, that it has no room for hate. I ask that you please allow the parts like to be flown without restrictions, to let those both in need of welcome know that they have a home in Hamtramck. Thank you.

Elizabeth Sarah. I am an active member of the planet and community and frequent Hamtramck on a regular basis. I love the diversity and welcoming nature of Hamtramck. Banning the private flag would be a colossal mistake going against the very nature of what the city stands for. Acceptance, diversity, community. It would send a message to both Hamtramck residents and visitors that discrimination is praised when really it should be reprimanded.

PART 4 OF 8 ENDS [02:20:04]

Robin:

Visitors, the discrimination is praised when really it should be reprimanded. What do you want Hamtramck to stand for?

Veronica Sawyer. I am writing to express my opinion on resolution 2382. The city should allow the pride flag to be flown on public property. Firstly, with the passing of the resolution, the city would be opening itself up to potential First Amendment violations and thus challenges to Fed resolution. I highly doubt that the City of Hamtramck, its residents or businesses want the negative publicity and costs associated with that potential controversy. But more importantly, I think that banning the flag would be very hypocritical on the part of Hamtramck. Not to mention that it sends a decidedly non-inclusive message to a significant number of the city's residents and frequent visitors. If Hamtramck truly values its diversity, then permitting the display of pride flags on public property is a no-brainer.

On the other hand, if the city and its loudest voices are truly committed to banning the flag displayed that no reasonable person will consider Hamtramck a truly inclusive city. This issue is personal to me. Although I'm not a resident of Hamtramck, I do visit the city frequently, approximately once a week. In

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the past, I have worked in the city, but if Hamtramck decides to ban the pride flag, I'm going to reconsider those visits, the money I spend in the city and the good words for Hamtramck regularly expressed. I would hate to think I've been misled all these years by empty rhetoric about the city's commitment to diversity. Thank you for your time and attention. Veronica Sawyer.

Jackson Boyd. As a resident of Hamtramck, I've emailing to let you know that I wholeheartedly disagree with the banning of the pride flag on city property. It goes against the ethos of what Hamtramck stands for. Everyone is welcome no matter where you come from or what your background is. Thank you for your time. Jackson Boyd.

Sean Van. Please mind attached to letter humbly submitting regards. I think he had a letter. I'll look it up. I don't don't know if there's an attachment to that email.

Speaker 33:

How many left?

Speaker 34:

Can you put a [inaudible 02:22:02] to read over?

Robin:

Valerie Stevens?

Speaker 34:

How many more? How many more?

Speaker 35:

She's halfway done.

Speaker 34:

She's getting tired too.

Speaker 36:

You want to take a break?

Robin:

Think I've gone through a lot of them though.

Speaker 37:

Robin, do you want me to do some?

Robin:

I'm okay for now. I'm okay for now.

Speaker 33:

That's enough.

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Speaker 36:

Well, can we take then-

Robin:

Who's saying that's enough?

Speaker 36:

Five minutes.

Speaker 34:

Five minutes?

Speaker 36:

Okay.

Robin:

Everybody saying, if it was your comment, you wouldn't say it was enough.

Speaker 36:

We're going to take five minutes.

Robin:

A five-minute break, okay.

Speaker 37:

Let's take a break.

Speaker 34:

Yeah.

Speaker 36:

We'll take a recess.

Speaker 34:

A five minutes break.

Speaker 36:

Five minutes recess.

Speaker 33:

Don't [inaudible 02:22:34] on that.

Crowd:

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[inaudible 02:22:38].

Robin:

Eleanor? Yeah, we called you.

Eleanor:

I know [inaudible 02:23:06].

Robin:

Yeah, I'll let you, I'll let you in.

Crowd:

[inaudible 02:23:16].

Speaker 37:

If anyone needs their [inaudible 02:23:22].

Crowd:

[inaudible 02:23:26].

(Silence).

Speaker 38:

If you leave it like [inaudible 02:32:36].

Speaker 39:

Can I have more sugar?

Speaker 40:

Why you did not brought any food?

Robin:

Because I knew Dalton and Kaled was bringing chocolates.

Speaker 39:

Yes. I brought dates. I brought dates.

Robin:

Where are mine?

Speaker 39:

I brought dates.

Robin:

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You brought dates. Does Mike know?

Speaker 40:

Okay. Anyway. We're [inaudible 02:33:19].

Speaker 38:

A date?

Speaker 39:

A date, fruit.

Speaker 35:

Okay.

Robin:

All right.

Speaker 35:

Yeah, we can resume.

Speaker 37:

Are we ready?

Robin:

Ready?

Speaker 35:

Yes.

Speaker 37:

You guys ready?

Robin:

Yes, I'm good.

Speaker 38:

All right, let's get the microphone on. Turn your microphone on.

Speaker 34:

And everybody was fighting against us [inaudible 02:33:33].

Robin:

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This is from Sean Mann. Detroit City Football Club has had the honor and privilege of being a part of Hamtramck since 2015 when we announced our campaign to save and rehab historic Keyworth Stadium. We've been proud to host our matches in Hamtramck over the years because it's a city that lives our values as a tight-knit community that is diverse, welcoming, historic, authentic, dense, and small businesses oriented. We consider it an honor to showcase Hamtramck to the southeast Michigan region, the entire nation, and the broader world.

In 2022 alone, we brought over 120,000 visitors to Hamtramck and another one million fans across our regional and national broadcasts watched games from Keyworth from the comfort of their homes. Celebrating diversity and being welcoming is core to organization's values and are increasingly recognized as crucial characteristics of a thriving economy. Leading business organizations like the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce and business leaders from Michigan recognized and openly advocate that being a welcoming, inclusive place for immigrants and LGBTQ+ and other diverse communities are fundamental to our region's economic success in the 21st century.

Passive attacks on the First Amendment in public spaces with the intent of further marginalizing already marginalized members of our community, in particular, the LGBTQ+, community not only undermines our common humanity, but go against the values of diversity that have defined Hamtramck for generations and makes Hamtramck a less desirable location for investment. As a proud member of the Hamtramck business community, we'd respectfully ask the body to reconsider any measures that try to minimize members of this community instead of celebrating them and their contributions. Thank you for your time and service. Sean Mann, co-owner, CEO.

Valerie Stevens. Hello, I'm a Hamtramck resident. I own and live in a home on Yemans Street with my husband and our children. This resolution is blatantly homophobic and disgusting. The media has been notified and Hamtramck will be viewed as oppressive and potentially dangerous for LGBTQIA rather than the welcoming multicultural community I knew it to be. I will never vote to support any council members who support this resolution and I know I'm not alone. These council members should be ashamed. Thank you. Valerie Stevens.

My name is Theresa Anasti. I am a current resident of Hamtramck on Norwalk Street. I'm also a social work professor at Oakland Community who lives in Hamtramck with my partner and my two-year-old daughter. I moved here from Chicago thinking that I was moving to a progressive diverse city that shared similar values that I do. I love the fact that I can hear church bells and the Salah call to prayer in the same city. I love the churches, I love the mosques, I love the coffee shops. I love the Polish and Yemeni restaurants. I'm writing to tell you that I strongly support flying the pride flag in our international display, considering Hamtramck's commitment to diversity and equity. Banning the pride flag is shortsighted and sends a message to the rest of the country that we are a bigoted city. Indeed, if Detroit can fly the pride flag, then so should we.

To the response that what if someone wants to fly a Nazi flag? The pride flag stands for inclusion and acceptance and not hatred and white supremacy. The pride flag was created in 1978 by a US veteran to promote pride within the gay, now called LGBTQ+ community. There's no hatred embedded in the symbol which shows love for our LGBTQ plus family. To be honest, if we ban this flag from the display, then Hamtramck will likely make national news and have a reputation as being backwards and intolerant and mocked on social media many times over. I assume the city wants more people moving to the city to attract business and tax revenue. Most cities do. Banning the pride flag would send the opposite message to potential new residents that this is a community of intolerance and hate. Thank you for your time. Theresa.

Julia Sosen, Holmes Street, Hamtramck. I would like to leave the following public comment for today's council meeting. I urge council to vote no resolution 2382, which in current language would prohibit the

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flying of the pride flag as well as the historical flown Cherokee nation and American African Union flags on city flagpoles. As a Hamtramck resident, seeing the pride flag be allowed on city property particularly important to me, the pride flag does not show a preference for any certain sexual orientation, but rather inclusion of all sexual orientation.

It signifies to the significant population of queer people and their allies who live, workshop, and volunteer here that they are just as welcome as non-queer people. Refusing to fly the flag in a political climate of homophobia and transphobia gives the opposite message. There is no neutrality. Regardless of what kind of personal bias you may have against queer people, I invite you to think about the economic benefits of inclusion as well as the importance of coalition building and fighting oppression and uplifting the variety of civil rights. Julia Sosen.

Marcus Merritt. I'm writing as a citizen in resident of Hamtramck to voice the strongest possible objection to resolution 2382. Contrary to the stated aims of the resolution to promote and embrace diversity, passing a resolution intended to restrict the pride flag from display on the city flag poles would announce that Hamtramck considered the LGBTQ community to be extremist and shameful. It would send a message to the LGBTQ residents of Hamtramck that a city government does not consider them welcome here. Municipal display of the pride flag is incredibly common everywhere around here and people understand this display of the pride flag to symbolize that the community acceptance supports the LGBTQ community.

This weekend I drove to Minnesota and back and I noticed the pride flag was flown at all of the rest areas along the way. No one is worried that the pride flags in the rest stops are going to open the door for radical or racist groups to ask for flags to be flown. It's absurd. A great deal of Hamtramck's vibrance is down to the community's acceptance of and celebration of the LGBTQ community, but if this resolution were to pass, Hamtramck would stand out as expressly and uniquely hostile to the LGBTQ community. The citizens of Hamtramck do not want this resolution to be passed. Sincerely, Marcus Merrick.

Courtney Blum. To the Hamtramck City Council with regards to the proposal to ban the pride flag from public property, never did I think that I would need to explain the importance of the pride flag to citizens of Hamtramck and yet here I am. My name is Courtney Blum. I am the mother of a 10-year-old daughter who recently came out as lesbian, with our entire family's wholehearted support. As much as I wish that the entire world would look upon my daughter with the same acceptance and admiration that we have for her, we all know that this is not reality of 2023 in America. Having read the proposal, you cannot with a straight face argue that all minorities are equally represented and supported by flying their flag's country. My daughter and the rest of the LGBTQIA community are unequivocally not represented by the American flag when there are several states within the union that are trying to legislate them out of support, out of crucial Medicare care and frankly out of existence.

There have been over 520 anti LGBTQIA bills proposed in state legislator this year alone. We are only halfway through the year. If you need any further reminder of how real and violent hate against the LGBTQIA plus community still is, this meeting tonight is occurring the day after the University of the Pulse Nightclub massacre. When even the White House is flying the pride flag to show solidarity while the country tears into the LGBTQIA plus community. I do not think the president would agree with council's proposal that everyone is equally represented under the American flag. Saying that you want to ban the pride flag because you're too afraid to stand up to white supremacy or other radical groups who may demand a flag be flown is a piss-poor excuse and if you are too cowardly to say no to extremists, then you have no business running the city or composing its legislation. Do better. This community deserves better from you, a city that deserves to be on the right side of history.

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John Salvitch. Hello, my name is John Salvitch. I have been a resident of Hamtramck since May of 2013. In these past 10 years, I have been both happy and proud to claim Hamtramck as my home. It is with great regret that I feel shame for this town I love so much due to resolution 2382, which is unquestionably a veiled attack of discrimination against our LGBTQ+ residents. What twists the knife even deeper in this attack is that it is these residents, ones that experienced prejudice and hate consistently in their own lives, who have raised and continue to raise their voices so loudly against Islamophobia over the years to help their Muslim brothers and sisters to feel safe, secure, and welcome in their migration to Hamtramck. To each city council member who votes yes on resolution 2382, you know that this is an act of utter betrayal and hypocrisy, an act that actually defines simple behavior in complete contrast to the celebration of diversity and inclusion that the pride flag beautifully represents. Francisco Olvero. I'm writing this to let whoever know that I wish to petition the banning of the business pride flags.

Amy Nicole. I am part of the LGBTQ community. I spend quite a bit of time in Hamtramck. I frequent your restaurants. I worked in one of your dispensaries. I bring people in when I throw events at the local art gallery. I promote bands who play on the sanctuary with my magazine. I promote the events at the new Dodge to my Instagram audience, shared the attendance shows at Smalls. Hell, I even went to the DCFC game just to support the city and documented when WETA co-painted that mural to promote them. We are a big part of your community whether we live there or not, and it is not a crime to love who you love. With your stance in not hanging a pride flag, not only is it a coward's move, the fear of upsetting a few sidelines those who continue to be marginalized and put in danger, but it's also a signal from our office and its elected, keyword elected, officials that you choose to disregard us.

Speaker 33:

How many more like this?

Robin:

And in doing so, prove to us that you don't want to cheer, respect or protect our community even when we're a big part of yours. If our community cannot feel safe within the parameters of your city, why should we bother to pump our hardworking dollars into your institutions? Why should we move to the city, pay taxes to you, when you clearly are taking the stand in how you feel about the collective us? I hope my word makes you understand the severity of this, even if it's just a threat in your bottom line. Do better Hamtramck. Take a stand for love and protection of people who love your city and if not, well, we'll go elsewhere. Thank you for your time,

Sam Shrum. I spend time in Hamtramck roughly every other week as a dedicated supporter of Detroit City FC. This proposal is not only a clear violation of the First Amendment, but it even being put forth on the table is a blow to many of the closest friends who also love the city. People who have been coming to Hamtramck for years, spending time in the community, spending their money at your businesses, people who have stood against the hate groups your bill claims to be bulwark against.

We have long said that the Hamtramck is a diversity city that stands for inclusion and that they love. This proposal will not withstand the challenge in the court. This proposal will only hurt those who have fallen in love with Hamtramck and drive them further from feeling safe there. I urge you to reconsider, vote no on this proposal, and stand for the diversity it claims to represent. Help my friends to continue to feel safe in Hamtramck and keep the love they've had for this wonderful city. Respectfully, Sam.

Amanda Jukowski. Hi everyone. Amanda J, Hamtramck resident. Everything on this agenda at least makes sense. Yay, street sweepers. Except for resolution 2382. I highly suggest postponing this vote to

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evaluate how far reach this resolution effect would be. I fear passing this would be counterproductive to the stated goal and would squash any uniqueness and diversity that we have fostered over the decades in the city. Does this mean no Christmas [inaudible 02:45:15] decorations could be displayed by the DDA during holidays? Does this mean no more special parking during the holidays?

An area where Hamtramck has recently made steps to be inclusive but still provides special treatment to Christian and Muslim holidays is racial, including black Americans who do not always know their country origin because they were stolen from there and the people indigenous to the area including in racial or ethnic, or would they be considered a nation? Would this resolution have prohibited last year's beautiful rededication of the Colonial Hamtramck grave site? There were many more flags that are specific in this document on display there. Furthermore, are you saying that you are going to monitor employee's cell phone and social media use while at work? Who would be responsible for determining and monitoring the protected time, manner and place? I do know that attention was paid to early social media commentary as the updated version posted on 6/12 reflects many of those issues, but there is far too many questions to pass this today with any semblance of responsibility. Thank you for listening.

Claire Noel Boyd. I am a Hamtramck resident adding my voice to the many saying we strongly support flying the pride flag in public space in our town. At this point you drag up this hateful debate every single year, spending the city's time and resources on your personal homophobia. It's clear the people of Hamtramck want to fly the pride flag. Our city wants to show our beautiful colors, but it seems like it's our electeds who are showing your true colors instead. Not a good look.

Alonzo Rubio. As a frequent visitor nearby resident to the great city of Hamtramck, I'm deeply saddened and disappointed that decisions to ban the prides flag are a discussion, a flag which represents peace, harmony, and solidarity amongst people within our own community. A flag that deserves every way to be waved high and mighty over a city that is proud and known for its diversity. I hope that the city council person that reads this will find peace and love in their hearts and choose not to close off a community that has helped and will continue to help the city of Hamtramck grow and prosper.

Joe Higgins. I'm someone who grew up in this area and I'm now raising two children of my own. It has come to my attention that a misguided attempt at patriotism has been proposed as a course of action to the great city of Hamtramck. A proposal that while purportedly celebrating the diversity and representation within the city of Hamtramck and the entire nation would proceed to infringe or disregard the freedom of expression belonging to those citizens and residents. The United States Government has protected the rights of all people to freely express their beliefs and opinions and peaceful methods, including banners, symbols, and flags.

Your beliefs, opinions and how you choose to live your life are protected along with your rights to assemble and associate with many other people. While better legal scholars than I might be able to find a way wherein it is legal that the city of Hamtramck may ban certain symbols or flags, even that they have to admit that doing so is in spite of the spirit of the law, the rationale that this motion is meant to circumvent any hateful group from attempting to display any plan of their own brings to mind old quotes from legal scholars and Supreme Court Justices about the price of a free society.

This motion frankly feels un-American because it reads as a craven attempt to censor free speech and undermined one of the greatest strengths of our shared American culture. The context of this motion causes it to feel as a reactionary attempt to ban the LGBTQ+ flag or similar flags with broad strokes under the guise of protecting the public from hate groups, which would be both disingenuous and cowardly. The LGBTQ+ flag on display only expresses that everyone has the right to feel comfortable in their own skin and has the freedom to love and form relationship with other people. That's it.

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There has lately been an abundance of bad faith arguing that those opposing the LGBTQ+ community are doing so to protect their children. To address that, I'll speak as a proud father of two kids. My oldest had recently finished the fourth grade and like many kids that age started developing her first crush, she quickly realized her crush was on another girl in her class. Jury is still out on the boys. She sees that flag as a positive thing in her life because it reminds her she's not alone in the world of feeling how she does. Any harm to children does not derive from that flag, loving and supportive parents or a community that celebrate diversity in the community. This proposal is cowardly un-American and should not be passed. Thank you for your time.

Julia Sayles. I'm sending this email for public comment. Hamtramck has always been known as a diverse community that has accepted a variety of cultures through time. It's the world in two square miles, times changed, but the city has always been a place that people from all over the world know. I moved to Hamtramck during the pandemic as part of the Arts and Culture Commission and quickly relocated from Detroit, previously Dearborn, and out of state because of the openness to all cultures and as well as it is important to the city of Hamtramck, and we had a commission surrounding that. A flag representing a huge majority of the world matches us as a city. Hamtramck must look at a reflection of the whole community and provide a safe and thriving space for businesses. I think removing this flag is unnecessary and does not reflect the amazing place that Hamtramck is. Everyone should be proud of who they are, where they come from and should be safe where they live.

Arlo Pickens. Hello. I'm a resident and business owner who is vehemently opposed to this resolution. If I was in town tonight, I would be there to say this personally, but I hope my statement and ones like it are heeded. This resolution is backwards, wrongheaded and theocratic governance under the guise of neutrality. I know the mayor's homophobic-transphobic public stance. I watched the rhetoric fly last year when council wanted the pride flag banned from Dustin Park. I see the posts made by city officials on Hamtramck Square.

I understand that this resolution has nothing to do whatsoever with the desire for neutrality and everything to do with council members and the mayor's desire to govern the city according to the structures of their religious books. This as well as their previous stamp on this issue tell the world that Hamtramck is not a place where everyone is welcome, that we do not value all of our citizens. Only those that are in majority, a euphemism frequently used to refer to people who want to enact policy along religious guidelines. Honestly, I repulses me that this is even up for discussion.

More than 40 years after the Stonewall Riots, after decades of hard-earned rights won by the LGBTQ community, our city government now wants to say loud and clear that they're not supported here, that they're not welcome here, that we are more comfortable with them in the closet, being quiet, not making their identity known. This resolution puts us squarely in line with the worst aspect of American culture. We can do much better than this. I've seen city officials repeatedly online referring to the LGBTQ community as disgusting, as mentally deficient, accusing them of being predators of children. These are not the messages I want to be seen as representative of the place where I live. It makes me sick. Pride month is a celebration of inclusivity, but we would do well to remember that the first pride was that MLK referred to as the language of the unheard.

Matthew Asapi. I hope this must find you all. Well, my name is Matthew. I regularly involve myself in the Hamtramck community and contribute economically to the city on a weekly, daily basis. As an ally to the LGBTQ community, I'm shocked, disgusted, and angered by the resolution that your city council is pursuing. The resolution 2382 is a legislative example of homophobia directed towards an already marginalized and heavily targeted community. LGBTQ people are represented by the pride flag in the United States where there are currently 417 anti LGBTQ State legislation bills being discussed to

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eliminate their existence. Considering the origins of how this resolution came to light from the LGBTQ pride flag being flown on the city owned flagpole in Joseph Campau near Carpenter Street.

Your council is using their power to make this resolution number 418. There's no morally acceptable argument that the council can make on how removing the pride flag, which represents love, understanding, and acceptance is meant to be an inclusive effort. Removing the pride flag is counterintuitive to your efforts to proudly promote and embrace diversity, as directly stated in both versions of the resolution. This is especially concerning as the author of this resolution, Mayor Amer Ghalib, dedicated his efforts to drafting this for discussion rather than alerting South and Hamtramck residents about the implosion of the nearby incinerator, in addition to the extremely bad AQI from the Canadian wildfires.

This resolution is far more than whether or not we can fly a certain flag in Hamtramck. Should this pass, this will demonstrate LGBTQ individuals will no longer be supported and loved by the community. It will show we do not care about the unity in Hamtramck and we would rather appeal to radical and racist minorities who do not promote positive decorum or value the presence of those different than themselves in our city. It will show that we do not welcome people who are different and that will impact everyone. Every human being regardless of race, creed, ethnicity, political belief, and in this case, sexuality deserves to feel safe whether they live in occupy space.

The Hamtramck city Council is not fooling anyone by marketing this resolution as a path to peace in our community. Peace requires understanding and acceptance and they are doing neither by removing LGBTQ flags. By passing this proposal you don't need to open the door for radical racist groups. They're already here and they will have received exactly what they wanted by denying everyone else the right to feel safe and accepted and Hamtramck through the resolution. That blatant violation of First Amendment rights immediately. The opportunity exists here to ensure that Hamtramck remains a welcoming and open place for all people and I expect Hamtramck City Council recognizes. Thank you for taking time to read this and your consideration.

Martha Mazariegos. I am against the vote to suppress LG-

PART 5 OF 8 ENDS [02:55:04]

Speaker 41:

[inaudible 02:55:01]. I am against the vote to suppress LGBTQ+ community voices. Do not pass this vote to forbid pride flags from being displayed on public property. This is unfair for the voices of this group under attack. Adina [inaudible 02:55:16]. As a resident of Detroit and someone who is a frequent visitor and love Hamtramck, I am shocked at Resolution 2382 that seeks to not allow LGBTQIA+ flags to be flown on the city properties. When I read that the city does not want to open the door for radical racist groups to ask for their flags to be flown, I couldn't believe my eyes. The queer community represents love, unity, acceptance, and justice. Allowing our flag to be flown is a statement of all of those values. I find it appalling that flying the LGBT flag, a symbol of love, would ever be considered a gateway to give [inaudible 02:55:51] radical and racist ideology they see on the table.

As a Jewish person, I have to imagine that if the city was asked to fly a Nazi flag and the answer would be an unequivocal and resounding no. Flying a flag of love does not open the door of hatred if you do not allow it to. To be neutral is to be complacent to the erasure of queer people from the public eye and public spaces. This is exactly what the bigots want. I feel compelled to speak out against the idea that neutrality is the best opinion when faced with a choice to celebrate a marginalized community that is quite literally endangered from violent legislation on the local, state, and federal level.

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I urge the City Council to stand with the LGBTQIA community. Do not allow the intimidation tactics of vandalism and violence make us cower to in fear. Now is the time to stand up and support each other. Thank you for your time and consideration. Adina [inaudible 02:56:44].

[inaudible 02:56:45] Boyd. As a Hamtramck resident, I do not support HPD acquiring tasers. Tasers are preferable to the use of guns, but I'd rather see us spending resources on something other than weapons, especially given the history of one HPD officer tasing another. Let's prioritize less weapons for our police.

Cameron Frank. The most beautiful part of Hamtramck is that it fully embraces the melting pot idea. People from every walk of life are corralled into this two-square-mile city and live side-by-side in harmony. Churches, mosques, synagogues, bars, euromats, Yemen cafes, all institutions with different ideas of what is supposed to be right yet still keeping peace and living amongst their neighbors happily. Why would you want to deny someone their right to fly a flag that says, "I'm here and I'm proud and I'm unashamed of it." It is not unconstitutional.

Penelope Bowler. I'm a resident of Hamtramck, and I'm opposed to the removal of the pride flag in the city. Hamtramck has a diversity that is unmatched across Michigan. Removal of the pride flag represents a few exceptions that are unfortunately prejudiced.

Guys, I'm almost done. Please just bear with me.

Removal of the pride flag represents a few exceptions that are unfortunately prejudiced against others who do not share their values. This is the U.S. and the protection of the LGBTQ population has been passed in the language of legislation of the Elliott-Larsen Act. Thank you for your time. Please don't allow the city to be crippled by new lawsuits because of council's actions. Sincerely, Penelope.

I think I'll be fine, but [inaudible 02:58:23]. Below is my personal comment regarding 2382. Hello, I am writing to you today as a member of the non-binary community. Resolution 2382 is in direct opposition to decades of work by individuals of various races and cultures that have come to inhabit and call the land we now live on, homes. No. I said the land we live on. We now live on. As a member of the non-binary community, I have personally found a lot of comfort and acceptance of my personal identity from a group I did not originally expect. The local and national indigenous tribes. Within many indigenous tribes, people of my identity are widely accepted and often viewed as prominent members of their communities. While I go into each and every of the 40 plus terms that exist in varying tribes including our local Nishnabe, I am instead going to use the term two-spirit.

Two-spirit has grown to become a launching point to convey the overarching term of which we may describe as non-binary individuals within indigenous people across the continent, but is not inclusive to gendered identity. It is not a radical idea, nor is it new. Tribes across the United States and right here in Michigan have lived with and accepted those of us that do not fit in the modern binary for nearly a thousand years.

If this is new information to you, a good place for additional research to avoid further missteps is the Indian Health Service website. You can input this URL access ... And she gave me the link or ... I am sorry. I can't say she. [inaudible 02:59:50]. I'm not sure what the name is. The respect and prominence of two-spirit individuals within indigenous communities reinforced illustrates the needs for representation and celebration of gender diverse communities and our local government and leadership. Resolution 2382 [inaudible 03:00:09] to celebrating individuals at a local level and excludes people who hold to realities that existed here long before the city of Hamtramck was established.

A resolution targeting the people. The public display and representation of any marginalized community during our most visible and important months of the year is appalling. I along with many of my peers have had to remove certain destinations from our future plans for fear of our physical safety, and I do

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not want to see Hamtramck follow that path. If this resolution passes, Hamtramck loses its ability to claim itself as a diverse city of individuals and will be on a quick path to joining those very destinations as unsafe location to visit or reside in.

One final point: have you thought about the mental health impacts that a resolution like this will have on the community in which it targets? At present, LGBTQ youth are four times more likely to commit suicide due to harassment and stigma placed by actions like this. Have you seriously considered the impact this takes by placing a community driven by love and acceptance as a hate group? Comparing it to racist and radical groups? The personal religious views of elected officials that have trauma cannot be prioritized over the mental and public safety of the LGBTQ residents.

My family has a long history in Hamtramck and we always were proud of the inclusivity that Hamtramck pulled. I boasted about the diversity when I'm able to and hope that you reject this resolution so that we can continue to have a city that uphold the diversity so that I can continue to be proud of the city. The city deserves better with empathy and love. [inaudible 03:01:33].

Jessica Vu. I am writing to express my disagreement in the banning of pride flags on city property. While I'm not a resident of the city, I live in Poletown, Detroit, a mile south of the city and spend a lot of time there and love the city. I want Hamtramck to be a place where everyone feels safe and welcome to be their authentic selves. Please consider the harm that banning pride flags will have on our community. The pride flag represents a beautiful diversity of the city and should be something that is celebrated, not banned. Thank you for your consideration.

Okay. So, almost there's two-

Speaker 42:

Thank God! [inaudible 03:02:06].

Speaker 41:

There are still two ... I still have two. There was two public [inaudible 03:02:09].

Speaker 43:

[inaudible 03:02:09].

Speaker 41:

Come on, [inaudible 03:02:10].

Speaker 43:

[inaudible 03:02:11].

Speaker 41:

Eloise?

Eleanor:

Eleanor.

Speaker 41:

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I'm sorry. I did that the first time around, too. Eleanor. Three minutes.

Eleanor:

Maybe you in the audience have come here ...

Speaker 41:

No. [crosstalk 03:02:30].

Eleanor:

I'll address you, then.

Speaker 41:

Okay.

Eleanor:

Maybe you've come here today to share your personal feelings. Maybe you have come here on someone's advice. Some of you maybe believe we have a need to feel victimized. Some of you may believe that the flags displayed in and of itself is an act of aggression. The result is the same. You came here to express that we are not a part of the community to be celebrated. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals bring a vibrancy and a positivity to this community, and it's crucial as a community we celebrate these contributions in the face of discriminatory legislation across this country. These members have helped me find a home here in Hamtramck and a future through Wayne State University. We live in America for its freedoms. It follows, I should be free to live the life I choose.

The world in these two square miles has and will continue to have LGBT residents whether they come here for the community or come from it. 7.2% of adults are LGBT in some form or another. And although it may be a hard pill for some of you to swallow, statistically, nearly a 10th of you and your loved ones is LGBT in some form or another. I do not wish to spend the next 30 years in a split community trading begrudging stares. I think you know better than to make your home a place of violence and/or distrust of your neighbor. Just outside that door-

Speaker 42:

Excuse me, ma'am. [inaudible 03:04:18].

Eleanor:

There is a poster just outside this door.

Speaker 43:

I told you. Knock it off.

Eleanor:

There is a poster hanging from the Hamtramck Historical Commission. It shares, "The donor was proud to be Polish." The first listed antonym of pride is shame. Is this a place I should not feel proud to exist? Abu Ahmed, Mohammed, Khalil, Nayeem, Muhith. I urge you to oppose this shameful resolution. Mohammed, Amer, I urge you to confront whatever hatred has fostered such a shameful proposal.

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Speaker 41:

[inaudible 03:05:06].

Speaker 44:

I moved to Hamtramck last year because I was ashamed to live in a Michigan city with such a shameful and embarrassing history. If you don't know Wyandotte, Michigan is known for being a sundown town. They're called sundowns because it was dangerous for Black and brown people to be out after dark or else they would face civilian and police harassment.

If we allow Hamtramck, Michigan to adopt a legal standard of bigotry, it's only natural that the queer presence here, your neighbors, are forced out due to hate crimes and police harassment. It's obvious what you're doing, and it's disgusting. In the eyes of the law, I am a transgender woman. In the eyes of many of you in this room right now, I will be never anything more than a gay man. That is fine. I'm not here to tell you what to think, what to do in your spare time. Interfering with clear expression is a violation of our rights. I know the movement to ban pride flags in Hamtramck has been supported by big money interests, some of whom are in this room with me right now. What we lack in funding we will make up for in perseverance. Anti-gay and anti-trans legislature will not be tolerated in Hamtramck. You want us to leave? Come and make us. We will vote you out before you ever could.

Speaker 41:

Thank you. Let me just make sure ... That's all [inaudible 03:06:30].

Chair:

That's all? Okay, thank you.

Speaker 45:

All right.

Chair:

I'll advocate for you to get some raise for reading all those comments.

Speaker 41:

It was three hours' worth of public comments.

Chair:

Yes. So, before we move to the next section ... I don't think many people who sent comments read the resolution. It's not talking about the LGBTQ in any way or form only. It says, "Religious, ethnic, racial, political or sexual orientation." In this room, I found earlier, a person whom I met outside and asked me, "I want to raise the flag that says, "[foreign language 03:07:09]. There is no God, but Muhammad is the messenger of God." He belongs to some religious group, and he's already telling me, "I want to raise that flag if you raise some group's flag." And I told him, "If this resolution passed, you are not going to be allowed to do so."

So, we are not targeting one group or another. Those people who accused me of hating them, half of my boards and commissions are either LGBTQ or supporters of LGBTQ and I know them one-by-one. Some

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of them are in this room right now. Some of them were appointed by the former mayor. I never fired anybody who belonged to the LGBTQ. And you can do some research.

Even the former mayor herself. I appointed her back in the DDA, and she's the biggest advocate for LGBTQ. So, how are we hating those people? But when some commissions that I appointed are trying to undermine my power and the city council power and violate rules and misinterpret terms, then I think some decisions has to be taken to clarify things and to make it clear. Those people who didn't understand this section that says, "Countries-

Speaker 45:

[crosstalk 03:08:23].

Chair:

... presented by some countries. We are talking about the countries that have immigrants in Hamtramck. For someone to mention Taiwan, Mozambique, [inaudible 03:08:36]. Who cares about these countries? We have no immigrants in this country from these countries. We're talking about countries that have immigrants in this country, and this international flag resolution that was passed in 2013, 102 said specifically international flags that reflects the international character of the city. Why are we talking about Taiwan or Mozambique or [inaudible 03:09:02]? We don't have any residents there. But there's also a violation of that because you have to pay some money to raise your flag on Joseph Campo.

Well, I know so many countries here that are not represented by those flag, either. We have people from Iraq. The Iraqi flag is not there. People from Morocco, Nigeria, [inaudible 03:09:22], Somalia, Afghanistan. None of these countries have flags there. Why? Because nobody paid the \$300 to raise that flag. So even that ... The Human Relation Commission did not do a good job with that because every country that have residents here should have the opportunity to raise their flags on Joseph Campo in the month of July only.

So, if you don't understand which country, we made it clear at the end which flags should be allowed. The U.S. flag, city, states and POW flags are the only ones that should be flown in the city properties. If you have your flag on your own properties, I would defend you. I released a statement to denounce the vendors [inaudible 03:10:08] one flag that was thrown in the garbage from a private property. It is nothing that cause any safety issues to the LGBTQ members in the community. We'll defend you. We'll serve you equally just like anybody else.

But why are you acting as a victim if your flag is not flown in the city hall or in the public spaces? That shouldn't cause an issue because other groups are acting like victims because they want their flags to be raised there. And like we said, we don't want to open the doors for any other groups who come and ask us for raising flags that you don't like or you may not like. And then we will look ... It's going to be a mess.

So, I think it's clear by now, and we should move to the next session, which is the constant agenda. And this is approved in a single motion with no discussion. We have a approval of minutes from the May 23, 2023 regular City Council meeting. The approval of [inaudible 03:11:09] register date ending June 13th, 2023.

Speaker 45:

Approved on this?

Speaker 41:

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No. [crosstalk 03:11:14].

Chair:

Approval of pre-approved expenditure date ending June 13th, 2023. Resolution 2023-72 approving appointments of Gary Saganski to the Beautification Commission. E, Resolution 2023-73 approving street closure for end-of-school field day. F, Resolution 2023-74 approving street closure for Hindu religious rally. G, Resolution 2023-75 approving Michigan Department of Surgery. Title form L4029. H, Resolution 2023-76, annual renewal of priority health insurance contractor for new benefit here.

Speaker 43:

A motion?

Chair:

Second.

Mayor Pro Tem:

Second.

Chair:

All in support?

Speaker 46:

Aye.

Chair:

No objections?

Mayor Pro Tem:

Nope.

Chair:

All right.

Speaker 41:

[inaudible 03:12:04].

Chair:

So, we have-

Speaker 43:

[inaudible 03:12:06].

Chair:

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... Gary. Mr. Gary.

Speaker 43:

Through all of this-

Chair:

Oh.

Speaker 43:

[crosstalk 03:12:09] sworn in.

Chair:

All right. Thank you so much. Go ahead.

Mayor Pro Tem:

Come on up, sir.

Speaker 43:

Come on up.

Speaker 41:

Come on, Gary.

Speaker 43:

Raise your hand.

Gary Saganski:

Oh.

Chair:

[inaudible 03:12:18]. [inaudible 03:12:20].

Speaker 41:

Is it Saganski?

Gary Saganski:

Yes, it is.

Speaker 41:

Okay. Just repeat after me, please. I, state your name.

Gary Saganski:

I, Gary Saganski.

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Speaker 41:

Do solemnly swear.

Gary Saganski:

Do solemnly swear.

Speaker 41:

That I'll support the constitution of the United States of America.

Gary Saganski:

That I'll support the constitution of the United States of America.

Speaker 41:

And the constitution of the state of Michigan.

Gary Saganski:

And the constitution of the state of Michigan.

Speaker 41:

And that I will faithfully discharge.

Gary Saganski:

And that I will faithfully discharge.

Speaker 41:

The duties of the Beautification Commission.

Gary Saganski:

The duties of the Beautification Commission.

Speaker 41:

Of the city of Hamtramck.

Gary Saganski:

Of the city of Hamtramck.

Speaker 41:

According to the best of my ability.

Gary Saganski:

According to the best of my ability.

Speaker 41:

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Congratulations.

Chair:

Yeah. [inaudible 03:13:07]. Sweet.

Speaker 41:

Thank you so much, sir.

Gary Saganski:

Thank you.

Speaker 43:

Thank you, sir.

Speaker 41:

Do you want to speak or anything?

Speaker 45:

Congratulation.

Gary Saganski:

I'm proud to be here and working to support Hamtramck.

Mayor Pro Tem:

Thank you, sir.

Gary Saganski:

This is an expression of democracy, and we are all working to find the best way to move forward. So, I look forward to doing that for you.

Chair:

[crosstalk 03:13:27]. Congratulations. Okay, moving to the new business. And we have the first Resolution 2023-82. Resolution to maintain and confirm the neutrality of the city of Hamtramck toward its residents.

Speaker 43:

[crosstalk 03:13:46]. Second.

Chair:

All right. Discussion.

Mayor Pro Tem:

Mr. Chair.

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Chair:

Mr. Mayor Pro Tem, go ahead.

Mayor Pro Tem:

Okay. So, we explained over three hours with the public comment. It was actually was approved by the 2013. Exactly same language is here, only some of the people from the commission do not understand the what or try to make the problem. That's why. And maybe some of the city employee [inaudible 03:14:21]. Who knows? So, only one speaker, young guy speak on behalf of this. The young guy said we are confirming it was passed by the 2013. We just confirming, letting them know what it was and it is there. It's nothing wrong. All of the speakers today said Hamtramck, great city. They're living with the no issue. That's what they said. We want same way. We approved that. Majority of the Muslim community know how to live together, how to live together, how to respect each other. And we are doing only the resolution. I'm the witness. I'm the senior councilman. I've been 29 years this seat.

So, still not understanding. Some of the Joseph Campo post donated by the some people their time. So, what we're trying to bring diversity country flag flown to the Joseph Campo. And it was successfully done, and it was a great things happen. Exactly same thing was happening and happening still.

So, I want to let everybody know one of the speaker mentioned. She moved from Wyandotte or somewhere to here because ... So, if you cannot live peacefully, safely at Wyandotte. You came here. You living peacefully here. You did not make the problem over there. You did not tell them to float that, get flag or whatever flag, LGBT flag over there. Here, our fear of the religious faith group came to us beg on the floor, to the flag, their own flag to the city of Hamtramck. We said, "No, we don't want individual. Everybody to do same practice. It is going to be chaos. It looks ugly, and it's going to be division. We don't want that kind of situation here." Your faith, you believe. You believe, you can put you ... and outside the city hall, outside the city property, it's your property.

If you drive right now Joseph Campo, you're going to see the LGBTQ flag right there. Some ... I drive every day, and I see the lots of flag. Nobody bother nobody. No incident happened. This city, as of today, as of now, somebody hates somebody. And hate is harm for the Muslim people. And it is proved that. And you guys prove that we never hate people. Never hate nobody. And peacefully life is here. Still, you're going to live same manner. Nobody going to bother nobody. You guys is the one making problem right here, I feel. If you leave alone ... if you leave alone some other group, there is no problem.

Problem is coming. Why I need to fly this flag right here, particularly Hamtramck, particularly right here. It's in your home, no issue. It's in your institute. No issue. You believe your practice. Nobody bother. What is the problem? What we are trying to do, confirming from 2013, what we approved that time and some of the commission people not understanding, not implementing and going the wrong direction to bring it here to the clear to everybody. Peaceful city, good city. We're still the good city. We don't want a problem. We don't want a problem. That's why we don't want a flag here.

You like your flag. I like my flag in my house. No issue. There is no issue. I want it clear on that. And that's why I brought it here because while I saw a discussion going across the border. I spoke to the mayor. The person ... He is the one problem-maker. He's the one wrong interpretation doing. And yeah, yeah. Again and again, we should now know that. We want to bring and clear everything. And he's going to be clear and I'm supporting this one and he'll be approved today. No question about it. Also, also-

Speaker 43:

[crossing 03:19:33], guys. Come on.

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Mayor Pro Tem:

[crosstalk 03:19:37] to you guys [crosstalk 03:19:37].

Speaker 43:

Still silent.

Mayor Pro Tem:

Excuse me. You guys is the one threatening us as elected official. Please don't threat us. Don't threat us. Okay? I am the elected official. If people like me, they will vote for me. If people don't like me, they're not going to vote for me. I don't have to serve here. If I serve, I will find out the interest of the Hamtramck city. Let me tell you guys one thing. A lot of you guys don't know, what is the definition of the democracy? A lot of you guys don't know. Let me tell you. 16th president of the United States. You don't know the name. I know the name. Abraham Lincoln. His Gettysburg Address. You don't know. Let me tell you that. Government of the people by the people for the people. A lot of you guys don't know. Let me tell you. Of the people, okay? I am of the people. I am elected by the people, okay? And I am for the people. So, what I'm doing ... what I'm doing because I'm elected, I am of the people and by the people elected, I'm working for the people.

What is the majority people like? What is the good for Hamtramck? What is the majority people will be living peacefully. Good manner. That's all I'm doing. I'm doing my job. I'm not against anybody. We love everybody. We don't hate anybody. We don't discriminate anybody. It is the proof. All of you guys told us. We are living very respectfully without hate living in Hamtramck, and you moved from other city 29 years ago. I don't see all of you guys. Now I see that means we're doing good job. We keep the good [inaudible 03:21:32]. That's why you guys coming. And welcome! Welcome, anytime!

So, that is my calculation. Please, I'm requesting everybody try to find out [inaudible 03:21:45] in Hamtramck peacefully, respectfully. Please respect each other. Anything ... Discrimination, any hate, crime, anything happening, let us know. Let my administration, police department ... Anything you guys see, we'll take care. We'll take care. I will find out the better way or take care how we can live together. That's all I'm doing.

Chair:

Thank you, Mr. [inaudible 03:22:15].

Mayor Pro Tem:

Thank you.

Chair:

So, just to explain one more thing, please. I mean ... Whether we are supported by the majority or the minority, we serve everybody equally with no discrimination but without favoritism, either. I want to explain the point of the Resolution 2013-102 that gives the Human Relation the purview to raise the flags on Joseph Campo, which is ... flags that reflect the international character of the city.

For the past 10 years, no other flags were raised on there other than country flags. Why now? Because the mayor has changed? Why didn't the former mayor think about that when she was the mayor? So, they just want to do it now. That means they knew it was meant to fly only the country's flags. Now they're saying other flags are international flags. Why is this interpretation brought now and not two

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years ago or three years ago? So, you understand? 10 years. No issue with this resolution. So, this was brought to clarify that resolution.

Another thing is the resolution that was approved in 2021 to fly the flag here in [inaudible 03:23:43] Park in front of the City Hall. The Art and Culture Commission asked for permission with the resolution. You will see. Art and Culture Commission has sought permission from the City Council to fly the flag in front of the City Hall.

Now, somebody is telling the board and commission, "No, don't ask for permission on the City Council. Act on your behalf." Like they have more power than the City Council to undermine the power of the City Council. And that's what forced the Council members to bring this, to put a limit to this. I mean ... Because of the previous practice. It should be just done as the previous practice.

If you go ahead and read those resolution, you will find that we're just trying to implement the previous practice. Nothing new. So, this is just an explanation about what's happening. Any further discussions for City Council members?

Choudhury:

Yes. Mr. Chair.

Chair:

Yes, Councilman Choudhury.

Choudhury:

If I may? Good evening, folks. [foreign language 03:24:41]. Thank you so much for being here so patiently. Some of you already passed the bedtime. You've got to work tomorrow. Yeah. But here's the thing. Folks, I believe in the rights of every human to enjoy the life under the full rights of the United States. The resolution does not prevent private citizens from flying the pride flag around the city. We only want to respect the religious rights of our citizens.

Pride Month is a time to celebrate diversity of the LGBTQ community, which includes people of all ages, abilities. No one should be denied access to the services and supports they need to thrive in the community because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

But here's the thing, folks. You guys are welcome to the community. You guys welcome to walk to the restaurants, walk to the grocery store. Why do we have to have a flag flown in the city property to be represented? You already represented. We already know who you are, and we don't have any hate or any discrimination against that. We get along very well. By making this bigotry, making this a scene, it's making like you wanted to hate us. It's you versus and others. It's not that. It's everyone included. And this is the community we live. I love where you live. I have no problem. But the community as a whole has this respect that we are raising family. We're doing our best to support the community.

Therefore, you are not unwelcome. You are welcome here. But we have to respect the religious. We have to respect the people around here. Schools, mosques, churches. I won't take any longer than this. It's been a long night. But I welcome every one of you.

Chair:

Thank you.

Choudhury:

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I have no problem with anyone whatsoever. Thank you.

Chair:

Thank you, Councillor.

Speaker 45:

Mr. Mayor.

Chair:

[inaudible 03:26:56] Councilman [inaudible 03:26:59].

Speaker 45:

Thank you. I just want to say Happy Pride Month for people that are celebrating the pride. I believe people are confused about the bending the rainbow flag and bringing restoration. So, this is a restoration to not only rainbow flag, any flag to be flown to the city of Hamtramck. City of Hamtramck is a loving and vibrant city. Everyone should be seen and heard equally by the city of Hamtramck and city official. If anyone feel difference, then they should let us know or city officials know. And people are combining religiously and rainbow flag. It's not a combination. I know our ex-councilwoman, Amanda Jaczkowski. She send in mail or email. She said the religious day and Christmas day that we offer the free parking and everything. I don't think this is a combination of flag to be the religious day. This is a completely different aspect, and we're combining two different things.

You guys have religion. You respect your ... Most of you are Christian. You celebrate Christianity. You guys go out to shopping and everything. So, this is doing for everybody's benefit, not for us only. And we love you guys. You're great people. There are nothing wrong with it. We also live together. As I say, it's a loving city, and we all welcome. We all should celebrate but flowing the flag is not only rainbow flag. It's just a restriction for any flag to be flown. Thank you.

Chair:

Thank you. Councilman-

Refai:

Mr. Chair.

Chair:

[inaudible 03:28:37]. Yes.

Refai:

And I want to inform everybody to ... Again, during your own property, you could do whatever you want to do. But to clarify this issue here. We had a issue previously with the commission. And we made ... Councilman Hassan presented with Mayor Pro Tem to make sure that our commissions ... members of the commission, any commission, do not overstep your powers. There's individuals that ... They posted something on one of the newsletters that "If Council does not approve this, you know what? He's going to put the flag on Joseph Campo. That means he's tearing Council members. You know what? You ain't going to vote for it. I'm still going to put on there."

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So, by us having this resolution. We're not banning you from not to put in front of your house or your little private business. That's your own choice. But to make it clear, like our mayor and Mayor Pro Tem, my colleagues ... Any member can come and say, "Hey, listen. Our tribe have a flag. I want to put my flag. My family has a flag. I want to put on the Joseph Campo Avenue." So, it's more to clarify to everybody here, our board commissions citizens, that it's an old resolution that's been there for years. It's been practiced before our body here. And it's ridiculous now how people want to push it during our time. If really people with the former mayor that really was trying to push this, she should have pushed it for the 16 years that she's been in the City

PART 6 OF 8 ENDS [03:30:04]

Speaker 47:

... That really was trying to push this, she should've pushed it for the 16 years that she's been here in the City of Hamtramck. Why she's trying to put a fuss in the City of Hamtramck because she lost sadly that sometimes you take wins and loss, but if you have lost, stop putting hate within community, especially with our mayor or city council. So message again to our citizens, whoever practice or are part of the parade flight, you're willing to do what you want to do in your property, that's your property, your business, what you want to do. But again, it's all resolution where it's international flags that is presented by countries. If it was to me, to be honest with you, I would just put the American flag. If I know this will come to a fuss like this. So I hope everybody will understand and thank you very much. Thank you.

Mr. Chair:

That was actually one of the suggestions to just put the American flags, but we found out that the money has been collected already for those flags for the post. And so maybe the flags have be bought already and they're ready to be flown in there. So we couldn't pat just the American flag.

Osa:

Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair:

All right, so yes, Councilman Osa?

Osa:

Can I bring a resolution? Mr. Mayor, can I bring a resolution to have just the American flag and not anything else at this moment?

Mr. Chair:

That's next year, this year because they collected the money and they bought the flag. So that's accepted. Yes. Councilman Aus. I'm sorry, go ahead.

Aus:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you. Be here this evening. We spent almost three and a half hours to get all those comments from public and I do want to repeat it again and again. Everything but L-G-B-T-Q, this community leaving the Hamtramck long time so you don't have any issue there. And this

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flag, if you want to put this flag on there that may explain though this flag only to the intentional community, intentional country. I like to amend something there Mr. Mayor, if you want. I'd like to put the intentional country but the country cannot occupy the other country like Russia and some other such a country. We do not want to put that flag there. This country occupy the other country. We do not want to put those things also and large number of the community people in here before we come in there.

Last couple days mayor explained that some Muslim people, they want to put the hams, some name there, the Hindu people they want to put there, Christian name there, some Buddhist people, they want to put their flag. So we cannot put all those together. We do not have enough capacity too. So that's why we want to get the international flag International country, the people who lived in there and Mel told us and told you guys that sometimes they have to pay for the fee.

Also, L-G-B-T-Q, peoples don't worry about us, trust us people elected us. We had the people, we leave this community and we like to serve you. Nothing different between you and some other people. You serve you equally. It doesn't matter who vote for us or do not vote for us and some people running for the upcoming election, please don't trade them. They're working for you guys. They're equivalent working for each and every one. They do not make discrimination X, Y and Z. We elected for the whole community and if you have any issue in future, let us know. We'll try to help you guys Help you judge. Thank you very much to give yourself.

Mr. Chair:

Thank you. So, Council councilman Ab

Ab:

I don't think you ever motion to open the discussion so if you should do that now please. And then also I think Councilman Mahmud's motion to amend it should be voted on as well.

Fai:

So motion to discuss the agenda of

Mr. Chair:

I met him? Yeah,

Speaker 49:

We did open the discussion.

Ab:

He didn't say the word motion but I think he motioned to amend. So I think it has to be addressed.

Speaker 49:

Even though he never said motion,

Ab:

Nobody seconded it. So I just,

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Speaker 49:

I'm saying he never

Speaker 50:

He was suggesting that is amended resolution.

Fai:

I think it's not, like I said, it's not possible now because the flags already, it's

Aus:

Already same the American flag,

Speaker 50:

Right? No, I'm not discussing whether or not you should. I'm saying whether or not.

Osa:

What do you think of the attorney? Do you have right to motion to have on the American flag?

Aus:

Good. So good.

Mr. Chair:

Well what needs to be motioned is the amendment of Councilman Osa. He wanted to add accept countries that occupy other countries

Speaker 51:

That's going to be difficult.

Aus:

Right now, I think we got... This for this one. Let this one go fast.

Speaker 50:

So if somebody, it's

Aus:

My opinion, somebody other country, I don't want to support their flag.

Osa:

Some people may bring a flag that for example Russian flag Ukrainian community here don't like. So that's going to be a mess. It's going to be a problem.

Aus:

So we Start with this one.

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Speaker 50:

If there's a Russian citizens that living in traffic, why not mean-

Mr. Chair:

If we allowed them but we still presented, they already collected the money to be flown the flag. So why are you going to neglect that can go and the next time, we just only have an American flag. All right, that's accepted for next time. This is the last time for international flags, flags, and maybe next time December we'll make an amendment to I support that. Thank you. All right, so any more discussion? Yes, go ahead. Councilman Smay.

Councilman Smay:

Yeah, I'd like to thank everyone, our city of Hamtramck, all the resident to come, the city council today. Everyone. They mentioned what he want. I had like to thank all my community. I have to respect all my community what they want, what they doing. I have to respect that one. I'm support all the resolution. What we have 23 ID two. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. Chair:

All right, so we're going to have to vote on it. Unmended just like it is now

Osa:

As it is.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Hassan?

Aus:

Yes. You put me in a spot.

Ab:

You're the one brought the reservation forward. Yes.

Speaker 51:

I thought it would be an easy one. Councilman Chari

Fai:

There we go's calling your name. Oh yes, thank you.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Ari.

Speaker 49:

Aye. Yes.

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Speaker 51:
Councilman Osa?

Osa:
Yes.

Speaker 51:
Councilman Hai?

Speaker 48:
Yes.

Speaker 51:
Councilman?

Speaker 49:
Yes.

Speaker 51:
Mr. Mayor, resolution 23. Approve.

Mr. Chair:
All right, come down guys. All right.

Aus:
We are one community

Mr. Chair:
Please. All right, thank you. Do I have to break the tie? No. Okay, thank you. So we move to the next one, resolution 2023 dash 77 authorization to enter an agreement for the development and sale of 24 0 7 Danford Street to Fatima. A sonni.

Aus:
Motion.

Speaker 49:
Second, I believe our staff.

Speaker 51:
Yeah, can you wait a minute for something to clear up?

Fai:
Motion.

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Speaker 49:

I will second it. Thank you. All right, go ahead Alexander.

Speaker 52:

Awesome. Yes, so I'm here defending and representing Ani who is purchasing or intending to purchase a property on 2 4 0 7 Danforth, which is a new addition to our lotio program of being able to purchase a lot adjacent to a property which we recently added. So they are going to make a residential expansion of a sunroom and you can see we sent files to you. I'll be brief. So this is just to approve this sale of the city lots. We still have a lot of city lots and our plan to advertise them in the coming weeks, I'm going to go the retail lots we have available putting a sign out so people know that are walking around and so people can take part in this program. We can get these lots to where we can build. Thank you.

Speaker 50:

Go ahead.

Mr. Chair:

Hassan left. We still have yeah, he had to go for an emergency. Yeah. Is there any discussion on it is

Speaker 49:

No, let's we get started.

Speaker 50:

Is this the first one that's been done in the city of RA or there was previously.

Fai:

No, they did it more. They did,

Speaker 52:

I would say the third residential expansion. Yeah,

Fai:

You wouldn't have No I'm saying as this plan, As This type Of

Speaker 52:

Like you're saying the exact same page.

Fai:

No, no, I'm sorry. Exactly the same Thing here. What is this called? The sun sunroom.

Speaker 52:

Sunroom, yes.

Fai:

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Is there a previously

Speaker 52:

Yes there has residence. Okay.

Fai:

All right, sounds good. It's also nothing new that We have to-

Speaker 52:

No, so these plans that are here are not set in stone. So this is just the proposal to get the property. But in two years, once they have built a property and the residential footprint has been expanded, the Bill of department Will defer if the residential footprint is expanded. But for example, if they don't build anything and they just put a garage, then that property would go back to the statement Notice

Speaker 49:

Fact fact we literally just sent to send a demand letter out to one recently that tried To fast and that's what I mean.

Fai:

No that is fine. Okay.

Speaker 52:

All right, sounds good. And question. Thank you. Okay. Okay, go ahead

Mr. Chair:

Carlos.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Fai?

Fai:

Yes.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Musa?

Speaker 50:

Yes.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Chari?

Speaker 49:

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Yes.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Ud?

Osa:

Yes.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Nelson?

Speaker 50:

Yes.

Speaker 51:

Hassan is no longer present. Mr. Mayor resolution 2377 approved.

Mr. Chair:

Thank you. Next one is resolution 2023 dash 78 approving the purchase of one street sweeper truck For The Department of Public Service.

Aus:

Motion.

Osa:

Second,

Speaker 53:

Mr. Mayor, we have John or DBS director here to Talk about this one. This is kind of his baby. So I told him he's got to defend it.

John:

Unfortunately I lead a department where everything's expensive. I hate to be labeled. There comes John, there comes a lot of money. Hopefully you'll be able to start thinking me as Mr. Progress. That's really what I'm trying to do.

What we have before us is the board's already approved, the council's already approved the first street sweeper and coming in here asking for another one, probably thinking what's another one? So that's what I'm going to explain. The intent of the department's all is to get two of them. A proper street sweeping program has two units. There's two different types.

One is called a mechanical unit. It goes first, picks up all the big items and then it's followed with another one that sucks everything up the fines. The best analogy I can do on this, I was trying to think of something and I'm not going to say the person, but I know somebody got, somebody spent \$150 on

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flowers or a whole bunch of marbles in there, water and sand and all these flowers gave it to his girlfriend.

The problem was for their anniversary, it was this ex-girlfriend's anniversary date. Then this to say those flowers got busted up all over the floor along with the glass. So nobody's going to grab their vacuum cleaner to come vacuum that stuff up. You got to broom it up first.

So it's the same analogy as with the street sweeper. You have to sweep up the big items first before you can use the vacuum. Basically that's the difference between the two units. The problem is I was going to come to this board later to ask for this in another budget. There's not going to any available. So I put the feelers out with companies that make them and said if anything comes available let me know. Detroit ordered six units on last year's prices, which was a lot less than what they're going to be like 50 to 60,000.

Detroit only took delivery of five of the six units. So they had one unit and the company tagged it for Hamtramck pending coming to council. So we could wait and I could order one later in the year, but it would take probably a year to a year and a half to acquire or we can move forward with the purchase of one now and put it in. We're training with the new one that we're getting so that our staff is trained with both units at the same time. So I talked to the controller, Amir found out if we could do it or not. He said it was obtainable to do this year. So that's why I'm bringing this forward because it is a big cost savings to the city to get it now than it would be to get it later and then have to wait a lot longer.

Speaker 53:

Basically goes up \$60,000.

Ab:

Okay, the first one when you bought it, do you receive the first one?

John:

No, we it near the end of this month and the other one that I'm talking about now, we would get at the exact, pretty much the same time it's already in stock in Auburn Hills. I think you ought to have a graph of a decision that the department made to save to say that city about a million \$50,000. And the council has been pretty generous with this department on allowing me to get what I think this department needs to be successful and I wanted to list that because a lot of times everything's approved but nobody really follows up. But the council let them know, Hey we got this, we got that. This is the changes that's happening. So I listed the machines that we've gotten already. We picked up an F two 50, we picked up an F-150, we picked up three F three fifties.

We picked up a street sweeper. We picked up a Kubota four by four utility vehicle, which is going to be one of the two. I plan on coming back to see you again for a second one in the near future, but this will be for snow pollen can handle the heavier snows and whatnot. All those items that you've already granted for the department total about 650,000 and we saved a million. So just everybody talks about big numbers, especially in this department. A million here, 10 million, 5 million, a couple hundred thousand. It's hard to relate it but just saving a million dollars to one decision. The department did look at all the assets the city acquired for it. It is huge. Five new trucks got delivered with us in the last two weeks, which is great with the guys. I have a lot bigger department now going to be up to 10 guys from four. So I put the pending approval items in there that are on agenda tonight to show what a million dollars can do for the city.

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Speaker 53:

John, if I may, these sweepers are actually somewhat designed to work in tandem. The first one that the department purchased was actually a VAC model, which we're also going to be using to vacuum out the basins, the catch basins, which right there is going to save us about a hundred thousand dollars of contractor fees along. So just by purchasing the first one that happened, the vac model isn't designed really to pick up heavy debris,

John:

Especially in alleys.

Speaker 53:

Particularly alleys as you know, we have a lot of alleys, we're paving a lot of alleys now. We want to keep the alleys clean as well. The one he's proposing to purchase now is a mechanical model that actually has two sweepers in front of it that essentially sweep the big pieces into a chute. It flips it into the back, the vet comes behind it to get all the little stuff. So they're designed to work at tandem to get a much cleaner surface and that was the original plan was to buy the other one at a later time. Fortunately for us, Detroit backed out in one. We got last year's pricing. We were going to do this probably next season at a price of another \$60,000. So it's a lot more cost effective to do this now for the long run.

John:

Yeah, that's the cleaning cause we put the 60, \$70,000. I noted that on the sheet. That's just basically what we're saving on. The one unit from jetting and the catch basins and gate valves that we have to vacuum out. That does not include the preventive maintenance on all of our catch basins within the side streets that we're not doing.

So If we actually ordered that out, we'd be spending hundreds of thousands of dollars a year cleaning out catch basins. We're Doing-

Speaker 53:

That's a very point. So we're spending a hundred thousand on doing the catch basins we identify we got to do. That's not going above and beyond doing all the ones we probably should have done.

Osa:

All right. I mean this is something good, it looks good, but first we haven't received the first one right to see how effective this would be. Second, the main littering problem that we have is not in the main streets, it's on the sidewalk. Parkings like park main parks and that needs does not need the sweeper. It needs some education and code implementations and stuff like that. So I mean yes we have a little bit of more money but it seems like we just want to focus on certain areas to spend that.

While I think there are other priorities that we should focus or at least work on both sides because it seems like each department now is trying to buy stuff because we have some surplus. But I think there are some priorities that we get asked by the residents, why haven't you done that? Why haven't you done that? And I don't think they will be happy to see more sweepers in the streets while they have other issues like streets that needs to be paved probably rather than just fixing the potholes and the next season they come back and so I am okay with this but I don't think I should take action before we see the first one and see is it really going to be effective or not.

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Speaker 53:

Well the one we bought is a vacuum. It's 11 inch nozzle. So basically it's a big vacuum cleaner is what it is. And predominantly the main use where you're going to be using it for a lot of it is we'll go through the streets with it, but we still would've to run a mascot in front of it. So it's a pickup truck With some guys they'd have to stop, pick up the bigger items so we're still running somebody in front of them, which I planned on doing for a limited time until we could order the other unit. The difference with now we wouldn't run the mascot truck, we would just run the other sweeper because the problem with the vac model is with 11 inch hose, you go over, you hit a carpet that's going to plug up, you hit a two by four, it's going to go sideways, it's going to plug up.

And then I think there's, with the paperwork you have just shows the life expectancy, the life expectancy of the unit's double when you run them tandem than if you run them singular. It's a lot less abuse on the machine plus the filters and everything don't get plugged up as bad.

But one example, another example I'd give is over on by the stadium when we had an issue with the parking lot's really bad. So they want to send the sweeper in there, a vac model. We wouldn't have been able to use our vac model out there. It would've vacuumed up the parking lot, it would've vacuumed up the asphalt, but the first unit, the mechanical unit would've swept it into the dustpan and then put it into the hopper. So there's advantages for both, especially when alleys are rough. I wouldn't dare run the vacuum model through an alley and hopefully with the alleys that we're redoing, I'm trying to get them on an alley maintenance program to where these units are going through because we do get a lot of bigger degrees in the alley. It falls out of the cans and everything else.

Speaker 47:

Also, Mr. Mayor, if we don't finish the alleys and if we don't have alternate ways to people park their car, I mean sweeping the street is going to be difficult anyways. So you want to wait for next year, maybe finish up all our alleys, let's put the alleys priority. Well

John:

We still have one coming. We still have the one coming at the end of the month, which is the back bottle, which I tend to start using. The only difference the way we use it is going to be a little bit different than if we had a tandem unit and then the training I got is got for free. They could be trained on both units through the company that we got the year from.

Fai:

I've got a question here. These sweepers, they don't come dual where they do both instead of buying two units, I know Detroit has units that will clean up anything because my street, it's actually half have Detroit and sometimes Detroit area. They could have stuff they

John:

Run. Sometimes

Speaker 47:

It needs a hand map. They run,

John:

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They have a front truck that runs through, well actually have three. They have a water truck that sprays, they have a mechanical unit, well they have a mechanical unit that picks up the big stuff then a water truck and then they run with the back model. And I think that's in the agenda item too. There's a lot of cities, Ann Arbor, Warren that are doing the street sweeping program. They all run canand units.

Speaker 52:

But

Speaker 47:

I don't think it's common sense because the first unit, it's really expensive and I don't know they're expensive but barely you'll get any two by fours or anything that's big on the road. And I'm not referring to alleys, I'm referring to streets. I don't think you'll see a big two by fours. And if there is, I think one of the men could actually be there before the machine sweep. Pick it up and pick it up. I'm going to go on our mayor, we're happy that we're Plus I think we need to take it easy on how we were spending the money. Citizens are happy that we are looking good in the city, but I think we need to work slowly and especially if the machine hasn't arrived yet. I think we're moving too fast of getting another machine. And if I'm not mistaken, I think there is machines out there that do both either heavy equipment or anything like dirt.

John:

Not that I was saying, I research many of them. That's always two units. This unit's a pelican unit. It's a world's used worldwide. It's the most popular mechanical unit out there.

Aus:

Mr. Chair?

Mr. Chair:

Yes, Councilman.

Aus:

All right. I believe Mr. John is trying to say that he needed to have a second one in order to pick up the debris, big debris and going through the alley. It will require

Speaker 47:

You understand?

Aus:

We understand. But thing is in order to get this full services done, he is looking for the second one. And I mean we already spent one of already approved one of them and that is coming. And the second one, it may help him to get more debris and more alleyways clean up. So even though it's a budget adjustment and more money coming out of the surplus, but we are going to do it today and tomorrow, why not do it today?

John:

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There's a lot of long term maintenance. The other thing issue that I looked at is the filters on the vac model are expensive. Every unit that I've negotiated I usually get the price and then I

Tell them I wouldn't even interested unless it can include \$10,000 worth of maintenance parts. So the units that we're getting, we're getting enough maintenance parts to last us for a while because I want a buy unit have to come back and buy brushes, buy filters, buy this, buy that. So every unit that you see is coming, the one we have is coming with 10 or 12,000 worth of parts. This one has \$10,000 worth of replacement parts coming with it. It's the filter. So like you say, you're just putting more strain on the vac model and then what you end up doing is just spending more on the maintenance on it because you're plugging the filters up fast, putting in items in that unit and it's not really designed to take a beating out all the time.

Speaker 54:

But John one thing, so you knew, I guess you didn't ask for both of them in the beginning before beginning to how come to get asked to fill?

John:

I took the unit that was best at the time for the city because of the capabilities of cleaning up.

Speaker 54:

I'm all for the cleaning of the city. I know I did myself many times clean up in the alley. There's alley behind me, there's a cross alley. I mean we need to have those equipment and the city in order to get the city clean up as a city official and as the administration has to step in and step forward. I understand, but it is up to my colleagues and

Mr. Chair:

It's a great idea. I think it would be for better service and more efficient way. But like Councilman Mohe, Mahmud said most of the alleys haven't been fixed yet. It's a mess. So is that a priority to try to fix some alleys before we get the machine to clean the alleys and some streets too, because that's the most concerning issue at this time for the residents, the streets and alleys, they keep asking us about that and we are saying we are waiting on some grants from the state, some grants from Ministry of Transportation that we applied for and if we get them we'll be able to fix those alleys. So I think it's a great idea, but I think we should try the first one and see if it's efficient and if there's a little bit left then we can order the other one.

John:

Yeah, the only reason why I brought it forward, I've talked to Max about it and he said he had a concern about it too, is this was the savings on the unit.

Mr. Chair:

I understand

John:

Because I don't think I'd be doing my due diligence if I didn't bring it to the council and say we can get a unit at last year's price is over what we were going to pay for it down the road when we need it. So that's one of the reasons why I brought it forward.

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Ab:

And here wanted to say something. Y.

Speaker 53:

Yeah, I wanted to just say that I think we need to look at the two units individually as to the functionality. So sweeping unit, the one that is being proposed right now does a totally different job compared to the one that we've already brought up. Now if we delay the purchase, I mean I talked to John and Max about this purchase at this particular point in time and the reason I said I'm okay with it was because I first of all wanted to get him those savings.

But the more important thing is that the availability of the unit later on might take a year or two. In the meantime, what we are going to do to the unit that we already have, which is the back unit that we will be compromising, its sufficiency by the way we are going to use it because even if we pick up manually big items in front of it, but the dirt and the mess that's going to go in, which can be swept up by the sweeper, will clog up and will reduce the efficiency of the machine and the life of that machine. So that's why I told John that if we can get these two together, it will be a much better program to implement than something that we use one right now and then buy another one in a couple of years and then try to make it work.

Mr. Chair:

I think it's a great idea like you said, but like I mentioned, the main problem that we have in the city is not in the main streets. It's in the front yards and in the parks And I think it needs different way of cleaning.

Speaker 53:

I totally agree with you and I think the city is trying to address that through the court department and what we have done is we have hired a few more part-time court officers who are working on improving enforcement of the city courts to make sure that the way the citizens live in the city, they need to be conditioned to take care of the city and the court enforcement department needs to make sure that that is being done and I think the city is working in that direction as well. That's why we hired three different, three more offices on part-time basis to implement. We're doing all of that, but I just wanted to make sure that we make this city loop as clean and as nicer as we can.

Aus:

Mr. Amir, I'm sorry to interrupt you but Mr. Mayor, I think it's getting really late. Less minimize the discussion. I think majority elected official, whatever you believe that if you want to buy it and purchase it, if it's not then let's vote it out because yeah, it's just

Osa:

Give 30 seconds. Sure.

Mr. Chair:

Okay, go ahead.

Osa:

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Almost John, we are getting one vehicle already in the order and another vehicle you want to try to buy to but if we don't have a surplus, we do not buy this vehicle. Am I right? If we do not have a surplus budget, you do not bring this vehicle on the agenda. Am I right?

John:

We have the money. Yeah.

Osa:

If I don't have a last 12, 13 years, we don't have a street sweeping. Let's try with one of those and let's see the how working with this we have a more important thing for the street area and sidewalk in my opinion at least we don't have the last couple of years. None been sweeping. Let's start with the one of those things and how many times are we going to sweeping the street per week, per month or yearly? Sometimes.

John:

No, quite a bit. It's going to be on a regular program at least once every couple weeks. On the side streets before we were doing the residence was once a year and then we were doing Joseph Campo about once a week. But the plan on putting in place, it's going to be done quite a bit.

Speaker 53:

I was a little apprehensive the first two because my first words to them were We didn't get the first one.

John:

Yet and I didn't know, to be honest with you, I didn't know that these units were on a backlog, Ross. I would've proposed this whole plan differently when I first approached the council, I would've on backward.

Osa:

I like to use this chunk money sidewalk.

Mr. Chair:

I said I support this and I think it's a great idea, but I'm very cautious about getting them the second one before we try the first one to see how effective it is and just to be safe and focused on priorities. I would support it for next year. I mean that's my opinion.

John:

I'd appreciate that.

Mr. Chair:

And it's up to the council. I mean vote. Well if I get a vote, yeah, we can get a vote. We can vote.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Councilman?

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Aus:

No.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Simi.

Speaker 49:

I can't agree with the council.

Mr. Chair:

Yes Or no?

Speaker 49:

It's your decision. I like to agree. Yes. F is not from this year's from Del party.

Mr. Chair:

So he's saying this year, yes or no. He's asking for this one. This all So yes, this Year. Yes or no?

Speaker 49:

No.

Mr. Chair:

Okay, Cool.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Chari?

Ab:

I would Say no.

Speaker 51:

Councilman Moosa.

Osa:

Thank you. No.

Speaker 51:

Councilman five?

Fai:

No.

Speaker 51:

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Mr. Mayor. Resolution 0.2 78 fails. Thank you.

Mr. Chair:

Hold on. Sorry, John. Please. Yeah. Next is resolution 2023 dash 79 a approving contract extension of the 2022 Alley reconstruction program. Motion.

Osa:

Second,

Speaker 47:

Mr. Mayor, we have Tiffany from he C who lasted all this time as well. I thank

Tiffany:

You. In

Speaker 47:

Short, this is the contractor that's already rock and rolling in rallies. We're hoping to keep him here to move right into the next phase.

Tiffany:

Yeah, so he provided a letter stating that he'd hold 2022 pricing for the contract extension. So it was our recommendation to proceed with the contract Extension for him for This next year for clean alleys. That's good price and saves time.

Fai:

Okay.

Osa:

This year, how many alleys we are doing?

Fai:

Excuse me, I received three big signature for the area, for the alley between Roosevelt and Yes, it's very bad. We need to add this location for this year.

Tiffany:

So we have our first three alley selected right now

Fai:

And

Tiffany:

We're finalizing that list and I know that area's on there, so we'll see where that falls in the list and everything. We've tried to contain everybody's Concerns.

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Fai:

I know, but some of them is still, if they wait for a next year's still, okay, but some of them is very bad. We're

Tiffany:

Trying to get at least 20 Or so on the list of where we know we're headed next. And we're going to Prioritize those 20 Of what's the top, Top ones instead of just from Roosevelt?

Speaker 49:

Start from Holbrook all the way down to council. So you have the whole strip of the south.

Fai:

I like to do The whole thing, I like to do the whole thing, but now we get some location very bad and very hardworking for the whole area. Schoolboard,

Osa:

Just Musk, Ali Musk, those side. Also on opposite side also. Both are very mass

Fai:

Done. The one next one, one.

Osa:

But those need to be, it

Fai:

All depends on the resources. We get the money for someone. There's

Mr. Chair:

Hope, we get.

PART 7 OF 8 ENDS [04:05:04]

Speaker 55:

... of the Resources. We get the money.

Speaker 56:

That one was the [inaudible 04:05:03] for someone.

Speaker 55:

There's hope we get some more money and we'll fix them all, hopefully.

Speaker 57:

We go in, [inaudible 04:05:08] we're going to get [inaudible 04:05:09] .

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Speaker 58:

Question, which alleys are you? I know we work on homes. Which other L's are we doing right now?

Speaker 59:

So right now they're doing the ones behind the mosques at Connect and Joseph Campo.

Speaker 58:

Okay.

Speaker 59:

So basically that T intersection is being completed as we speak. We're hoping to move right into... right behind PNC, which would be the North Connect between Mitchell and Joseph Campo. And then shoot North in the East Joseph Compo Alley taking it all the way to Comer.

Our thought process is if we can do that now prior to the Labor Day Festival at the end of the year, we can showcase where we're heading with this. And that's a very, very high trafficked alley. We have PNC, we have [inaudible 04:05:45], we have Main Street. We have [inaudible 04:05:47]. I mean it's one of the most trafficked alleys in Michigan.

Speaker X:

[inaudible 04:05:51].

Yeah, it's bad.

Speaker 58:

No, no. It's really bad. I know.

Speaker 61:

But look, when we do between BNC and all the way down north, those six, seven block alley. We talk for one block alley between Roosevelt and Goodson. When we do the other one between PNC and all the way down to Kasmir or Comar, offer six block alley.

If we did this year, it's like three block alley, is going to be enough, is working for the possible for the whole area. Tha for 20 years, nobody did anything.

Speaker 58:

An echo to Councilman [inaudible 04:06:26] where residents in the south end or south side, they think we're just ignoring them. Where, "They're making me out..." It's mostly on that side. It's like we're being ignored where the business area is being done.

Speaker 56:

If we did one place, everybody's going to be happy.

Speaker 58:

And that's how it looks. So how can we explain to our residents who live in that neighborhood who voted for us and say, "Oh, they're going to come to you." So when are they going to call?

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So I think if we're able to divide... Instead of continuing from PNC all the way down to Carpenter, if we were able to fix at least one side on that side, I think at least that can let ease people on emailing us or calling us. "Hey, how come we're not... We're not even [inaudible 04:07:09]." So hopefully you guys could-

Speaker 59:

So we're hoping if the stars aligned to rip right into all of those really fast.

Speaker 56:

So I think we can talk about the list, but now are we happy with the contractor or not? Should we extend contract?

Speaker 62:

Main topic. The contract we are talking about.

Speaker 61:

Oh, okay. So I think we can go ahead and vote.

Speaker 62:

Yeah, let's go and vote down because...

Speaker 56:

Yeah, it's a long night.

Speaker 63:

Councilman [inaudible 04:07:39] Mary?

Speaker 56:

Aye. Yes.

Speaker 63:

Councilman [inaudible 04:07:40]?

Speaker 59:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Councilman Chari?

Councilman Chari:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

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Councilman Musa?

Councilman Musa:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Councilman Rafi?

Councilman Rafi:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Mayor... Resolution 2379. Approved.

Speaker 56:

Oh, okay. Thank you. Next one is Resolution 2023, thank you, dash 80. Approving the pressures of end installation of new carpet and tile flooring throughout City Hall.

Speaker 57:

Motion

Speaker X:

Me again.

Speaker 57:

Motion.

Councilman Group:

Second.

I'll second.

Speaker 64:

Mr. Mayor, we have John here to talk about this one again, I supported this one a lot more. Plus our judge is going to be doing a big portion of the court with this as well. So there's a lot of carpet in City Hall that we don't necessarily see that's in pretty bad shape. We recognize the first floor is pretty good, the rest of it isn't.

Speaker 56:

How about the council hall? This one city council?

Speaker 64:

This is in it.

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Speaker 57:

I know the judge is [inaudible 04:08:25].

Speaker 59:

Most all of City Hall is in it. A lot of the... Our side of... The court side is I think 125 or 130,000 should come out of the building fund. I think what we have front of is 110. It's about a hundred.

Speaker 60:

We also note that we're trying to get good quality carpet this time, because know we're going to have it for a while.

Speaker 59:

Yeah, these are carpet tiles. So if they dump coffee and stain the tile, we can pull the tile up and replace it and they won't get these runs that we have currently in a lot of the offices, we have a lot of trip hazards. And big portion of that expense is the whole second floor for the police department.

Their locker rooms are... they're down to concrete. They got tiles flying all over the place, it's really horrendous. So I think 58 or \$59,000 of .loan is just the police department.

Speaker 65:

I know the court is desperate for new flooring and the judge is... It's really important for her to...

Speaker 61:

Okay. All right. I don't think [inaudible 04:09:24]-

Speaker 56:

What do you think about... I'm sorry, Mr. Miller. What do you think about those 30, 40 years guarantee? What is it called? Eliminate floor?

Speaker 59:

Well, a part of the changes I've made would say is where there's kitchenettes in the different departments, instead of putting carpet in those areas we're doing vinyl plank flooring. So it can be cleaned.

Most all but the courtroom is going to be vinyl plank. And then the bathrooms in the police department locker rooms, that's going to be all new vinyl plank.

Speaker 66:

How about the council chamber?

Speaker 59:

Council chamber's carpet. You want carpet here because of the noise?

Speaker X:

Yeah. And you have too much echo when you [inaudible 04:10:01].

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Speaker 59:

Too much echo. If you don't have the carpet.

Speaker 67:

Are you planning to do anything like entrance when we enter to the city hall?

Speaker 59:

I looked at that, I have proposals for that. I think that's going to tie into probably another proposal that you'll see me on for the front of the building. Because we're going to plan on doing a whole new [inaudible 04:10:15].

Speaker 68:

No, this should add this when we enter to the city. Like it's [inaudible 04:10:19].

Speaker 63:

Classic tile flooring the...

Speaker 68:

I think it should put the tiles on.

Speaker 59:

There is for... That's simple. But we originally had the dispatch here, we took that out because it's just going to get too complicated.

Speaker 60:

But right where we get in the front doors [inaudible 04:10:32].

Speaker 59:

Yeah. That's in there.

Speaker 61:

First appearance only make big difference.

Speaker 59:

That's a different type of tile too that's designed for industrial area. So it takes a lot more to use it.

Speaker X:

Now because we're talking about the front door. That front door needs to get fixed. It's hard to open.

Speaker 59:

It's designed that way. If you just touch it will start to open by itself. It's an assisted door.

Speaker X:

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The first main door in the beginning?

Speaker 59:

Yeah.

Speaker 69:

I thought the same thing. But all you got to do is touch it, barely pull on it and it opens automatically for you. You're trying to open it completely with by yourself.

Speaker X:

You just have to pull a little bit, it'll start to open. Yeah.

It opens easier.

When I was coming, someone hit him, so.

Speaker 56:

I think Council-

Speaker 59:

And the carpet's going to be, it's not going to be all one time because obviously we've got to move furniture around, move offices around. We may have tile issues with asbestos in it we have to mitigate. There's a lot of different things that can pop up.

So I don't want to tear everything out one weekend and say, "Uh oh. Now we got a big problem."

Speaker 70:

We need tomorrow after the carpet to come the new issue? For anything?

Speaker X:

We want to discuss everything tonight.

Speaker 70:

[inaudible 04:11:44] for anything we need to fix outside.

Speaker 56:

Long night.

Speaker 70:

It is going to come tomorrow or, "We need to change this. We need to change the other one."

Speaker 55:

All right. I think we have-

Speaker 63:

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[inaudible 04:11:55] in the carpet.

Speaker 55:

... just talk about the carpet. We applied for this project with Congressman Sherry to fix the whole City Hall. So hopefully we get something from [inaudible 04:12:04].

Speaker X:

Uh-huh. We'll buy a new place.

Speaker 55:

But anyways... Yeah, I don't think they should disappoint you in this one. So we can get going and vote.

Speaker 63:

Councilman El Samiri?

Councilman El Samiri:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Councilman [inaudible 04:12:23].

Speaker X:

Yes.

Speaker 60:

Councilman Rafi?

Councilman Rafi:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Councilman Musa?

Councilman Musa:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Councilman Chari?

Speaker 55:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

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Mr. Mayor. Resolution 2380 approved.

Speaker 56:

Thank you.

Speaker 59:

So one out of two ain't bad.

Speaker 56:

All right, thank you.

Speaker X:

See, we still like you John.

Speaker 56:

Thank you. The last one, resolution 2023 dash 81 approving the contract award for tasers and technology purchased to Axon Enterprise.

Group:

Motion.

Second.

Speaker 59:

Mr. Mayor, we have the chief here to speak on it. I just want to reface that though. We heard a bunch of comments about, "Oh we don't need tasers, this and that and the other." But tasers are a less lethal option before we transition to a finger arm that could potentially kill someone.

I mean, a taser is designed to stun somebody to take them into custody a lot easier. So this is a tool that should help us reduce risk and problem.

Mayor:

What is taser? I'm sorry.

Speaker 71:

I don't know what the acronym for it exactly is anymore. But it's basically... It looks like gun, it's shaped like a gun but it essentially shoots two darts out.

Speaker X:

He has one on, Sergeant.

Speaker 72:

Would you like to demonstrate, sergeant?

Mayor:

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No, no.

Speaker 72:

Can we test it on Max?

Max:

I've been tazed.

Speaker 61:

I've been tazed too.

Speaker 72:

Oh yeah, I forgot.

Speaker 55:

You want to try it?

Mayor:

Okay, so I mean how much is each one? It's like a large amount.

Speaker 73:

It's a lot. The total amount is a lot because you're looking at a bunch of different things. You're looking at training cartridges, which are included. You're looking at some training options that are included. You're looking at what they call the evidence.com storage for the data for the tasers.

This program gives us... In five years they will outfit us with new tasers. So that's part of this program as well. So that's why the cost looks a little higher. But if you've got a lot of different things that are included, like I said, different cartridges, the dock, the bay, the storage, the carrying holsters, things like that, that are all included in this battery pack-

Speaker 60:

Are there cameras on these too? I forget.

Speaker 73:

These are not. But these... And that was part of the reason why we went with Axon without going out to bid because they do have a single source vendor letter that they included with this that allows us to integrate those with our body cameras. So if a taser is pulled, it will activate their body camera if they had to jump out on something and maybe didn't have a chance to activate it.

So that is part of it. It's all integrated with evidence.com, which is what we use for the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. So that's part of this program as well. So everything kind of... We already purchased the Axon body cameras, so these are all integrated together and that was why we chose to stay with Axon.

Speaker 60:

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We're also heading towards the INCAR cameras as well-

Speaker 73:

Correct, yes.

Speaker 60:

To integrate with these.

Speaker 73:

So you will hopefully see that.

Speaker 60:

So the hope is that everything is perfectly integrated. And to be Truthful, Axon's got a monopoly on this.

Speaker 73:

They do. They're one of the few [inaudible 04:15:27].

Speaker 60:

They really good job. It's the leader in the industry.

Speaker 73:

Yeah, they're one of the few ones that actually make the tasers. So the cost of 146,996, seems large at once but like I said, it's got a lot of options come with it. It can be spread out over five years if we chose to do it that way. Or we can pay it all up front.

And I will include that this does not come from general fund money, this comes from already existing narcotic forfeiture fund money that we're allowed to spend for law enforcement.

Mayor:

Oh, okay. So it's not from general? Okay, all right.

Speaker 73:

It's not from general fund. We can only purchase law enforcement equipment with them.

Speaker 56:

I was going to say that this is not coming from the general fund.

Speaker 73:

All right, sounds good.

Speaker 56:

Even though, I mean we haven't approved anything for the police department. What we did for [inaudible 04:16:09].

All right.

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Speaker 66:

146,000. How many equipment?

Speaker 56:

35.

Speaker 63:

Are we voting?

Speaker 56:

So one thing, we were paying once or we were spreading out to the five years?

Speaker 60:

Once. Once.

Speaker 72:

We'll probably just pay it all off once.

Speaker 56:

Yeah. okay. I just want to clarify.

Speaker 72:

[inaudible 04:16:30] more things and then I don't have to say, "I don't have any money."

Speaker 56:

Thank you, Chief.

Speaker 72:

All right.

Speaker 63:

Councilman Chabi?

Councilman Chabi:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Councilman Rafi?

Councilman Rafi:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

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Councilman Musa?

Councilman Musa:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Councilman Hamud?

Councilman Hamud:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Councilman El Samiri?

Councilman El Samiri:

Yes.

Speaker 63:

Mr. Mayor. Resolution 2381. Approved.

Speaker 73:

Thank you.

Speaker 56:

All right. So done with the new business. Move to the reports. Reports. And it's getting too late so I'm going to make it very short. The mail report, not much. Just want to thank everyone who attended the meeting tonight and those who send their comments by email. It's been a long meeting, almost five hours. So thank you all for sharing your concerns.

And like I said earlier, we will make sure that we serve everyone equally and with no discrimination, we'll be available to protect every citizen in the city of [inaudible 04:17:29]. But regardless of their religious or political or sexual orientation, whatever they believe in, everyone is free to practice their own views and beliefs.

So yeah, regardless of the result of the outcome of the resolution, I thank also the city council members for staying and attending, all of them, full house tonight. That's what we want in every meeting. And thank you again. And other activities that usually I mentioned my report, there have been so many events in the past two weeks; attending graduations, speaking in graduations, meetings.

I cannot remember all of them, but we have been very active in the past two weeks. And that's all for me. Mr. [inaudible 04:18:23] left, so there is no report for him. City Council, anyone would like to say anything? Councilman Rafi?

Councilman Rafi:

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I want to thank everybody that showed up here today, especially the ones that stayed until right now with us here. It's great to be back. It's been a long vacation for me and it's been... I got surprised by this long meeting as I got back.

But I'm happy to be back and hopefully the city will continue progressing to a better city. And thank you to my colleagues. [inaudible 04:18:57]. And try to work in a way making the city a beautiful city. Thank you.

Speaker 56:

Thank you so much. And I forget to welcome you back to your hometown.

Councilman Rafi:

[inaudible 04:19:07] hours now.

Speaker 56:

Thank you. Anyone else? Yes, Councilman Chari?

Councilman Chari:

Yes. Just real quick, briefly. I will go. I wanted to thank everyone who showed up today, and I'd like to acknowledge Brother [inaudible 04:19:25] is still here and Brother Abdulaziz and Mr. Bill Myers, Mr. Gary and then Brother-

Speaker 74:

Hassan.

Councilman Chari:

Hassan. And Lean Blassey, right here. You're staying with us until this end, thank you so much and appreciate you all made a comment today. And this is the community that is thriving to everybody's equality and rights. So that's all I wanted to say. But thank you so much.

Group:

Thank you.

Thank you, thank you.

Speaker X:

Thank you Mr. Mayor. Thank you. Or welcome back Mr. [inaudible 04:20:00]. You left your community. We have lot to do when you left, but we missed you. Welcome back. I want to congratulate all of our high school gradouters. And I just want to remind you that now you turn 18 officially so you can really start for vote. Make sure, participate on election. Your vote is your voice. And we want you guys to come forward and take the lead of the city one day.

And also, I just want to say there's no division or ethnicity. I know some people say they have fear to live in this community. Our friends, they are transgender or LGBTQ. You all have right to live free in this community. It's a free... I mean, it's a great community, [inaudible 04:20:46] mentioned.

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So I don't see any fear to live in our community and I want to thank you all... Both side people that are coming in and express their concern. And thank you everyone again. Have a good night.

Speaker 66:

Mr. Chair?

Speaker 56:

Yes, Councilman [inaudible 04:21:02]?

Speaker 66:

Thank you very much. We have a big agenda and we have an issue. A lot of people come in for the support and somebody opposed this flag issue. I hope those people don't get afraid. You will feel free, the way you live in there before, same way you live in there. And I urge police and all of our city officials, please look forward. If there were any issue, solve this issue, let us know. They'll be free. Treat them every equally.

And last two weeks ago, especially Memorial Weekend, are on honorable ambassadors from Washington, DC, Bangladeshi ambassador. He come to visit our cities, have a great time with him, a couple hours. And he come with the reason we live in almost 100,000 people in Michigan, Bangladeshi community, people, only the embassy service there. Some reason we are not getting the Department Embassy at this moment.

But Washington, DC who serve this community for, they're going to be coming two times a year. So I hope they're coming this summer. I need city council and city official helps too if they're coming, everything was safe and secure. We had a bad experience last time. Mr. City Manager Max knows, and he knows also. And I hope you're going to come into serve the community. Thank you very much to everybody. Still, 11:30 you're hear. Thank you Sha. Thank you everybody.

Speaker 56:

Thank you. Anything?

Speaker X:

[inaudible 04:22:46] left.

Welcome [inaudible 04:22:49] coming back.

Speaker 75:

And today I am happy to see everyone in Hamtramck To folks, something, the issue to make Hamtramck some bad, people they speak what he want. All the resident, I am happy to see everyone come to the city. And I'm happy to respect all my community what he want. That's what we do. Respect all the community. Something to make the city safe. Make the city better.

Welcome everyone to come Hamtramck. Live here, business, everything. We going to work in with him, the matter who. And thank you for [inaudible 04:23:29], they take long time today and [inaudible 04:23:32]. Thank you, everybody.

Speaker X:

Okay, thank you. Thank you. And so is there any report for the financial officer?

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Speaker 75:

Yep.

Speaker 55:

Mr. Mayer, unless you have specific questions for our controller [inaudible 04:23:46]?

Speaker X:

CFO? Are you sure?

You sure?

Not really.

But I just want to clarify something. I think maybe there was some misconception about the street sweeper, I think. The street sweeper that we bought earlier, it didn't come from the general fund, it came from the road fund. And even this one was going to come from the road fund and not the general fund. The problem is that we can do alleys from the road fund. It's just not allowed.

I explored that issue with the ACT 51 people and department transportation, and they said, "No, you can't do. Alleys are not allowed under the road farm unless until they are streets." So the street sweeper program is coming through the road money and not the general fund. Just wanted to [inaudible 04:24:36].

Speaker 59:

Think it's interesting about that though, if you wanted, we may be able to convert the alleys into their own if you want to call them-

Speaker X:

Streets.

Speaker 59:

I'd have to look into the law.

Speaker X:

No, there is a whole process for it that you have to go through and get it approved from the Department of Transportation.

Speaker 59:

I see.

Speaker X:

And it's not something that you can naturally just do it. You have to follow and go through a process I think. But I just wanted to clarify the street sweeper money, it was not coming from the general fund. There was no issue in terms of whether we have surplus fund or not. It wasn't going to affect the general fund.

Speaker X:

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So the road fund, we can use it for side streets, right?

Speaker X:

Road funds are used for major roads as well as local roads. So all... Both these major roads and local roads are defined and registered with the Department of Transportation. So only those roads can be any resurfacing saying any maintenance, anything on those roads can be done through the Act 51 money.

Mayor:

Okay. All right. Thank you so much for clarification. City Manager, do you have anything?

City Manager:

[inaudible 04:25:49] forgo anything today, Mayor.

Mayor:

All right. All right, thank you. And so next one is the public comments. Again, is there?

Speaker 63:

123?

Mayor:

Are you serious?

Speaker X:

Don't scare us.

Speaker 63:

Let's see.

Speaker 66:

Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair.

Speaker X:

Lynn is tired. Bill is tired.

Mayor:

I'll look at it.

Speaker X:

Anybody outside?

Speaker 76:

Hello again, mayor and council. First of all I'd like to congratulate Gary. I think he's a great candidate for the beautification commission. He attended the meeting before he was appointed to figure out what

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was going on and really made an informed decision about wanting to engage in community service at that level. So welcome Gary.

And relating to... I also would like to congratulate [inaudible 04:26:52] for the approval to make the addition on her home. I think that's a really great program. I'm glad to see that more and more residents are having the options to buy the neighboring lots and build on their own properties.

I do have to say that I disagree with your decision on resolution 2023 78. I think that because this was a long meeting, there wasn't time to listen to our controller before a decision was made and really see that the funds were coming from something that's not out of our surplus and was within budget. And because of that decision, I have a concern about inflation.

Everything, all prices are going up. Crazy rates right now. We could have saved \$60,000 just on the unit itself, and instead we're going to have to pay more later. There's no guarantee, one, there'll be available if it is when we want [inaudible 04:27:54] have another month. And then also there's the added expense of the maintenance on our existing equipment plus the manual labor for employees and increased the risk of injury making workers' comp, which could also cost more.

And lastly, related to the flag issue. There were some comments made that said that only national flags have been flown and that the pride flag was the first non-national flag that's been flown and that is incorrect. I really encourage counsel to pay attention to the details to... we can get records of every flag that's been flown over the years. The very second year this resolution was passed, the Sicilian flag was allowed to be flown. That is not a nation, that is not a country.

The Cherokee Nation flag has been flying for several years. The African Union flag has been flying for many years. With the currently approved resolution, those flags are no longer allowed to be flown. And that is cutting out certain demographics of our community that have been marginalized for several years, decades, centuries.

And so I just really encourage you to pay really close attention to the language that's used in resolutions. Make sure that you're questioning, researching and making sure that you're making as informed decisions as possible. Thank you.

Mayor:

Thank you. So that was one of the violations that the former government did to fly some groups. While the resolution clearly said, "Nations." So they abused their power. What can we do? We weren't there at that time, but it shouldn't be the norm for our future decisions. Yeah, continue.

Speaker X:

Okay, [inaudible 04:29:42]?

Speaker 77:

And Simon, you in public act is... You know the emails that the clerk was reading today, it was ridiculous. I'm asking for you guys to sit there and do a motion to deny any email for the clerk to read a hundred and something? This is ridiculous. Nobody should sit there and do emails. You got concerns, you come to city council. You don't cut the city council, you ain't got to talk.

There's no need for her to sit there, 100 and 200 and 300 papers sitting there. We're sitting there just for hours. What time is it right now? 11:43, people got families to go to. By the time I get home it's going to be one o'clock in the morning. This is ridiculous. I've never seen something like this. And then they want sit there and say about the flag.

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Nobody said we're going to sit here and put the Lebanese flag. Nobody said we're going to put the Iraqi flag. Nobody said we're going to put any flag. No flag should be put but the American flag. This is America, we're here. We love America and this is the only flag we represent. You don't see me putting the Trump flag because I support Trump.

And I'm going to say it nice and clear. I used to be a Democrat. Ever since they put the book issue, I became a full Republican. And I tell somebody something, that I will never, ever in my life vote for a Democrat because of the situation regarding the books and [inaudible 04:31:19] our children. Thank you. Have a great night. And be safe. Thank you, [inaudible 04:31:25].

Group:

Thank you, brother.

Speaker 77:

Have a good night.

Speaker 63:

Mr. Bill Moyer.

Mr. Bill Moyer:

Yep. Okay, so why didn't we have a controller come up when you were talking about that issue? I mean that would've been nice. This was all the sell job. These guys were coming up selling you things and you had to buy it. And I mean even our city manager was a former chief of police. He helped you... convinced you to buy the tasers and he knows all about it. It's a sell job, is what it is.

A better seller, you're going to get it whether we need it or not. You're going the guy who sells it, that's good. I'm not saying we don't need it, I'm just saying. All right. So anyways. Yes, I have something here. Okay, so I want to commend... Oh, first of all, I got to talk to the mayor when you talk. So tell the councilman welcome back. I'm really glad that while Kelly was back with us.

Speaker X:

Thank you, Bill.

Speaker 63:

Did you just say you're glad you came out?

Mr. Bill Moyer:

What's that?

Speaker 63:

I'm just kidding.

Mr. Bill Moyer:

Okay. So I commend you all for your patience, and what will I say? Patience, I guess is the word, and sanity. Listening to... Going through all that long list of attacks, there was some hateful and disrespectful

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speech going on here. Lots of threats being thrown out at the Council, being called Hitlers or being called ignorant imbecile that are idiots that don't know what you're doing.

And that was the compliments. Most all Muslims were against the issue. I mean, were against the flag. And most of the binary non-binary community was for, it was good. It was obvious where people were at. It shouldn't be that way. We should all be together so [inaudible 04:33:10]. But not allowing certain flags to fly in hamtramck will change. Oh, really?

Speaker 63:

I was holding it up for 10 seconds, so speak fast.

Mr. Bill Moyer:

Okay. So it's not going to change anybody's mind about the issue. I mean, whether you have a flag or not, to be honest. If you want to work together, we'll work together. Flag doesn't make difference. But what we need is positive personal interaction between that [inaudible 04:33:37]. I ask for another minute.

Speaker X:

Ask the Mayor.

Mayor:

Go ahead.

Speaker 66:

Thanks. So we need Muslims helping gays when they're in trouble. We need gays helping, working in the Muslim community so that we... In commissions, I think we're trying to do that. We're working together. And once we all, maybe some from the LGBTQIA 2S [inaudible 04:33:55] community, we will come up and run for office someday and we'll be part of you and everything will get better and better. So that's what we're working for.

I don't think this issue made anything worse. I really think it was a problem in the first place because they didn't realize this commission overstepped their bounds and we know that. I was a chair of the Human Rights Commission, I know that whole history. And I can tell you I was the first one that as far as I know, to bring a gay person into the commission and two meetings later, he helped, he colluded with the mayor to fire me. So I mean that's how that worked out.

I want to say that the most difficult challenge we all have is to find a way to live with people you don't agree with. I don't think... We have to use peace, justice of all. One more thing.

Speaker 63:

Five seconds.

Speaker 66:

They're not all international flags. You have an MIA POWMIA flag up there ,that's not an international flooding and it's controversial. That should not be [inaudible 04:34:46].

Speaker 63:

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Thank you Bill. Appreciate it. Mr. Mayor, that's all [inaudible 04:34:51].

Mayor:

All right, thank you so much guys. And now we move to a closed session.

Group:

Motion.

Second. Second.

Mayor:

Thank you, guys.

PART 8 OF 8 ENDS [04:35:15]

EXHIBIT 5

RESOLUTION 2023-XX
RESOLUTION REMOVING RUSS GORDON AND CATHY STACKPOOLE FROM HUMAN RELATIONS
COMMISSION

WHEREAS, on July 9th, 2023, two members of the Human Relations Commission, Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole, did intentionally violate the laws of the City of Hamtramck by flying a flag in contravention of Resolution 2023-82; and

WHEREAS, in order to maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law, the City must act to remove Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole from the Human Relations Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck, Wayne County, Michigan, that Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole be immediately removed from their membership on the board of the Human Relations Commission to be replaced by candidates appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council at a later date.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HAMTRAMCK, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN THIS 11th DAY OF JULY 2023.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Rana Faraj
City Clerk

EXHIBIT 6

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Mr. Mayor:

We're ready? Okay. Good evening everyone. I call this meeting of Hamtramck City Council to order. Today is July 11th, 2023 and it's 7:02 PM. Will the clerk call the rolls, please?

Clerk:

Councilman, Refai?

Councilman Refai:

Present.

Clerk:

Councilman Musa?

Councilman Musa:

Present.

Clerk:

Councilman Choudhury?

Councilman Choudhury:

Yes, present.

Clerk:

Councilman Mahmood?

Councilman Mahmood:

Yes, ma'am.

Clerk:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Councilman Alsomiri:

Yeah, present.

Clerk:

Councilman Hassan.

Councilman Hassan:

Present.

Clerk:

The mayor's present. Mr. Mayor, we have a quorum.

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Mr. Mayor:

Thank you. Let's rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

All right. There's supposed to be an announcement section before proclamations, right?

Clerk:

Yeah, but I don't think we had any announcements in there.

Mr. Mayor:

Do we have any I...?

City Manager:

I don't have any to add to it.

Mr. Mayor:

You don't have any? I think I have one, I received a text message from Islamic Center of Hamtramck, they're having a grand opening of the new Islamic Center in Joseph Campau and they are inviting all the city council and staff and city manager and everybody to join them. It's on Sunday, 16th July at 9:00 PM. So they just wanted me to deliver that.

Councilman Refai:

Thank you Mayor.

Mr. Mayor:

Thank you. We'll move to proclamations, recognitions and presentation, we don't have any of those? No. Okay. Additions and deletions to the agenda.

Councilman Hassan:

Mr. Chair?

Mr. Mayor:

Yes.

Councilman Hassan:

I'd like to add a couple of resolutions to that. Excuse me. I'd like to add under new business, one resolution. It should be D. Resolution Removing Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole From Human Relations Commission, Resolution 2023-99.

Clerk:

Correct.

Councilman Hassan:

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Yeah. 99. So that, and also I'd like to add another resolution.

Clerk:

We'd have to add one at a time.

Atlas K:

Okay, we do.

Councilman Musa:

Second.

Mr. Mayor:

All right.

Clerk:

Discussion? No.

Councilman Hassan:

No.

Clerk:

Okay. Councilman Refai?

Councilman Refai:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Musa?

Councilman Musa:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Choudhury?

Councilman Choudhury:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Mahmood?

Councilman Mahmood:

Yes.

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Clerk:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Councilman Alsomiri:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Hassan?

Councilman Hassan:

Yes.

Clerk:

Mr. Mayor, Resolution 2023-99 added to new business D.

Councilman Hassan:

Mr Chair. Next one. E. Resolution 2023-100, Resolution to Rescind Authority of Human Relations Commission to Maintain and Fly Flags on City Property.

Councilman Choudhury:

Second.

Speaker 1:

Speak up, please.

Councilman Hassan:

Our lead speaker.

Mr. Mayor:

Yes, it's Resolution to Rescind Authority of Human Relations Commission to Maintain and Fly Flags on City Property, which means it will remove the authority of the Human Relations Commission-

Councilman Hassan:

We'll discuss under that resolution.

Speaker 1:

Can you please speak up?

Clerk:

Do you want me to read the title?

Mr. Mayor:

You can, but she's not going to understand it.

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Clerk:

Okay. The first resolution that was passed is Resolution Removing Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole From Human Relations Commission.

Speaker 1:

Oh, I didn't even hear that.

Councilman Hassan:

Excuse me.

Clerk:

Second, the second one.

Mr. Mayor:

Okay. You can speak up, it's no discussion though.

Councilman Hassan:

Excuse me, mister. Go ahead.

Clerk:

Second resolution, Resolution to Rescind Authority of Human Relations Commission to Maintain and Fly Flags on City Property.

Councilman Hassan:

Mr. Chair, third one.

Mr. Mayor:

We need to vote on this.

Councilman Choudhury:

Second. I second it.

Clerk:

Okay. Councilman Hassan?

Councilman Hassan:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Councilman Alsomiri:

Yes.

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Clerk:

Councilman Mahmood?

Councilman Mahmood:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Choudhury?

Councilman Choudhury:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Musa?

Councilman Musa:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Refai?

Councilman Refai:

Yes.

Clerk:

Mr. Mayor, Resolution 2023-100 added to new business E.

Mr. Mayor:

Okay. Thank you

Councilman Hassan:

Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mayor:

Go ahead.

Councilman Hassan:

I thought I had another one about the discussion.

City Manager:

That one. So there's one on there that's listed for just discussion, it's not really the resolution.

Councilman Hassan:

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Still I can put down-

City Manager:

You can just add a discussion to it, but I also ask kindly that someone sponsor, there is a third resolution for Approving Friends of Historic Hamtramck Stadium-

Councilman Hassan:

Yeah, somebody else going to do that one. Yep.

Councilman Refai:

Yeah, I'll do that.

Clerk:

Refai. Councilman Refai, I need a second.

Councilman Choudhury:

Second.

Clerk:

Well let me read it off. This resolution would be Resolution 2023-101.

Mr. Mayor:

Approving-

Councilman Hassan:

Yep.

Clerk:

And then this would be in New Business.

Councilman Hassan:

101.

Clerk:

And it is Resolution 2023-101, Approving Friends of Historical Hamtramck Stadium Special Events.

Councilman Choudhury:

Offer, seconded.

Clerk:

All right, vote. Councilman Hassan?

Councilman Hassan:

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Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Councilman Alsomiri:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Mahmood?

Councilman Mahmood:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Choudhury?

Councilman Choudhury:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Musa?

Councilman Musa:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Refai?

Councilman Refai:

Yes.

Clerk:

Mr. Mayor, Resolution 2023-101 is moving to new business, Letter F.

Councilman Refai:

Yes.

Mr. Mayor:

Thank you.

Councilman Hassan:

Mr. Chair, I had another one for discussion.

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City Manager:

Motion for discussion under new business.

Councilman Hassan:

Yeah.

Councilman Refai:

Second

Clerk:

One moment. I'm sorry, who seconded?

Councilman Hassan:

I'd like to make a motion.

Clerk:

A motion to add discussion for new business G.

Councilman Hassan:

Property tax. Yep.

Clerk:

And you'll be discussing property taxes.

Councilman Hassan:

Yes.

Mr. Mayor:

Yes.

Clerk:

Vote?

Mr. Mayor:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Musa?

Councilman Musa:

Yes.

Clerk:

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Councilman Mahmood?

Councilman Mahmood:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Hassan?

Councilman Hassan:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Councilman Alsomiri:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Choudhury?

Councilman Choudhury:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Refai?

Councilman Refai:

Yes.

Clerk:

Mr. Mayor, discussion was added to new business letter D for property tax discussion.

Mr. Mayor:

Mm-hmm.

Clerk:

I am assuming that's all for additional resolutions?

Mr. Mayor:

Yeah, that's all.

Councilman Refai:

Yes.

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Mr. Mayor:

All right, thank you. So we'll move to the public comment now.

Clerk:

I'm going to start with the in-person public comments first, just so that they don't get sort of drowned out with all the written.

Councilman Mahmood:

I think that's a good idea.

Clerk:

Yeah, me reading them. So Atlas K. Three minutes.

Atlas K:

One second. I am going to be sharing a statement from a Hamtramck resident and business owner. My name is Elizabeth Fonacier, I address you today through a messenger. I am a female business owner in Hamtramck, I worked very hard in life to gain the opportunity to own property and operate a business in this city.

This past weekend my private residence, above my business, was attacked by violent vandals. They threw eggs which exploded on my window causing siding damage and trauma. My 3.5 month old child slept away feet from the window that was attacked.

My mother was in another room and was terrified by the sound, which was so loud she thought was gunfire. All of this because I chose to fly a flag that represents my beliefs. This flag is on my private property over my public business. Most of my customers come to visit from outside Hamtramck, many of them are from as far away as Ann Arbor, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Ohio, Chicago, and sometimes even further.

I received national-

Clerk:

Atlas, I apologize. You were heard, but can you push the button on the mic please? Thank you.

Atlas K:

All right, for sure. Would you like me to start again?

Clerk:

No, you're good.

Atlas K:

Okay. For sure. Give me one second. Let me find my place. Most of my customers come to visit from outside Hamtramck, many of them are from as far away as Ann Arbor, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Ohio, Chicago, and sometimes further. I receive national recognition in the food and beverage industry for my products and services.

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Many people have asked me, "Why did you open in Hamtramck?" Why did I open here when I could have opened many other places that could have benefited my contributions and respected me and my clientele better? Because my grandmother grew up in Hamtramck, my friends live in Hamtramck, my heart is in Hamtramck, my child is growing up in Hamtramck and we are not going anywhere.

It is only going to reflect poorly on the city to disrespect its passionate and peaceful citizens when they ask for a safe place to live, worship, work and raise children. Thank you for your efforts and for listening to my statement. Thank you.

Mr. Mayor:

Thank you.

Clerk:

Josh Hansknect.

Josh Hansknect:

Hello, thank you for having me today. I'm here to talk to you about the recent uptick in hate crimes against the LGBTQ community. I am the president of the Hamtramck Queer Alliance and one of the things that we have been trying to do is keep track of all of the different instances of people shouting slurs across the street, people tearing down private property flags, egging houses like you've heard in the last statement.

And what I want you to understand is that the policy that you have passed, the one that is neutral, does not have a neutral impact on the citizens of your city. In particular, the most vulnerable citizens in your city. The minorities who are not accepted by the religious majority in this city.

The different crimes that have been happening in the city have been very concerning to the Hamtramck Queer Alliance, because we have seen a huge uptick in those crimes. Meaning before the ordinance was passed in 2023, we have had over five times as many reports for different events of people shouting things across the street or destroying property like we talked about.

And it is concerning to me how quickly the council is able to do things for their citizens when they think that something is important to do. In fact, they could get up on a Sunday morning or an afternoon and mobilize to make sure something happens, especially when their pride is involved, right?

But what doesn't seem to be happening is any sort of mobilization to protect this community based on the resolution that you have passed, that has had an impact on the safety of your residents. Thank you.

Clerk:

Thank you. Mike Petrack.

Mike Petrack:

Hello gentlemen, my name is Mike Petrack, I own Dos Locos Tacos and the building it's in. Been a resident of Hamtramck for 15 years. I am also the father of the child that was mentioned in the statement read by my friend, Atlas, on behalf of my partner.

I'm here today as a business owner, a resident, and a father to speak on behalf of one of the city's newest residents. Not here to chastise you for your beliefs, nor do I believe that anything I can say here would change them. I'm here to let you know just how close we came to tragedy Friday night.

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On Friday night, as my three-month-old daughter was asleep in her crib, two masked men threw a half dozen eggs at her home because there was a pride flag on display. Two of those eggs struck a window less than two feet from the crib she was sleeping in.

That window pane is an eighth of an inch thick. If it had broken, she would've been showered in shards of glass. Just let that sink in. Two adult men could have very easily maimed or killed an innocent child because they are unwilling to tolerate a different point of view.

Emboldened by the rhetoric coming from this esteemed body of government, they committed a premeditated string of acts of intimidation and destruction of property against multiple homes and businesses, all because they don't respect our right to free speech.

If you're truly against this despicable behavior, then you need to say it louder and more frequently. You need to step up and actually lead this community towards peace. The police department has been professional and receptive on this issue, but they have a tough job ahead and an example needs to be made of these perpetrators.

Mr. Mayor, as far as I'm concerned, it's your duty to speak at every Friday service in town until it stops. An eighth of an inch gentlemen, that's how close we came to a tragedy that would've made national news, forever tarnished your reputations and the reputation of the city. And eighth of an inch. Thank you.

Clerk:

Reverend Roland Stringfellow.

Rev Roland Stringfellow:

Good evening, Mr. Mayor, esteemed council. I'm Reverend Dr. Roland Stringfellow and I want to say first of all, I come in peace and I want to also talk about public safety, much of which has been stated tonight. But oftentimes as a faith leader, I understand the difference between protecting someone's religious freedom, which I'm all for, and then also protecting people's public and private safety.

And as elected officials, that's one of the things that I really encourage not only public officials but parents and anyone who may not quite understand someone else's sexuality or gender expression, to say that, "Even though, I may not understand or agree with you, I will stand up for your safety."

Especially those who have elected positions to stand up for safety. Today, when we all gathered, we stood up and we pledged allegiance to this flag and this flag is used to unite all of us together as Americans. And flags are indeed symbols and the pride flag is indeed a symbol that should create peace and not division.

One of the things I just really wanted to say that we're not talking about the right to fly a flag, we're talking about matters of life and death. Because when you share a particular say, "I'm for this or against that," it gives permission for people to say, "Oh, I'm against them too," and take it to extremes that you never would have imagined or intended.

But one of the things that I really do hope, as a faith leader and those who I represent in this community, is to say, please reconsider the policy in which you have enacted with your resolution. Recognizing that once it happened, what it did, it gave permission for people to act in very hateful and harmful ways.

Very last thing I wanted to say, when I heard all of you have been elected to the position that you are in, I was so very proud because to have men of color to stand when you generally don't see men of color in

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positions of leadership, that says a lot. And I just really want to say that as in your positions to stand for the safety of all individuals and not to do anything that will be divisive. Thank you again for your time.

Mr. Mayor:

Thank you sir.

Clerk:

Bill Meyer.

Bill Meyer:

Bill Meyer for OneHamtramck. I didn't know those two new resolutions were being put on the agenda so I was going to address it. Anyways, this is a subject that I'm very familiar with, as you probably know by now, I had been the chair of the Human Relations Commission for many years, five years.

It's no big deal to be removed from the Human Relations Commission because I was and I immediately started OneHamtramck, and we've done the work that we should have done with the Human Relations Commission but was stifled by the council and mayor at the time.

The mayor removed me, the council had choice of putting me back on the Human Relations Commission, but I chose not to go back on. Because I didn't want to work with the commission of the council that wasn't working in conjunction with the body that's supposed to represent the council in the city.

This Human Regulations Commission has fallen apart ever since I left there. They rarely have enough members to show up for a quorum. They have one major project since I left 15 years ago, it's a flag project, and that turned into a commercial thing where they have to have other people pay for it now and put up their own flags and it's turned into a totally counterproductive project.

And now we have these new issues with the pride flag on the flag pole. I know you all feel this way and I feel this way too, we have to protect everybody in the city and I know you want to do that. I have total concern about the statements that were made before this and you have to make sure everyone's protected in the city.

I don't know if it's your job to go out on the street and go knock people's doors, I think that's the police job, but you should show your face and speak publicly more, in defense of all the people who live in the city, that would be nice.

As far as the issue with the Human Relations Commission, I totally support you removing the people who are not working with the city because this is an organization that's supposed to be working with the city. Instead, I understand that, in defiance of the rule that you passed at that the last council meeting, they attempted to put a pride flag back up on the flag.

Which was in defiance of the rule of the city government, which is supposed to represent the majority of all the people in the city. So they actually committed a crime against the people of the city. Maybe a small segment really supported what they did and certainly we support that community but we don't support raising the flag anymore because that was already voted on.

It was illegal. So this says nothing against gay people or the LGBTQ community, it says against following the rules. I have to follow rules every day that I don't like, but I still follow them, unfortunately. I will always defend everyone that lives in this city to be treated equally and justly.

Let's all find a way to work together instead of coming here and doing disruptions like this, which divides people. The Human Relations Commission is supposed to bring people together, that's the purpose of

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the commission. They're not doing that, they haven't done anything. They put flags up, it's called [inaudible 00:21:30] let them do something positive. Thank you.

Clerk:

Thank you.

Mr. Mayor:

Thank you.

Clerk:

Michelle. I'm sorry, your last name?

Michelle Cameron:

Cammon.

Clerk:

Cammon.

Michelle Cameron:

Yes.

Clerk:

Welcome.

Michelle Cameron:

Hello, good evening. My name is Michelle Cammon and I am here to talk about the property taxes. A couple of months ago, I received this is not a tax bill, the change of the taxes value increased and/or decreased your tax bill for the year of this year, 2023, was approximately for \$90.

When I opened up my new tax bill, and this is... I'm speaking on behalf of myself and anybody else that's in my neighborhood because me and my aunt, Deborah Richards, that couldn't be here today, walked the streets and asked everybody did their taxes increase extremely this year, which they did.

When I opened up my tax bill, my tax bill was over \$300 more than it was last year. I'm trying to find out what is this court order that was on the property taxes? Why wasn't anybody in the city notified about this new court order on the taxes and will it be on there every year?

Also, I want to know what is the standard rate to assess the taxes. If I've been in my home for over 10 years, my taxes should not be raised up 200, 300 dollars every single year. It is not stable, it is not normal. I don't live in Farmington Hills, I don't live in Sterling Heights. I need a resolution and I'm also a plaintiff.

I also want to know are all the homeowners getting the same treatment or is there any difference or distinguish with the plaintiffs in the Garrett case and are we getting hit harder? Because this seems to me that by us getting these new homes and Hamtramck didn't have to pay a dime to build these homes, they're hitting the plaintiffs harder than anybody else in the city.

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And there's proof, online, you can see it is public records and they're doing it all over again. And also why is the taxes, why does that go up every year when the value of the houses are going down? And then assessor is not assessing the houses correctly either.

You can assess outside, but you're not going actually inside to see what the houses are, how many bedrooms there are, how many bathrooms. It's not accurate, and I can see this from public records online. So whoever is assessing these houses are not assessing them correctly.

We won again, a good fight and we'll win again, but we got to get down to the bottom of this because these taxes every year getting raised up high is ridiculous. We want to live too.

Mr. Mayor:

Thank you.

Clerk:

All right. That's all for in-person public comments.

Councilman Refai:

Mr. Mayor, can I ask a question? Is it okay or no?

Councilman Hassan:

I think it's not right now.

Mr. Mayor:

Let's finish the public comments.

Councilman Refai:

That's fine.

Clerk:

I have one email and then I had some letters hand delivered to the office, so I'll be reading through those.

"Hello, dear mayor, council, city clerk, city manager and city attorney. My name is Ahmed Ali and I am a resident of Home Street. First, I would like to give my condolences to the city attorney for his loss. I'd like to say that what happened this week is an embarrassment to the rule of law, the city as a whole and the Human Relations Committee in specific."

"The commissioner needs to resign or the mayor needs to fire him. We can't have rogue officials that do things based on their whims and desires. What he did was wrong, and if we can't trust our public officials to uphold the law, who can we trust?"

"I would also thank our council, mayor, DPW director for their work in making the city better and keep up the hard work. Thank you."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, gender non-conformity is as ancient as humanity and has had countless iterations throughout cultures and history. If it is so unnatural, then why must violence be used to suppress it? Violence can be legislation, violence can be verbal."

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"Recognize the legacy of violence you now perpetuate. Remember this as you progress this path of hate. Remember, you can always turn back. Remember, you can always repent. Bria, Hamtramck resident."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council, my name is Jackie van Tolie. I am a transgender woman. Since coming to Hamtramck, I've become a part of a vibrant, supportive, and loving queer community that has lifted up my life. Queer people are here in Hamtramck."

"The city council's decision regarding the pride flag is cowardly, divisive, and bigoted. They ought to be ashamed. Jackie van Tolie."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, hello, my name is Claire and I am a Hamtramck resident. As a municipal professional who has hosted many public meetings myself, I have questions about the new public comment restrictions, which might technically follow the letter of the Open Meetings Act, but they're absolutely in defiance of the spirit of it."

"In addition I [inaudible 00:26:33] Resolution 2023-93. You should not be able to seamlessly transition from public office to paid top worker of the city. It almost seems like you had someone in mind when you wrote it. Claire Nowak-Boyd."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, since you passed resolution 2023-82, the resolution meant to ban the gay pride flag from being flown on city property, you have made international news as the city council stoking hatred of gay people."

"Hamtramck now bears the mark of being uniquely intolerant of the LGBTQ community. Moreover, businesses and people who fly the Pride flag on their own personal property are reporting escalating levels of vandalism and hostile behavior from people on the street."

"This behavior was not happening before. It has clearly been egged on by the perception that your resolution affirms the right of bigots to harass gay people. You claim your intentions in passing the resolution was to oppose racism and bigotry, but look at the effects your actions are having instead. Marcus Merritt, PhD, Hamtramck resident."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, I first want to thank you for such a prompt response to the pride flag going up. I'm hopeful that this is indicative of your willingness to have a quick and concise response to the latest wave of vandalism."

"I do want to apologize for not being here this evening but I am away on work, not of the shadow government. I've been collecting the footage and will continue to do so. I'm accepting footage at atawsu@proton.me. I'm so excited about how this year is shaping to form so far."

"I'm hearing lots of community activity and determination, and I've never been more proud of my community with the exception of the gentleman assembled in front of the reader. Any who, in closing, I do think that Council Hassan owes me an apology for trying to lie to the cops about me. Lady of corruption, Gracie, Hamtramck resident."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, the city council should take immediate action to address the recent and growing trend of anti-gay activity in our community. City council itself is partly responsible for this trend since they gave their implicit support to anti-gay bias when they banned the gay pride flag on city property."

"As a gay man, I have enjoyed being a part of Hamtramck community for the last year and a half. In the last month, however, I have noticed a concerning increase in unwelcoming behavior from certain members of the community."

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"Since June of this year, my partner and I have had to replace our gay pride flag on our house three times, after two were stolen and one was torn in half, prompting us to file a police report with the Hamtramck Police Department."

"Additionally, a passing driver shouted an anti-gay slur at my partner and me, as we were standing in front of our house a couple of weeks ago. This is the only time I have ever experienced something like this in our city."

"I'm also aware that two local businesses flying gay pride flags were recently vandalized. To help prevent further hateful acts in our community, city council must make clear that Hamtramck is accepting of everyone and that anti-gay acts will not be tolerated."

"To send this message effectively, the city council must immediately rescind the ban on the gay pride flag. Going forward, the city council should additionally seek out opportunities to foster inclusivity with the LGBTQ community by engaging with gay friendly businesses and organizations."

"Finally, the city also needs to direct the Hamtramck Police Department to make acts of anti-gay vandalism an enforcement priority. Ian Nichols, Hamtramck resident."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, the recent flag ban-"

Mr. Mayor:

Keep going.

Clerk:

"... the recent flag ban has put the entire city in danger. Every news article about the law, the comments there are full of Islamophobia and homophobia. The law is perfect for outsiders and propagandists to characterize our city as anti-American."

"Look around, these days, mass shootings are happening everywhere. All it takes is for one person who knows nothing about our city to come here with bad intentions. It can absolutely happen here. This law does nothing to help our community and it has put a huge target on all of our backs."

"People who don't like pride flags will still see them. This city council is a disgrace for passing the stupid law for political points at the expense of the community and all of our safety. Claude Silvera, Hamtramck resident."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, I moved to Hamtramck in 2017 after graduating college and securing a job at General Motors. I grew up only about 15 minutes away and had been frequenting Hamtramck to visit my friends and local establishments for years and was so excited to become a part of this vibrant, kind and growing community."

"As a young professional with a lot of potential, I was so excited to purchase my first home in Hamtramck in the late 2019, after falling in love with the city and becoming active in my community in many ways."

"I've had family working in the Hamtramck school system for decades as well as family ties leading back to relatives working at the hospital in the north side of town in the fifties, and various family members living here throughout the decades as well."

"When the city's decision to allow the call to prayer was announced, I was heartened that a small community could grow to embrace anyone who called it their home. My first landlords in the city were a young, recently immigrated Bangla family whose children made me smile every day and were always quick to lend a hand to the young woman renting out their upper floor, as I was with them."

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"Since moving into my home, my neighbors have been kind enough to share treats with me for Eid. We have lit fireworks together in the streets every year since I moved in. The children love to give my dog a treat and pet her when we come home and my neighbors have even come over and let me know that they saw someone peeking in my window while I was away when I was very new to the block."

"I have been so proud to embrace and be embraced by those around who care about the wellbeing of those we share a block in our city with. Unfortunately, I no longer feel the safety and compassion with these neighbors and friends have extended to me, due to the actions of my community."

"With a high salary and future earning potential, I should be an asset to my city. Not to mention the fact that I maintain a board of director position with two different community-based nonprofits and spend much of my time making an effort to better the lives of those around me."

"The statements consistently made by Hamtramck residents online, including but certainly not limited to my sin, mental illness and pedophilia, make me feel decidedly unsafe in my own home where I pay taxes to live happily."

"Seeing people in this community, young and old, deface, a simple piece of cloth meant to show solidarity with all members of the community and call for the jailing, execution and exile of gay people haunts me every day. Am I so unacceptable for the love I freely give?"

"Will God see fit to punish me, not only in the next life, but in this one as well for the crime of finding a caring person to spend my time and life with? Have the lives of all the people whose groceries I paid for, animals I've vaccinated by the veterinary care for and neighbors I've shared a sunny afternoon or a chilly night with been so negatively impacted that I should be run out of this previously accepting and strong community?"

"In the minds of many hearing and reading this letter, the answer is, yes. I beg of you, where is the willingness to at least live and let live? It is with shame that I am afraid to sign my name to this letter for fear of endangering myself, those I care about and those to whom I'm provide care. Ms. P Hamtramck resident."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, protect democracy at all costs. E Mel Dondo, Hamtramck resident."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, my home and pride flags have been vandalized three times since you passed this resolution banning pride flags from our city property. While your resolution only applied to city property, I fear that some members of our community are taking this as approval to harass the LGBTQ community in Hamtramck."

"Could you pass a resolution condemning these types of actions and confirming that Hamtramck remains a welcoming place for LGBTQ residents? Daniel Prickly, Hamtramck resident."

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, if the flags are important to this council, I would strongly suggest that the city follow U.S. flag code. As right now, there are multiple violations on the flag that fly in front of City Hall. It's embarrassing for a veteran to see the flag unlit in the rain and the city flag tattered-"

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:35:04]

Clerk:

To see the flag unlit in the rain and the city flag tattered to the point of being unreadable.

Colleen Hamtramck resident.

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"Dear Hamtramck, City Council members, I am the owner of Hamtramck hostel, an affordable location for people to stay in Hamtramck. Unfortunately, some folks have told me that they no longer wish to stay in the city where they, members of the L-G-B-T-Q community are not welcome.

This will have a big impact on my business.

It also isn't right.

There are multiple examples of City Hall allowing religion into politics in City Hall in support of religious folks.

You allow free parking on Eden, Christmas and Close City Hall for it as one of the many examples, this is a nice thing to support Muslims and Christians citizens."

It is time to show the same support to L-G-B-T-Q plus citizens and visitors.

Scott Aaronson [inaudible 00:35:47] president.

"Dear Hamtramck City Council Members, Hello I hope your evening [inaudible 00:35:52] splendidly.

I'm so happy to be able to provide public trauma and in an easily accessible manner. That's a joke.

Actually, I'm more disappointed that due to your actions you are hiding from public comment on your actions.

City Council I hope we're all having fun as I personally cannot wait to see what happens next.

Will it be a new ordinance?

Will the Mayor write another shady poem but well written?"

Gracie Kaju Hamtramck resident.

"Dear Hamtramck, city council members, you have not just excluded people who cannot come to council meetings from having a voice. You're also silencing those you have actively intimidated away from City Hall.

You're taking rights away from the contagious and pregnant and busy. This should not surprise us. Your selfishness has been on display all year from bullying your gay neighbors to discussing turning parklands full of children into parking lots because you are lazy.

Thank you for continuing to display your complete disregard for anyone who doesn't behave how you want them to behave."

Carrie Beth Lasley Hamtramck Resident.

"Dear Hamtramck, City Council members, I see here so much hate it sickens me.

Stop all the hate."

Patrick J. concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck, City Council members, first of all, refuse to take no more than 15 public comments via email is anti-democratic.

I don't care about flags usually and I don't like Mike Duggan anymore for using this culture war stunt of Hamtramck City Council to try and win support.

Clearly this is not about flags, but about the safety of L-G-B-T-Q Detroiters.

We know your City Council is being supported by dark money, the same dark money that stoked hate in Dearborn. You aren't fooling anyone and how spineless really to bow to the demands of people who don't even have the best interest of your Muslim citizens in mind, just for a taste of political power.

You might be able to cause fear in religious people right now, but time will tell.

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You'll be remembered for the cowardly power seeking politicians you are.

God does not reward people who are full of greed and profit off of hate.

Wave your flags, put them at half mass or burn them. I do not care.

We are Detroiters built the city and we'll be here long after you cash in your political prowess for a higher position.

We are watching, God is watching."

Z St. James concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck, City Council members in regards to limiting electronic submission of public comment, I think that's a terrible idea.

I grew up and lived most of my life in Hamtramck and still own several rental properties there.

However, I am not down to the city very often as I live up north on a lake with few neighbors. Therefore, obviously I would like to see the continuance of digital submission of public comments to the Council."

Cheryl Seeking concern citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck, City Council member, I'd love Hamtramck since I started visiting for the Metro Times blowout in the 1990s.

While I don't want to deny your many brilliant local businesses. My patronage, I have a hard justifying the trip given the hateful, bigoted stance the Council has taken as of late. I imagine I'm not the only one.

Please reverse this heinous decision and celebrate the diversity that has always made your city great."

Tyler Ru Baker concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck, city council members, please don't discriminate against the L-G-B-T-Q plus community"

Margaret Elliot concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck, city council members Muslims are called by the Quran to stand against wrongful oppression wherever they find it.

I urge everyone reading this to stop pretending the people of Sodom were practicing consensual homosexuality and he quranic values of acceptance and love instead of cultural values of homophobia and erasure."

Victoria [inaudible 00:39:51] concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck, City Council members to create a safe, accepting and peaceful community you must celebrate and educate on the topics and ideals that make up such a diverse community.

The hate, just stop, and you must lead by example. Stop the hate."

Lisa concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck, City Council members, for as diverse as Hamtramck is or claims to be, this is a pretty dark stain on that legacy, by lumping pride flags in with extremist flags such as swastikas and other hate group flags is sending the message that the Hamtramck city council thinks L-G-B-T-Q equals extremism when it couldn't be further from the truth.

I think y'all are smart enough to see that this is just y'all conservative underbelly showing itself jumping on the hate train as cities state across the nation adopt similar anti-gay legislation.

Way to turn the clocks back, there are queer people from all nationalities which fit your diverse Hamtramck narrative, yet they are being singled out.

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Let the rainbow flag fly. It's the least y'all can do.

Next up, actually protect the queer and trans kids from the violence that is sure to come."

Joseph Bootcamp concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck City Council members, until recently I was a longtime resident of Hamtramck who love the diverse community of people who live in the city.

It's heartbreaking that city council has decided to feed into hate by passing the flag ban.

There is nothing neutral about this resolution, especially considering the rise in vandalism and hatred that has plagued the L-G-B-T-Q community in Hamtramck since its passing.

One word I keep hearing is rumor and is a former proud street auntie of six neighbor kids who grew up around me where I lived in the city it is distressing to be treated as a criminal for existing.

What exactly was grooming?

Was it during our science fence chance where I would answer any science questions any neighbor kids could think of?

Was it when they invited me to their birthday parties?

When we mourned the passing of my beloved dog together?

Was I grooming them when I went with their whole family to an apple orchard and petting zoo?

Maybe it was when I went over to their house to fix things for them and stayed for tea?

This resolution is not a result of the true character of the citizens of the city and should be reversed to support the true character of the diversity city."

Amanda concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck, City Council members, the council needs to recognize the volume of comments will not decrease because you're limiting avenues for residents to work with you.

The L-G-B-T-Q community has supported the city of Hamtramck peacefully and without [inaudible 00:42:28] prior to the resolution of banning pride flags.

It's incredibly dishonorable and shameful that Russ Gordon was removed from the Human Relations Commission yesterday. Neutrality is about conversation, not removing every voice you don't agree with.

If you continue down this path, you will continue to scar Hamtramck's legacy as a diverse and proud community."

Matt I concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck, City Council members, before moving to Michigan, I was a lifelong resident of the state of Florida.

As you can see in headlines every week Florida trying [inaudible 00:42:59] the rights of L-G-B-T-Q people.

When I first moved, I was so relieved to live in a place that I thought was more accepting but as a flag ban you've imposed clearly shows hate can be found everywhere you go.

It is disappointing but not surprising that the City Council has decided the First Amendment doesn't apply to L-G-B-T-Q. Members of the community.

Joseph M, concerned citizen.

"Dear Hamtramck City Council member, the flag ban was heartbreaking news. I had an enormous question, Amir, as well as several striking members of the council.

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This feels so personal when I expressed such deep and sincere love and affection for Amir and the rest of the council.

Please reverse this decision and let our flags and love soar."

Pink Flowers concerned citizens.

"Dear Hamtramck, City Council members, I live in Bangla Town. Most of the businesses I need to access for food supplies, work and social life are in Hamtramck.

Since the city council's decision removal of the equality, the equally inclusive queer representation of the pride flag from city property, my family and I have experienced a dramatic increase of incidents of harassment, unfriendly behavior and aggression in Hamtramck.

It is also true. Some folks have taken extra time to extend kindness, empathy, and acknowledgement. I've even had a respectful conversation where the foundation of real acceptance may have been laid.

It would be a bold and powerful move for the city council to create a sustainable avenue of healing. Perhaps this is a commission of peace that is formed to represent the specific demographics of Hamtramck led by someone with a background fit for the task of building social bridges or social art engagements with similar goals.

This city is hurting and it isn't just the L-G-B-T-Q plus community.

The pain extends beyond the borders because borders don't contain the human heart.

Please consider the legacy of the choices you are making in your words and deeds here today and on the street."

Ephemera Lenfae concerned citizen.

Mr. May that's all the comments.

Speaker 2:

Thank you. Mr. Mayor. I just have a comment-

Speaker 3:

I mean let him finish.

Speaker 2:

Oh, have you got another one?

Speaker 3:

I think this is done.

Speaker 4:

Mayor just approved another one.

Speaker 2:

Okay, go ahead.

Speaker 5:

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I'm here to speak mostly on behalf of friends, family and people in Hamtramck, residents that I've spoken to also on behalf of myself that on property taxes.

I noticed in the last three to five years it has increased three to seven time fold for many of us and I'm one of them. There's no reason for these homes to be over assessed.

I really don't even know how they even assessed them or even how they're being broken down to the residents.

There's no reason for this.

Our roads are still bad.

There's not enough money going into our schools.

Many of our alleys are disgusting and scary, unpaved.

There's still lead issues in our water.

There's also, every time it rains, we always have to cross our fingers that water doesn't back up into our basements.

I'm one where my taxes were \$1,900 last year and now it's \$6,500 this year.

That's three and a half times over. I do hear people complain they've increased a hundred, two-hundred dollars.

I understand there's got to be some type of increases, but when you increase someone from \$1,900 to \$6,500, you're chasing him out of Hamtramck, not trying to promote him to come into Hamtramck and it's for many other residences that I know, mostly recent purchases between three to five years.

Now I do understand that someone living in Hamtramck 30, 40 years and they're only paying a thousand dollars and they got the same square footage as my house, should I be paying the same?

Maybe not, but I shouldn't have to pay \$6,000 more than my neighbor.

What services am I going to be provided that is not provided to him?

So as Council where we elected you guys to serve and protect and also service the people of Hamtramck at the same time, I feel like you're pacing people away from Hamtramck too and something needs to be done and that's why we elected you guys into office.

Mayor:

Thanks. Actually we have... all right.

We have heard so many complaints about this and that's why we brought this resolution for discussion today of the property taxes.

So, we noticed there is an issue and we need to figure out what it is and most likely we will form a subcommittee to take care of that.

Thank you.

There is another person who told me that you want to come and speak but you didn't speak.

Did you want to talk about your issue?

Maybe you didn't know the process. You need to fill out the bar.

Yeah, maybe you need to help him.

I knew he didn't know the process because he told me he's coming to speak.

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Speaker 3:

Around something in the meantime-

Mayor:

Until he comes to speak we can take your question, Mr-

Speaker 2:

Mr Mayor this is, his question was that all the violation that happens possibly been deporting here he has been informed to the city administration and what kinds of step been taken. I just want to ask the question to city manager. I know police chief is not here, but replacement [inaudible 00:48:46].

Speaker 4:

Did you ask him if he wanted to speak?

Yellow shirt if he wants to speak.

Clerk:

Did you want to speak as well? No?

Speaker 4:

Okay.

Clerk:

Yeah.

Mayor:

I know we just got to get lost everywhere. I don't know what's going on.

Speaker 2:

Just trying to finish whoever wants to speak.

Clerk:

Mr. Mayor can you?

Mayor:

Okay, you can speak and then you can answer. Next question.

Speaker 5:

My name is Mohamed Maje. I've been a resident in Hamtramck since 1996, almost 28 years.

I graduated high school in 2002.

I'm fully committed to the city and I invested into the city for the past five years I accumulated properties and it's getting worse and worse. I mean if I just tell you the last three properties that I purchased, it's crazy. 3 1 5 9 Belmont, property tax is \$7,776.

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This is not a home that the rent on the first level is an Elderly man who pays \$650 and the upper level is a students who pays \$800.

Now if their water heater goes out, I won't even be able to fix it because of the money that they want.

Here's another home, 2 2 6 0 Hewett.

Same thing.

\$7,740, which I refuse to change the rent because it's another elderly man and another elderly woman.

Next door to that house. The same house, same built, same title, 2 2 6 6 Hewett \$5,232 and I'm not going to tell you the addresses, I'm just going to tell you the numbers.

\$5,538, \$5,540, \$4,400.

I mean there's no point in me keeping these homes.

There's no point.

I might as well every summer sell a house to pay the property tax.

I mean I want to invest in the city. I want people to invest in this city but at this rate, I purchased these homes 120, 130, 110. The only reason why I got them for those prices is because I'm paying land contracts, pay half down and you pay monthly installments but at this rate, I don't know what to pay?

The property tax to pay the homeowner?

I don't know what to do and they all need work.

I guarantee you, if I took you to one of these homes, none of you will live in the house for \$300,000.

I promise you they all need gutting and I can't even take the people out to fix the house. I have to worry about this.

I honestly don't know what to do.

Sell the homes, keep the homes.

I'm stuck. I mean if I show you this, I don't even want to tell you the number.

It's crazy. It's crazy and I just need answers. I need help.

I want to invest in the city. I want to continue to let this grow with the city but at this rate, these numbers, people are not paying in Troy, in Canton.

That's pretty much it. Thank you so much for time.

Clerk:

Thank you.

Mayor:

Thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 6:

Hello,

My name is [inaudible 00:51:34] Last week I have a ticket use of combo without reason, no reason.

I've been here since almost over 30 years and I never heard about this new rules.

Everybody they do this.

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Why is up to me?

I mean they stopped me and they give me a ticket.

This is not fair.

Mayor:

So what was the problem?

Speaker 6:

The problem is we have a wedding and we drive very slow.

Not like crazy people.

This is why I have a ticket.

I know and my son, he went from the sunroof. Everybody did this since 30 years, everybody does this and I don't know why I have to take it, that's all.

Mayor:

So you want to address that.

Speaker 7:

I can't even express how dangerous it is to stand in the sunroof when the car is moving.

I mean that's just careless. I mean the driver probably should have got a careless ticket from what I understand you got a seatbelt ticket on that.

I mean they let you off pretty easy.

Frankly speaking, if people are driving around hanging out of sunroofs and hanging out of windows, they should probably get more tickets for that because that's just a recipe for disaster. If someone would've hit you and he was hanging out the top of that sunroof, that'd been all over for your son.

Mayor:

So no, you only allowed [inaudible 00:53:12] . So his argument is how come everybody's doing it and he's the only one who got the ticket. I know what his argument is.

Speaker 7:

So bottom line is the police can't ticket everybody.

They tried to ticket who they can for this.

Apparently they observed your son doing it and he got the ticket for it but if someone else was doing it, I can guarantee you they would've wrote them a ticket too.

So people do get tickets for this.

They get tickets for far more than that.

That's dangerous behavior. A hundred percent.

Speaker 6:

This is the first ticket in the city.

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Speaker 7:

It is not the first time that it's been written in the city. In fact, those processions have been very frequent with the city. We're very, very familiar with it and they're usually right with careless driving and all the time police officers are running tickets to people that are acting very irresponsible in those processions.

Now don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with the procession as long as people are following the rules, driving safely, wearing their seat belts, driving responsibly, but hanging out sunroofs, people are doing burnouts, doing all kinds of crazy driving and frankly, if that's what they're doing, they deserve a ticket for this and this is not exclusive to your son, 100%.

Speaker 6:

This is the first ticket-

Mayor:

But we appreciate you coming out and voicing your concerns.

Speaker 8:

Want to address-

Mayor:

Nothing.

Speaker 8:

His question?

Mayor:

Councilman [inaudible 00:54:39] question.

Speaker 8:

Repeat your?

Speaker 2:

Do I need to repeat it?

Speaker 8:

I'm sorry, please.

Speaker 2:

Oh no. Only reason is I see all the violation being brought up to our attention.

It's been reported to the city And is there any precaution or anything have been taken against those in a case throwing the eggs and windows and all of the stuffs has been reported to police department or I mean what's the update on it?

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Speaker 8:

We are very, very carefully monitoring the situation.

The police department has been taking multiple reports on this topic and investigating everything as thoroughly as possible.

The PD is very much high and alert for this and frankly, anyone, they do catch doing this behavior. We're going to try to do our best to prepare a case for prosecutor's office to prosecute.

I mean the city's not going to tolerate it and the PD is doing the best they possibly can to apprehend it.

Frankly, there are a lot of juveniles doing it, which is unfortunate. Not that there hasn't been some adults because there is, but there are a lot of kids doing this bad behavior as well. But PD is all over it.

Speaker 2:

Okay, thank you.

Mayor:

All right, we'll move to the consent agenda now.

This is approved with a single motion with no discussion and we have a approval of minutes from the June 27th, 2023 regular City Council meeting.

B, approval of invoice register date ending in July 11th, 2023.

C, approval of pre-approved expenditure dated in July 11th, 2023.

D, resolution 2023-91 approving street closure for 2023 Hamtramck Labor Day Festival.

E, resolution 2023-92 approving cancellation of regular City Council meeting is scheduled for August 8th, 2023.

F, resolution 2023-93 proposed amendment of the Hamtramck City Charter to remove section 9-18 C City Manager appointment, qualifications, compensations, and the ballot language for this proposed amendment.

G, resolution 2023-94 a proposed amendment of the Hamtramck City Charter to remove section 4-04 Council member who run for Mayor and section 4-505 Mayor who runs for council and the ballot language for this proposed amendment.

H, resolution 2023-95 a proposed amendment of the Hamtramck City Charter to change section 7-01 A council compensation and composition section 9-03 composition of Mayor and Mayor [inaudible 00:57:25] and ballot language for this proposed amendment.

Speaker 8:

Motion.

Speaker 9:

I second.

Speaker 2:

All in favor?

All:

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Aye. (All).

Mayor:

All right, no objections.

All right, we'll move to the new business then and we have the first one, resolution 2023-96 approving the purchase of one utility vehicle for the Department of Public Service.

Speaker 10:

I'll make a motion.

Speaker 8:

Second.

Speaker 11:

Mr. Mayor, we have DVW Director John Daniels here to speak on this topic.

Mayor:

Okay.

Speaker 12:

Yeah.

What's in front of you is the second of two that we tried to get earlier in the year.

We were able to secure one from a cancellation.

This is actually a second unit that I pre-ordered to come in just before winter and it actually came in.

So, this just fills what we were initially going for was the two units. This is what's going to do the parks, the parking lots around City Hall and whatnot.

Speaker 2:

Is that coming from general funds?

Speaker 12:

No, it's coming from [inaudible 00:58:25]

Mayor:

No, it's funding utility.

Speaker 2:

I was hoping you don't make that mistake.

Mayor:

It's coming from the road fund.

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Speaker 12:

Like the last one we got this is actually a diesel model.

The gators that we have spent half the time in the shop broke and thousands of dollars trying to keep them running and it just didn't run and it couldn't, that last heavy snow we had at the end of the season, it wouldn't even push it.

We couldn't even use them.

So these are diesel models.

Longevity will be a lot better and they'll be able to push the heavier snow.

Speaker 8:

Is the first unit also a diesel or just?

Speaker 12:

Yes, they're actually twins. That's why I went with the same unit.

I want go to the same place for service and we can keep up on the maintenance.

We don't have to have different filters for different models.

Speaker 8:

Do one of these units actually... Is able to carry salt?

Speaker 12:

Yeah, we put salters in them.

That's what this model would have actually have the salt in it and we ride around and salt the walks and-

Speaker 8:

So it's almost like a plow and then saw in the back.

Speaker 12:

It's like a little mini salt truck and actually the gators that we have, we might repurpose those for we haven't used in parks or during the festivals. The police can use it to hop in it and run around during the festival.

So we won't be wasting other units.

Speaker 10:

So John, so you were asking us to approve it. Is this because it is available now?

Speaker 12:

Yeah, this one ordered. I pre-ordered it but I wasn't worried about pre-order. They said they'll sell it in a second if the council turned it down.

So they just went ahead and pre-ordered.

There's such a demand for these.

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I know if I wait much longer, that's why I put the order in when I did it. As you get closer to fall and people start to see that weather's changing, what the cities do is going and they try to buy these vehicles and then you can't get them. So that's why I put the order in early.

Speaker 2:

One is good enough are we're going to need another one.

Speaker 7:

Two is all we need. I talked to the guys we have have a big department now, so I get two guys out there doing the snow.

So yeah, I don't think we need another one.

We could always, the gators that we have, it's lighter snow.

We do have plows for those. We could actually put one of those in service for the lighter snow.

Speaker 10:

Right John? I know it's coming from the road fund but the roads needed to be repaired first. You know, snow, it's here there, right?

I mean this is Michigan.

We expect the snow, [inaudible 01:00:44]

Speaker 7:

Oh yeah.

Speaker 10:

That's going to, I think it's the most priority.

Speaker 7:

We have nine of them. Nine of them so.

Speaker 8:

Getting ready to rock and roll.

Speaker 10:

I just got to get there. Thank you.

Speaker 13:

Mr. Chair.

Speaker 10:

Go ahead. Mr. [inaudible 01:01:02].

Speaker 13:

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So similar types of drugs. We do have.

Speaker 10:

One.

Speaker 13:

How many we have?

Speaker 7:

Have two. Well we have one, a newer one that we just got earlier.

Speaker 13:

I thought we had two. The function?

Speaker 7:

We tried to order two when I went for before but they only had one because somebody canceled. So we grabbed it when we knew we could get it and then-

Speaker 13:

So right now, as of now we have one active, only one or two?

Speaker 7:

One of the Kubotas the one that can handle the snow. We have one.

The other ones are still not up to par.

The gators that we currently have that are older, they're not working right.

Speaker 13:

So we brought another one is not working right.

Speaker 7:

Well the new one we have is working perfect.

That's all set up.

That's the one we got earlier in the year.

We wanted to get two. We only got one out of last year's budget and we're supposed to get one out of this year's budget

Speaker 14:

Councilman. They were formally using what was called gators and they basically don't have enough oomph behind them to push the snow.

They're essentially ineffective.

So they were switching to the actual Kubota, which we did go ahead and purchase last time. This is the second one from that purchase he was trying to get, he just couldn't get it before.

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So now this one finally came in.

So he's asking to purchase, we're going to repurpose the original Gators for other uses though or sell them, one of the two.

Speaker 13:

So hold on. So we want to clear something after this. We're not going to come for another one next year.

Speaker 14:

No, this should last two years.

Speaker 7:

We only need two.

Speaker 13:

Okay, well that's why I was asking. We have the two, I'm not going to approve that, one is not working with respect to the council member name [inaudible 01:02:39]. Yeah, the dialogue is coming.

We are approving everything, everything, everything but road.

How about the road?

So I understand, so you said the third one we're going to repair and perform base and to start working. So we're going to have a three?

Speaker 7:

The gators that we have that don't work will not do the job that we originally got them.

Speaker 14:

We originally had two gators, which is just name brand for this type of vehicle for the snow but they were ineffective in actually pushing the snow.

They couldn't handle what we needed them to handle.

So the department is switching to the Kubota, which is the purchase of what you see today and then the one he purchased last time, the original Gators will be either repurposed for other uses within the city or sold completely and we're completely going to be just the Kubotas.

Speaker 13:

Okay, so somebody brought those things-

Speaker 14:

Years back.

Speaker 13:

Years back.

Let me tell you clarify this thing.

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So to do same stop up job, what we try to do?

Speaker 14:

No.

Speaker 13:

No.

Speaker 14:

So they were originally

Speaker 13:

No, no when I'm going to the point.

So somebody else brought it and they never thought, they don't have no brain, how much horsepower, what is the thing they have to do?

So that's why I'm telling that kind of situation happening, somebody buying, somebody selling somebody sell is happening a lot.

I've been here 28 years and I come here from 1996.

So I know everything. I saw everything.

So I just want tell him, if I trust you, give approval this one, next year I know you're going to be here. Somebody else come over that did not do the good job. It was not good for this. It's not functioning. I want to get another one. It's happening this city a lot.

Speaker 14:

I understand your concern but this one we're not buying junk, he's buying the diesel, good ones, in order to make sure we get what we need to handle the snow.

Speaker 7:

The gators we currently have, just to give you an example, every time we do use them, they usually come with a \$1,500 repair bill because they break every single time we do try to use them.

So I'm starting to see these bills come through and the guy's telling me, I'm telling why is the city hall not done?

Why is it so late?

Well the Gator's broke, it's broke, it's in the shop, got to get fixed.

We bought this truck. It's junk. It doesn't do anything.

Speaker 13:

Okay, well again have to some adapting-

Speaker 2:

Mr. Mayor?

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Mayor:

Is this the most effective one in the market or there is a better quality one on the market?

Speaker 7:

For the price, yes.

Kubota and we've got the warranty with it. So we've got a three-year warranty with it, which is good and that's one of the reasons why I want two the same kinds so that our guys can keep up on the maintenance. They learn one, they know how to do the other one, we don't have all this mitch match equipment in the yard to try to keep up on.

These are outfitted correctly and like I said, they're diesel, three cylinder diesel, so they already got multipurpose. We just don't have to use them for the snow in the winter.

We can use them in parks, we can use them in other applications in the summer too. They will handle whatever we need them to do.

Speaker 15:

Hey John, so recapping to Mayor ProTech, like he said, every team that comes in, well we got to buy new equipment. So will these equipment will at least last five, six years or every two years we're going to be here again in [inaudible 01:05:56]

Speaker 7:

I would be surprised if this doesn't last at least 15 years plus.

Speaker 15:

And that's my, you know, if we're going to put money and we're going to purchase stuff, it should last us more than 10 years.

Why would you always continue buying these cheap equipment and then we'll come back in two years. Either you're going to be here in front of us or somebody else and say, you know what, we trying to get new equipment.

Well that's too old. So I'm hoping that after we approve this, this is a real good equipment that will last us at least for 10 years.

Speaker 7:

Yeah, I always research everything just find out what's the best [inaudible 01:06:28] to talk to other city people in my position and what they're using. And this is what a lot of our switching out to is the Kubota all the way around for excavators for everything.

Speaker 14:

When they started this process, one of the things I told them was see what everybody is using. See what everyone's recommending, see what the commercial people are using and see what the best one is.

Don't just buy one, you recognize it, buy one because it's the best.

Speaker 16:

Another question through manufacturing, is there a warranty on it or can you buy warranty beside

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Speaker 7:

I did have them put the purchase extra warranty in it so we have an extra two years on the unit.

Speaker 10:

I see that. Yeah.

Speaker 16:

And you continue with the warranty? After two years, it'll expire.

Is there a way that you'll continue?

Speaker 7:

Usually they send you a flyer to extend it and that's why the service, the recommended service, we want to bring it back to the dealer to have them do the recommended service because you extend your warranty life on a lot of the units if you do so.

Mayor:

That's all right. I think that's we discussing in the trucks and stuff, but it's all due to the labor force. If they providing better services is not all due to the trucks, whether they're new or old.

It's mainly the labor force. Whether they will be more committed on time to do better services.

I'm concerned about the old trucks.

I used to see them. They still look in a good shape.

What are we going to do with them?

I mean now we bought like five new, what are we going to do with the old? We have a lot of guys now,

Speaker 7:

So we've already using them.

Speaker 14:

The old ones aren't that great. Mr. Mayor, I can tell you I drove them a few times.

Speaker 7:

For the driving trucks we're using them.

Speaker 14:

I was a little concerned when I was driving them.

Mayor:

Well we can sell them then and make some money.

Speaker 14:

Yeah, we auction them off. We'll push them off.

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Speaker 7:

I think I got four units.

Mayor:

It's a money back.

Speaker 13:

One question. Warranty, how much cost is that? It's not here.

Speaker 7:

The warranty It was about \$900 bucks, but I did get a rebate of \$732 on the unit.

Speaker 13:

Every year?

Speaker 7:

Huh? No, no. Just the one time flat rate.

Speaker 13:

So I want clear everything.

Speaker 10:

No it says right here.

Speaker 13:

Okay, I didn't see that one, that case.

So again, just want to let you know also one time we cannot make the paycheck.

I have to borrow the \$2 million from my one of the water department fund. Okay?

We want that kinds of situation, that case we have everything perfectly done.

I cannot make the paycheck, then I have to bring the receivership here and sell 26,000 to the 6,000 as a manager as the finance CFO.

I just want to remind that those kinds of situation before come we have to be ready. It's not the system working like taking the money from property tax, take it, take it as many, put it there for revenue, for retirement.

That kinds of mentality has to go away too.

So this is the one I kind of trust to you. Economies. After that maybe, no.

So that's all I can say.

Mayor:

All right, I think that's enough for discussion. We can go ahead and vote.

Clerk:

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Councilman Hassan?

Speaker 13:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman El Samir?

Speaker 10:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Wood?

Speaker 17:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Chaudri?

Speaker 18:

Yes.

Clerk:

Councilman Mussa?

Speaker 19:

Yes.

Clerk:

Oouncilman number five?

Speaker 20:

Yes.

Clerk:

Mr. Mayor. Resolution 2396 approved.

Mayor:

Thank you. Moving to the next one, resolution 2023-97 approving the purchase and installation of new windows at City Hall.

Speaker 13:

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Motion.

Speaker 2:

Second

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [01:10:04]

Mayor:

At City Hall.

Khalil Refai:

Motion.

Muhith Mahmood:

Second.

John Deangleis:

[inaudible 01:10:04] John here in regards to this, again. This is a multi-facet proposal here. There's three components to it. The first part is floor one, where all the windows are, the customer service windows, with the little thin plastic, this is doing it more in line with what the treasurer currently has. So one inch thick plexiglass, done professionally in an aluminum frame. Right now we have a couple screws holding up a piece of plastic with some boards on it. It doesn't look professional and it doesn't... Not going to hold anybody back if they want to jump through the counter. Some of the staff has mentioned for safety reasons.

Speaker 21:

But it's time for professionalizing.

Mohammed Hassan:

Mr. Chair?

Mayor:

Yes, go ahead.

Mohammed Hassan:

I have to discuss this one. I agree with everything else, but this one is not the emergency needed, what I call. So that case, if I can survive today, I can survive tomorrow. This one, I'm not going to be agreeing to expend the money right now. I want to wait.

Khalil Refai:

Mr. Chair?

Mayor:

Yes, Councilman Refai.

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Khalil Refai:

I don't know if Mr. Mayor Pro-Tem is done. Well, regardless of resolution, I know there's other windows. Consider the court and the judge chambers. I know it's owned by the city, but can the court help out even though they have-

John Deangleis:

Yeah, that's what I was going to get to. So there's like three components of this. We have some windows on the third floor that are commercial grade. Actually windows that should be put in our building. We have a lot of residential windows in this building on floor two and floor one that are just total trash. So my idea is to do a bulk of windows every year. Can't afford to do them all, but we can do some every year. If I do a little bit every year, eventually we'll get there.

Third floor, we already have the advantage of the frames being in place. It's just the glazing unit that's bad. So the glass company that came out, all they'd be doing is they'd take a special seal out, they'd take the glazing unit out. They put the glazing unit back in. The only windows that I've cited are literally the ones you can't see through. The ones in the court, they're actually, you can stick your hand right outside of them. The windows have shifted and it whistles in there, they told me. And I couldn't understand what they said until I actually researched it further and looked at them. The court, the building fund for the court would pay for part of this. Anything to do with the court windows and all that would come out of that fund, the building fund.

Speaker 21:

We have a lot of bad windows around whole city hall. We do a pretty good job of masking it, but if you look closely, you'll see the damage around some of them from the leaking and the mold growing. Even in this room, sometimes you smell it a little bit from the mold. That's from the windows.

John Deangleis:

The windows I cited, you can't see out. They're like frosted up on the inside, really bad.

Speaker 21:

If we could systematically replace them as we go, a little bit here, a little bit there.

Khalil Refai:

How come these windows were not replaced previously?

Speaker 21:

No one cared.

Khalil Refai:

As soon as we have money now, it's like, start spending this money.

John Deangleis:

I think a lot of things got overlooked with City Hall. We're starting at ground zero in a lot of areas. I'm just doing my job going through the condition of the building, trying to upgrade the building appropriately a little bit at a time. So the residents and the council and the mayor and the employees

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have something proud to be in. But the mayor's office here, you've got some of those. And his, you can't even see out of them.

Mayor:

Councilman Musa.

Abu Musa:

Where this fund coming from? General fund?

Speaker 21:

General fund.

John Deangleis:

Some of it'll come out of the general fund. Some of it'll come out of the court fund.

Speaker 21:

Big portion of that is out of the building fund, which is a protected fund that actually only the court can spend out of.

Abu Musa:

What percentage is coming from the court?

Mohammed Alsomiri:

Not too much.

Speaker 21:

It's a fund that-

Speaker 22:

How much for twenty percent?

Speaker 21:

Yeah, it's like for every ticket issued in the city, a percentage of that goes into the building fund, which is basically for upkeep of the courthouse and by law the court is the only one who can decide how to spend that. So I mean we're able to utilize that for things that are in upkeep of the court, including windows, which in actuality benefits the rest of City Hall too because it's better installation, better aesthetics.

Khalil Refai:

Last question. Are we able to function without fixing these windows now?

John Deangleis:

You mean open them?

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Khalil Refai:

All of them?

John Deangleis:

No, most of them are fixed unit windows. There is an option that we can add to open some, but I don't know if you want that in the court.

Mayor:

So I remember we put some projects for some elected officials and one of them was renovating the City Hall. We haven't gotten the approval, but if we do, we'll be able to fix everything.

John Deangleis:

They excluded the... Yeah, they excluded city buildings.

Mayor:

Well now, I mean I know it's a small amount of money, but it seems like what the residents are noticing that we've got some money, now we are being selfish to spend it for us changing the carpet, buying a car for the fire chief, changing the window. What are the residents, what is the priorities? Are these priorities for us to spend this money even if it's coming from road fronts? Isn't the alleys priority or the streets to-

Speaker 21:

Well, we are doing that, Mayor. We're doing alleys, we're doing streets, we're doing that service lines, we're doing water mains.

Mayor:

But we are moving very slow on these. I mean, the alleys are priority for the residents. We are moving very slow on this. Every summertime when we work, we do a few alleys and sometimes we have the money but we can't finish them on time.

Speaker 21:

Yeah, we're basically constrained by the contractors on that one. We literally sat in the room with them, encouraging them, pushing them, saying, "This is what we want. This is what we want." Even with the lead service lines, we basically have to really amp them up to say, "Get your butt in here and get these rolling." Construction is in abundance right now.

Mohammed Alsomiri:

Can we say whatever we done is done? Now every meeting they going to become a new issue. But when we work outside, never even to fix something. Everybody, they're going to come a new issue. Today, the car, the window, the car. Tomorrow, you don't know. A door, a roof, a ceiling, a light. We're going to change the whole place.

Speaker 21:

I can still-

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Mohammed Alsomiri:

We need to work out. We need to work. We need to work the outside. Fix the alley, fix the street. Make safety. It's not going to stop.

Mayor:

So I'm saying is this it?

Mohammed Alsomiri:

Yeah, it's not going to stop.

Mayor:

Or we expect more stuff?

John Deangleis:

Unfortunately I'm in a position that I have to come to you and ask you to do my job. So I'm always in a position where I'm always asking for [inaudible 01:16:53].

Mohammed Alsomiri:

It's not from you. It's not from you. But the issue, they can, you want to do something but we didn't work outside. We need to work outside.

John Deangleis:

Yes.

Mohammed Alsomiri:

Whatever we done early, that's it. The car, the other issue, leave it two, three years. Is not very important. We need to work outside. We need to make the city a good shape.

Speaker 21:

For the court at least though, I think they do need new windows and it's coming out of the [inaudible 01:17:17].

Khalil Refai:

Yeah, that's fine. If the court was to-

Mohammed Hassan:

Internal employee can repair that one too, protect that too. It's not the one right away coming up. So let's go ahead Mr. Mayor, if everything done there, vote for it.

Nayeem Choudhury:

I'd say though, Mr. Chair, the building is old. You got to consider that part. It's a D2 trading, it's needed.

Speaker 21:

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It's a hundred years old.

Nayeem Choudhury:

A hundred years old. As needed, he's asking for improvement. It's not like that he's asking for the entire building to be renovated. It is part of the building construction. People got to come in and out. It's this also safety issue.

Mayor:

I don't know if you're trying to scare the clerk because her windows need to be changed too.

Rana Faraj:

No, no. Actually to be honest, if you don't mind me speaking, the one that's on the resolution is just for the plexiglass in front of our window and I didn't want to say this, but all of the windows in the clerk's office do not lock. Thankfully we're right by the police station, but my windows are not on this resolution. But he's planning on doing step-by-step, little at a time-

Nayeem Choudhury:

Little by little, that's-

Rana Faraj:

So it's not all at once, but every window the clerk's office is broken.

John Deangleis:

You'll probably see me every year asking [inaudible 01:18:26].

Nayeem Choudhury:

I don't think, we shouldn't have mentioned that. We don't want anything to happen, but it's okay.

Mayor:

We can go ahead and vote.

Nayeem Choudhury:

It's a small amount. I think we should move forward and let's move. And we got other things too.

Mayor:

Don't make me break the tie now. Okay.

John Deangleis:

I did start with the least expensive part.

Mohammed Hassan:

Okay. Let's [inaudible 01:18:45].

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Rana Faraj:

Councilman Hassan?

Mohammed Hassan:

No.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Mohammed Alsomiri:

No.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Mahmood?

Muhith Mahmood:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Choudhury?

Nayeem Choudhury:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Musa?

Abu Musa:

No.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Refai?

Khalil Refai:

No.

Rana Faraj:

Mr. Mayor, resolution 2023-97 not approved, fails. Oh, I'm sorry. Did I cut Choudhury?

Mayor:

Yeah, I did. I voted yes. I mean, good luck next acceptance. All right. All right, thank you. The next one is resolution 2023-98 approving action regarding Wayne County right of first refusal properties.

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Khalil Refai:

Motion.

Mayor:

Second. Discussion? Any discussion or do you want to explain that?

Speaker 21:

Yep. So every year as council, mayor know, Wayne County has their annual forfeiture list and we have the option of the first refusal on those properties. This year they sent us, I believe it was seven total. Of the seven, six are worth us purchasing for resale. One of them, unfortunately the price would be too high for us. It wouldn't be worthwhile. So it's our recommendation. Purchase them and auction them off.

Mayor:

All right, any...

Nayeem Choudhury:

When did the auction start?

Rana Faraj:

I haven't set it up yet. It's the same way... Do you mind? I'm sorry.

Nayeem Choudhury:

Sure.

Speaker 21:

So basically what'll happen is if counsel approves tonight, I'll send them an email tomorrow saying these are what we want. They'll give us a bill. We'll send them the check. Probably about a month or so after that, they'll send us the deeds and then we'll start the process for the auction. We'll post it and do it similar to we did last year.

Max Garbarino:

We set it up last year, just the sales process.

Nayeem Choudhury:

Just for the public to know how the process works.

Max Garbarino:

It goes pretty fast. The biggest thing is waiting for the deeds to come from the county.

Speaker 21:

Well, it counts also the dates, it's federal.

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Rana Faraj:

Can I add something? Thank you for saying that councilman, because you're right. I think every day that we mentioned that they had the auction, people are calling my office, when are these homes going to be on auction? When are they, can you call me when they're... And the best advice I can give you is we post them in the newspaper when it's going to be the auction and we'll have them posted anywhere that there's city news, so just keep an eye on it.

Mayor:

Usually post it on Facebook too. So people just need to be patient.

Rana Faraj:

Yeah.

Nayeem Choudhury:

Social media.

Max Garbarino:

Yeah, we don't sit on our hands on it. We try to get them out the door pretty fast.

Rana Faraj:

And I know people are eager to get them. That's why they want to get the first wind of it.

Speaker 21:

That's the problem. [inaudible 01:21:35].

Nayeem Choudhury:

We're not-

Muhith Mahmood:

Sorry to interrupt. People bid high and then the tax goes high, then they'll complain. So that's something I only recommend to our citizens in Hamtramck. Don't go too crazy. Don't ask \$300,000 for \$50,000 house. Then come back here and say tax is too high because things goes both ways.

Nayeem Choudhury:

Good points. Yeah.

Muhith Mahmood:

Please. Thank you.

Mayor:

We can go ahead.

Rana Faraj:

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Okay. Councilman Mahmood?

Muhith Mahmood:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Musa?

Abu Musa:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Refai?

Khalil Refai:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Choudhury?

Nayeem Choudhury:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Mohammed Alsomiri:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Hassan?

Mohammed Hassan:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Mr. Mayor. Resolution 23-98 approved.

Mayor:

Thank you. Next 1D is resolution 2023-99. Removing Russ Gordon and Cathy Stackpoole from Human Relations Commission.

Khalil Refai:

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Motion.

Muhith Mahmood:

Second.

Mohammed Hassan:

Second.

Mayor:

Discussion?

Mohammed Hassan:

Mr. Chair?

Speaker 21:

Yes, Councilman.

Mohammed Hassan:

My previous experience, the best human relations commission chief was the Bill Meyers. Good job ever did, for everybody. Mr. Meyers was the one brought the diversity almost a hundred percent to the city of Hamtramck. He fight for us a lot. I used to sit over there. I used to see what they used to, this side of the people sitting here, what they used to treat us. And the person is the Bill Myers. He stick with us, he strongly fight for the diversity, as strongly fight for the everything. So that kind of person, former mayor, like a terminate within second. We have lots of tolerance about this commission. We personally spoke to the person, city manager personally spoke to the person, and lots of residents also personally spoke to the person. The person, or the commission, some of them, don't want to realize what their job and they was doing by themselves. Maybe listening someone else.

The common sense law after your ordinance, nobody can do any other thing. This is the law already been established, but still they ignore the law and they did it without knowing nobody and they should not. If any residence out of ordinance violate the ordinance, they're getting punished, \$250 ticket, \$100 ticket. And one of the baby boy by mistakenly has something done and we punished him, go to the house and talk to the parent, give him some punishment. So this is the one that the persons or commission should give us good job, correct us. They're the one. Some of them is making more problem to the peaceful community, what I see from 29 years. So I really appreciate this resolution and I agree with this resolution. Thanks.

Mayor:

Thank you. And just to clarify, within the first 90 days of me taking the office, I could remove anybody with no question, without a cause, from any commission. After that we have to have a cause. So just to let you know, when I took to the office, I didn't remove anyone of those people and I knew what they support and what their ideology and political views, but I thought that we can work together. Unlike the former mayor when she fired Bill Meyer, just because she disagreed with them in her first day of office or so, some advisors used to tell me, "You need to fire everybody from the former administration." And I said, "No, we can work together." I even appointed the former mayor back in the DDA, just to show you

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the good intention I had. But did they work with me? Did they try to build bridges and unite the community?

I'll tell you now, most of them did not. They took advantage of these positions and they worked against my vision for the city. They will, let's give an example. Russ Gordon last year put the flag without a meeting, without the quorum for the human relations. His excuse was that Cathy told him to do so. Cathy denied that, who's the former city manager. So okay, that was a miscommunication, we said, misunderstanding. Okay, it shouldn't be the norm for the future. You admitted he came here and he apologized and he said, "I didn't mean to create a problem, but she told me to do so." She denied. So okay, there was miscommunication. Now if that was a mistake, let's stop it. In the future, we have to do it right. This year, month ago, he said, "If there is no resolution," it's documented in Hamtramck Review. "If there is no resolution to stop this, I'm going to fly the flag again."

Well, there was a resolution now and he still did it, like he contradicted himself. Well, to do this with some previous staff from the former power structure, all of them were there, show zero respect for law and order, complete irresponsibility and then they blame some others when they violate stuff. You are, yourself, used to lead this city at one point. This is the kind of people who used to lead the city for decades are acting like this disrespect of law and order and acting, "Oh, there is no severe punishment for violating the resolutions." You are setting an example to the ordinary citizens to violate everything. Now, if you are who used to lead the city doing this and violating rules and laws, how do you want me to convince the citizen not to do something wrong?

I can speak up, I can say statements, but would they listen to me when they see you as an example, violating rules and law and disrespecting law and order? That's the reason why there is a valid cause for removing him from this commission. The purpose and the mission of this commission is to bring people together. He's doing totally the opposite. He's being a divisive member of the community and everyone with him created this severe division in the community, that's very hard to fix. And so I think it's a valid cause to remove him and whoever was with him from this commission.

But I didn't remove him because of last year mistake. I thought he would fix it. We kept him in there but he didn't. He's completely doing things against the well of the city council and the mayor who appointed him or kept him in there. And so I think this is a good reason to remove him.

Rana Faraj:

Yes.

Mayor:

All right, let's go.

Nayeem Choudhury:

I think Mayor has covered everything. We're good.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Hassan?

Mohammed Hassan:

Yes.

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Rana Faraj:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Mohammed Alsomiri:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Mahmood?

Muhith Mahmood:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Choudhury?

Nayeem Choudhury:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Musa?

Abu Musa:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Refai?

Khalil Refai:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Mr. Mayor, resolution 2023-99 approved.

Mayor:

Thank you. The next one, resolution 2023-100 resolution to rescind authority of human relations commission to maintain and fly flags on city property.

Khalil Refai:

Motion.

Mohammed Hassan:

Second.

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Mohammed Alsomiri:

Second.

Mayor:

Any discussion?

Mohammed Hassan:

Mr. Chair?

Mayor:

Go ahead. Mr. Mayor Putin.

Mohammed Hassan:

We brought those things are given to the Human Relations Commission, try to help each other. More diversity, more open talk to the people, more accountability to the department and the elected officials. Now we are seeing more problems coming. So that's why we are revoking and bringing back to the priority ones. That is exactly nothing wrong. Thank you and I will support this motion.

Mayor:

All right. I think it was an obstacle for the human relations to bring people together to give them the purview of doing something that's controversial. So they will not be successful to bring people together in that case. So leave this to be the purview of the city government and then we exempt the human relation from this. Maybe they can do a better job bringing the community together.

Mohammed Hassan:

Okay.

Mayor:

We can go ahead and vote.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Musa?

Abu Musa:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Refai?

Khalil Refai:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

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Councilman Choudhury?

Nayeem Choudhury:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Mahmood?

Muhith Mahmood:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Mohammed Alsomiri:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Hassan?

Mohammed Hassan:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Mr. Mayor, resolution 2023-100 approved.

Mayor:

Thank you. Next one. And probably the last one, resolution 2023-101. Approving Friends of Historical Hamtramck Stadium special events.

Nayeem Choudhury:

I'll make a motion.

Khalil Refai:

Second.

Nayeem Choudhury:

All right. Max, you want to explain this please?

Max Garbarino:

So I received a request from the Friends of the Historical Commission. They have an event coming up and they need council's permission for this. And I'm hoping that, I mean we do have an MOU with them for the usage of the park as far as programming goes. But as far as special events go, as far as some of

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the catering aspects of it with the beer and the wine and the other stuff, they need special council approval for that.

Mayor:

All right.

Nayeem Choudhury:

Thank you for clarification. I have no question.

Mayor:

Go ahead and vote.

Rana Faraj:

Okay. Councilman Refai?

Khalil Refai:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Musa?

Abu Musa:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Hassan?

Mohammed Hassan:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Alsomiri?

Mohammed Alsomiri:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Councilman Mahmood?

Muhith Mahmood:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

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Councilman Choudhury?

Nayeem Choudhury:

Yes.

Rana Faraj:

Mr. Mayor, resolution 2023-101 approved.

Mayor:

Thank you. Probably, actually, there's one more which is resolution 2020-

Rana Faraj:

Not a resolution though.

Mayor:

Discussion of 102, discussing the recent issues with property tax increase.

Muhith Mahmood:

It's a big issue.

Mayor:

So can I get a-

Mohammed Hassan:

Motion.

Nayeem Choudhury:

Second.

Mayor:

All right, so let's discuss that.

Mohammed Hassan:

Mr. Chair.

Mayor:

Yes, Mr. Mayor Pro-Tem.

Mohammed Hassan:

Okay, so let's go down at 2000, 2001, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. We don't have any permanent assessor in our city. We had that part-time assessor and we used to slide everything underneath the door, he used to come take it and assess and everything and everything is on time. And no problem, it was everything properly done. Secondly, a state department, Michigan State came, we have the one guy came here and assessed

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the used the wrong formula, assess the property tax. And all those, the lawsuit case people get the 21,000, 18,000, 19,000. It was a big meeting around here and it was proven he was the wrong formula. He was not listening and either he was forced to go or he go himself. So assess this year what happening, there is that of course that office has the two employee now. First of all, I never had the one employee permanently.

Now it's the two of them. So the assessor, he's going to explain, I know, but there is something still wrong. If it is lawsuit for the flaw, the person has the \$300, maybe two, \$300 or \$100. Why it's gone up to that? One of the person told me last year, before last year, \$1,200. Last year, \$2,700. This year, 6,000. I understand when to buy the house. Okay, came the original bill late, no problem. But he came in and you assessed the \$2,700. That means you have the bill or change the name. And next year, this year go to 7,000 a year. So the gentleman was speaking about the house he has to pay. He not getting \$500 rent for one apartment. He has to pay more than that to save the house. So what kinds of world we are living? What's going on? So there is the need to be accountability with the subcommittee.

And by the way, I create the formula because I'm the mathematician. I'm the double two degree master's, statistics and mathematics. So I create the formula, all the formula myself, I create. So sometime formula, if I'm going the wrong way and it's going to go the price high, it's the common sense. This guy house, one family house today, sold for \$7,000, his value was \$30,000. I said, "No, maybe you buy the house." Like, "No, no, no, no. I didn't buy the house \$300,000." Here is the why, my process and everything. Okay? And he leave over there. Then I told him, "Maybe you don't have the hundred percent exempt like me." I don't have the 15 years a hundred percent exempt. I never look at that. I'm paying, paying, who cares? My city getting some money. Somebody telling me, "You don't live here."

What? "Oh, your house is not a hundred percent." So that kinds of mistake somebody did, I look at that one, no? A hundred percent example. So all those things, I'm not blaming not my city site and I'm telling the resident little bit patient please. And we're going to have it, I believe today. If everything okay, we're going to have a subcommittee to discuss with the assessor and look at everything as a team. Have a seat then we'll back to you guys to answer that question. Please be patient. I understand like Farmington Hills, other cities tax is not that high and they have less water, less insurance money. Here I have to pay extra water bill, extra insurance money, now extra tax. So like the gentleman said, we are forcing to the people leave. So we're not doing that honestly. There is somehow a miscommunication or little mistake or something. We can look at that one, assessor office and ourselves. So that's why we brought a discussion and I will come back to you guys again and again, like last time.

All of them, you guys came and there's no city side was telling. "Yeah, yeah. Everything good." And I was the one telling, "No, it's not good." And it was proved it was wrong. So we're not saying we are correct a hundred percent and we're going to look into that situation and we're going to answer the question. And one more thing though. Lots of people, innocent people, very honest people, buy the house. Their realtor never told them, "Oh, your tax is the 16, 1700. Not bad. It's going to be okay." But when you buy the house, \$170,000, is the \$70,000 house. There is the hundred thousand extra tax is coming. I understand that one. But it's not going to be that like a real up to the roof. So if we do wrongfully assess, make the money, guess what? Who is getting more money? Michigan State, not the Hamtramck city. Okay? So all those things we'll consider and we'll come back to you guys. Please accept the apology to us, maybe miscommunication. I understand most of them upset and we'll take care of that one. The other gentleman said-

Speaker 23:

But in the meantime, the ones that have to pay the five, six, \$7,000 summer taxes [inaudible 01:39:41].

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Mohammed Hassan:

I am going that far in case we misuse or we mistakenly done to you guys. There is the answer we'll discuss with the attorney. Maybe it could be returned something if it is wrong, we'll have to talk to the attorney. I'm not the attorney so I'll have to talk to that. So that one will do it. Other gentleman saying that it was the 2007, I tell exactly same thing. Reassess the value of the house as somebody paying \$500, somebody paying \$1,800, same house, same side, same neighborhood. So those kinds of options still we have, I understand there's the grandfather in-law, senior citizen. Right now, almost everybody got it. I said, "How long you been this house you bought?" "Oh, I'm 10 years." So suddenly why this year? It could be the flood lost a little bit money, not that much. So that's brought to my attention. So all together, please be patient. We'll find out the wire, get the solution.

Mayor:

All right, thank you Mr. Mayor Pro-Tem. Just one point I want to mention. So on November 22 of 2022, last year when we had a closed session and then we voted on to increase 1.5 mils to cover the attorney fees for the house in the discrimination housing case, Sarah Garrett versus Hamtramck. And we said it's going to be a one-time thing. I was against at that time. But the council voted for, we were told it's going to be around \$50. So that was expected to be a \$50, 60, 70, a one-time thing.

Although it wasn't a necessity because we handled this for the past 50 years and the city was in a more difficult financial situation than this year, but at last year in November, we didn't know that we would have a better balanced budget and some surplus. So the city council voted for it because they scared us that the budget will collapse if we don't do so. Although it's just going to save like 300 or 400,000. But that's what I was expecting for people who owned their houses for years, for decades. And I even posted about that, but I was surprised that some people who owned the house for 10, 15 years showed me an increase of 600, 800 and that was not expected. Let's not talk about the transfer of ownership. If somebody just bought a house last year or the year before, it's expected that it will go up in a significant value, but not four or 5,000.

Some people are showing me the difference between 1800 last year, 6,500 this year. This is crazy. I don't think this is acceptable. And it doesn't matter what the formula that we are using, the Proposal A formula, whatever. It's just not logical to pay 7,000 here and your neighbor pay 1100 just because they own the house for 20 years while they are getting the same services. So I think I believe something needs to be done. We can work with the assessor office and see how we can help the people. We don't want to kick people out of Hamtramck. We are saying that yes, it's the city with the fastest growth in population, but it doesn't mean that we want to punish them for coming to live in Hamtramck. Something needs to be done and I think a subcommittee should be formed and work with the assessor office to discuss this issue.

Khalil Refai:

Mr. Chair.

Speaker 23:

Mr. Chair?

Mohammed Hassan:

Councilman Refai. And then...

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Khalil Refai:

I'm glad that we opened this topic here. I've been getting so many calls and so many residents are complaining. There are some that have been complaining because high taxes, even though they bought the house a year or two. But I'm referring to those who've been living in the city of Hamtramck 30, 40 years. Some of them are elders who are either retired or receiving social security, and now taxes are going up like crazy and they're showing me bills. It's like, what the heck? What's going on? How come their bill's high? Like you have mentioned, that they came with the issue that we have to raise the taxes because of a lawsuit, but again, it was a smaller number. Now we see a bigger number in these people taxes, and I think it's ridiculous that people are paying these much in the city of Hamtramck. I'm not saying Hamtramck is not a good city, but it shouldn't be with these thousands of thousands of taxes.

It's ridiculous. I got a friend that lives in West Bloomfield and he's paying 65 for almost a two acre house, even though he owned this house from his grandfather, but that's how much they're paying. So paying six to seven, these people are mentioning, it's crazy. I think you guys both have mentioned, it needs to be a subcommittee. Something has to be done ASAP. We're not going to have these continue going up like crazy and having these complaints from our residents who actually put us here in these seats. So they're not going to continue to give us these seats, but we're not doing our job.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:45:04]

Councilman Refai:

... They gave us these seats but we're not doing our job. So I'm down with the subcommittee, whoever's going to be in the subcommittee, we have to work with the assessing department, see how they came with these numbers and how they assessed these houses because to be honest with you, it's ridiculous.

Mayor:

Nayeem Choudhury and then you, I'm sorry.

Councilman Choudhury:

All right, thank you.

Mayor:

And then after we finish, we want to hear from the assessor. You know maybe-

Councilman Choudhury:

Sure. Right. That's what I was going to get. I want to appreciate those who came in today and spoke about your property tax. This is how we... I appreciate that much because if the residents don't come out and tell these folks that the property tax is going up and increased, then if we talk, they try to talk us out somehow that this and that things they're trying to do.

And sometimes we don't know the equation of that, but the residents come out and speak is really better to be heard and address that. I want to mention one other thing that we live in the Wayne County. Grosse Pointe also live in the Wayne County. Grosse Pointe Woods, their property tax isn't that high, their service is way better than here.

Speaker 24:

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And I know it's [inaudible 01:46:14] so you're right.

Councilman Choudhury:

And these folks that we're expecting them to pay this much money, if you divide the \$6,000, this is \$500 a month. You're not owning the house, you're paying rent and that is disgusting. You want folks to stay here, retain here through the right things.

I know we want to fix things up but not like this chastising and getting the property tax increase, that's not the way, we can do better than that. I hope that we create a subcommittee today and then do the best thing for the communities.

Mayor:

All right.

Councilman Choudhury:

Thank You.

Councilman Musa:

Question there, some people will get some answer from there, some people get grandfather laws, taxes. How it is possible? Can you change the grandfather law or how are you going to be working with the grandfather, law and-

Councilman Choudhury:

Grandfather in.

Councilman Musa:

For the taxes, I'm talking about. I hope that people... A lot of people calling me and gave me the mask regarding this issue and we are lucky we discussing this issue, this meeting. So we need to do something and we have to do the subcommittee.

But my question is that, if they have a face to face they come up with grandfather law how come they take all the advantage? We pay the same street, walking the same street, same everything, same water bills and my bill will be two times, three times more taxes than the other people.

And I just telling you, people asking me, arguing me, please be careful. Don't promise the people on the election time, "No more taxes." I said, "No, I never told them no more taxes", or "We working the taxes, it is not my pension." No more give them the false information. Thank You.

Councilman Refai:

Mr. Chair, I just want to add one more thing, so people understand. Taxes do go up and I think it's 5% a year, right? Correct. So it does go up.

Councilman Mahmood:

No, no. 1%.

Councilman Refai:

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No, it's 5%.

Speaker 25:

5% this year, all state.

Mayor:

This year, all state.

Councilman Refai:

I know. So it does go up but it shouldn't be going up that much. Just to let people know, taxes do actually go up every year, and it depends on if there's lawsuits or whatever that is but not how it is. Yes ma'am. So hopefully we'll take care. That's it.

Councilman Mahmood:

Mr. Mayor, there's quick things. I know you all said everything, there is nothing much to say. We all agree with people that somehow we need to be in control over the... But one of the things could be a subcommittee discussion that the sewage line that we voted previously last month, I believe.

Next year is going to be added up, again. So its tax is going to go higher next year, we need to prevent from now on. And the sewage line, I'll recommend to put a separate bill to people not to include in the tax bill, because that's become a burden to the people to paying so much money at the same time.

Councilman Refai:

It's going to be on the water bill, right? Water bill.

Speaker 25:

I'm sorry councilman what was-

Mayor:

Sewage system.

Councilman Mahmood:

The line fixing that we decided...

Speaker 25:

It has to go on the water bill.

Councilman Mahmood:

It's going to be on a water bill?

Mayor:

Yeah.

Councilman Mahmood:

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Okay, so there's another bill going up, that's going to be another burden.

Mayor:

All right, so we want to hear from the assessor. Do you have anything to say?

Speaker 25:

Mr. Mayor, I did ask the assessor to join us this evening. He was not supposed to come today, in fact he actually was off for most of the day today, but he made the exception and broke off with the Stanley to come in because you guys wanted to talk about it.

Councilman Mahmood:

It's Good.

Mayor:

Thank you.

Connor:

First of all, I'd like to say, a common misconception, the assessing office has nothing to do with the millage rates or the property tax bill. We value properties and we come up with valuations for the properties. The city council comes up with the millage rates and approves them. It's not the assessment office.

We're all licensed by the state of Michigan, we have to follow state laws and that's what we're doing. If we do not equalize, it goes to county equalization. They give us our ratio of where we're at at the beginning of the tax season.

We have to be at 50% of true cash value, which by state law says the usual sale price of homes. If we don't equalize and not follow state law, county equalization will equalize for us. If county equalization does not equalize, state equalization will equalize for us.

We have no choice but to be at 50% of the usual sale price of homes. We have no control over what people pay for their houses. We do the math, we do the studies, we do standard deviations, PRDs, everything else when going in there. By state law we have to be at 50% of the true cash sales, and that's what's going in here.

Yes, sale prices in Hamtramck have gone up drastically. A house that was selling for \$60,000 five, six, seven years ago is now selling for \$180,000. Homes that were selling for \$90,000-\$120,000 six, seven years ago are now selling up to \$330,000. We've seen sales over \$300,000 in the city of Hamtramck.

Those numbers are what causes us to have to equalize and raise the assessments. Yes, your taxes are based on the assessments and the taxable values that are calculated through proposal A. But again that is state law and we have no control over that.

We have to do that. If we don't do it, the county will do it for us. That threatens my license and that threatens everyone's license in that office to do our jobs.

Councilman Mahmood:

But Connor, sorry to interrupt you, but Mr. Mayor, the same houses people have been living there for six, seven years, five years, how come their rate goes so high? There's no exchange in the last three, five years.

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Connor:

So over the past few years we've seen increases in... So every year, the taxable value after proposal A increases by the CPI or what would be people commonly referred to as the rate of inflation or 5% whichever is lower. This is the first time since proposal A was passed that the state of Michigan's calculated the rate of inflation at 7.9%.

So it hit that 5% cap, so the 5% was lower. So every property across the state of Michigan, the state tax commission calculated that every property across the state of Michigan had a 5% taxable value increase by law. That's what proposal A passed in 1994, that's what people voted for and that's in our constitution. This year-

Speaker 25:

Basically, the whole state would go up by 5%.

Mayor:

Wait-

Connor:

It's the highest ever, ever since proposal A passed. The other thing is it's not just the Sarah Garrett lawsuit, there's three separate lawsuits that were added to this. So as you mentioned, yes, there might've been on the average taxable value, in 2023 in a Hamtramck house for residential improved, which is a lot with a home on it, the average taxable value if a residential is \$32,185.

So with all three of those lawsuits, that came out to an average of 175 dollars and 90 cent increase for every residential approved. On average there are taxable values that are less, there are taxable values that are higher.

Speaker 25:

There's always going to be exceptions to that. I mean if you buy a \$300,000 house, your taxes are going to be a heck of a lot higher. But bottom line is the average house in Hamtramck accessible value is \$30,000. It's the average house.

Councilman Choudhury:

With this being said, the number... Now wait a second.

Speaker 28:

The subcommittee, I think-

Councilman Choudhury:

Yeah, so we'll save the discussion for that but I know some people who are paying \$700, they own the house for 20 years.

Connor:

Yes, they are still residents who are paying between a \$700-\$1,100 per year in taxes in Hamtramck. There are some of those that have been grandfathered in because once, when the market dropped in the [inaudible 01:53:34] housing crisis, values dropped in Hamtramck, drastically.

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Those increases have been between 1.4 and I think 3.3, 3.5 percent every year. So their taxable values are still low because it takes a very long time to get back up if you own that house. Unfortunately, with the state law and the uncapping after proposal A passed, it is, "taxes go higher based on the values of the properties that are selling."

We have no control over that either. So we have to equalize, we have to make these numbers that have to be by state law, MCL211271 defines the true cash value as the usual sale price. So we have to assume that what [inaudible 01:54:10] is going in there.

Yes, the county does a sale study, we review the county sales study, the county removes sales for us, we have to use it based on what they do. Yes, our predecessor, as Mr. Hassan mentioned, that there was somebody in here who was a part-time as assessor, we also failed the audit after him.

We had a corrective action plan through the state, we did a reassessment with Tyler to go in there. There was threatening that the state would come over and take over the role. We had to come up with the corrective action plan. He left my predecessor, Mr. Singh came in there and corrected it.

We went through that audit with what we have in here now. Last time we got a 100% score for the state of Michigan at our last audit, we'll have another audit in two years. It happens every four to five years. We have another audit coming up. We try to adhere to every state law that is there. If you have any questions, I'm more than happy to try to answer them.

Councilman Choudhury:

Mr. Chair-

Mayor:

I think we should form the subcommittee.

Councilman Choudhury:

We do, but we do need to address a couple of things.

Mayor:

You'll work with him then.

Councilman Choudhury:

No, I haven't had-

Mayor:

I mean, you don't want to be, okay. I'm sorry but go ahead and ask.

Councilman Choudhury:

The thing is the residents still here, Mr. Mayor, the property... Wayne County as I mentioned, Wayne County is a large county, there's other cities. Detroit did not increase that much property taxes as far as also other Lincoln Park, Allen Park.

Hamtramck is a 2.2 square miles, you asking this much money to increase, there's got to be something that needs to be done for the residents, they cannot afford it. I don't think they will be staying in here if this kind of money they got to pay.

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I'm not debating, I understand where you're coming from Connor, this is a state and county assessed and you're doing your part. But this city is poor, it's a poverty city, this cannot... They stayed in the city for a long time because of the tax, it's the less taxes they pay.

This time this three to, I mean from 1200 to 2700 and then 1500 to 6000, it's dramatically just too much and it's got to be something done. I know we're trying to form the subcommittee, but you got to help us to retain those residents.

Speaker 29:

Can I say something? This is not okay-

Councilman Choudhury:

Appreciate it. It's something we need to take this seriously. You are an expert, I am not assessor nor I know anything about it but I can rely on you. But they elected us to make sure they stay in these houses. So you got... When our state has got to come in and fix this, these numbers.

Speaker 25:

That's what makes me just want to form the subcommittee and-

Mayor:

Sure, yeah. We'll go on and form the subcommittee.

Councilman Choudhury:

That's what Mr. Hassan-

Mayor:

I would suggest that Mr. Mayor Pro tem, Councilman Refai and Councilman Muhith Mahmood, are you okay with being in the subcommittee?

Councilman Refai:

I'm good.

Councilman Mahmood:

Yes.

Mayor:

All right, thank you. So this is-

Speaker 30:

I'm sorry, Mr. Councilman Refai and who is the third one?

Councilman Mahmood:

Mayor Pro tem.

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Mayor:

Well I know the rule is the mayor choose two and the city council to choose the third one. But I know we are in agreement.

Councilman Mahmood:

That's fine.

Mayor:

So, all right.

Speaker unknown:

Okay.

Mayor:

All right. So no vote on this one?

Councilman Refai:

Nope.

Mayor:

I guess we are done right.

Councilman Choudhury:

Thank You guys, fix it.

Mayor:

Thank you, Connor, for coming in. So we're done with the new businesses and we move to the reports. I will start with my report.

Speaker 24:

Have a good night.

Mayor:

Thank you so much.

Councilman Mahmood:

Take care.

Speaker 26:

Yeah, have a good night.

Mayor:

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All right, so May report, I really don't have much to say, we already said everything tonight. I just want to make it clear that we as, mayor and city council, denounce any kind of vandalism of private flags or private properties, whatever they are.

We are very upset by these behaviors, whoever is doing them, kids or adults. I actually did my part and I contacted some community leaders and some activists and some Imams with messages and I told them to educate people and speak up in their Friday prayer. Talk to the parents to educate their kids about this issue and how serious it can be.

Some people do it for fun and some people do it out of hatred. I don't know what are the motivations, I don't know who's doing that. But we are against this and we will continue doing our part, talking to people, talking to community leaders. And we would always release statements to denounce any kind of vandalism.

We don't support any kind of violations or vandalism. And also on the other side, we denounce any kind of violations to the city rules and codes and regulations such as what happened last Sunday. Like I said earlier, those people who used to lead our city, if they behave in such a way, it's a bad example to the residents.

They will say, "These people are violating the rules and they were the leaders of the city. So why do you ask us to follow rules and city codes and regulations?" It's just a bad example to the people. We expect people who are educated, who are community leaders to follow the rules.

And whether you like it or not, it happens in the past that you voted against things or in favor of things that are against the majority of the people. Were they happy with that? No. Including the marijuana, including other stuff.

People were upset about those kind of decisions yet they did not do any kind of vandalism, they did not violate rules, they did not come and protest in front of the city hall. So why when it's done against your will, you act in such aggression? That's not accepted either.

You have to respect the rules and resolutions of the city whether it's in your favor or not. Like I said, there are many examples that happened the past. 2021, this same city council voted in favor of the flag in front of the city hall. What did the people do? Did they come and protest him for city hall? Did they do any kind of violence? No.

Did they like that decision? No. Of course they did not. And they're the majority of the people. But they respected the law, they respected it. They didn't cause any violence, no aggression and they maintain peace and stability in the city. We expect people to respect law and order.

So I'm getting more requests now for people to do some protest and rallies, but I don't want that. I ask people nicely to step back and keep the city peaceful. Otherwise people are not... The fact that they don't come to the meeting doesn't mean they're not following what's going on in the city or they don't want to do anything or they don't want to do any, take any actions.

So I hope that everybody takes responsible actions and maintain peace and stability in the city because everything will lead to a bigger thing and we don't want any kind of violence in our city or any kind of hate crimes. So that's all for my report and we move to the Mayor Pro tem report.

Mohammed Hassan:

Mr. Chair. Thank you everybody, to be patient today. What I want to say, what's happened, it was very unlawful, what's happened last Sunday. Hamtramck city, as an elected official, we are moving right direction, we're not violating any constitutional law, we're not doing nothing wrong.

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We try to keep the peaceful life here. Mr. Councilman Khalil Refai say maybe we are not number one city in the area. Yeah, one case we are number one. Which one? Diversity. This is the first city in the world, diverse city, peaceful life, everybody live here.

Even though some people disagree with us, they are the one few weeks ago council meeting they said they move here because it is the peaceful city and still is the peaceful city. The violation that they did, as elected official, I came to the spot, I've been insulted, people circling around me, coming to my face.

I said, "I have some personal issue going on, I apologize. Please stay away from me and I don't want to talk to nobody." He's still coming and circling me and just came to my face showing the middle finger. Who doing that? It's not us. And still gently, respectfully we take care the situation.

So today I want to tell, including my city employees, zero tolerance with the discrimination, zero tolerance with the involvement with any group if any city employee. There is the history of this body around here, within two minutes we terminate one city manager, within two minutes, for [inaudible 02:04:12], that's all.

No matter what after that, who care. Respect. Because my one of the council member, city manager disrespect my council members. He can disrespect our argument in his office, not in the publicly. What happened last Sunday? Same thing. Some people did publicly insult us and they violated the Hamtramck city ordinance law.

And I want mister attorney and city manager, further investigation and I want to proceed lawful action for those people who involved. If anybody inside the city hall, we don't have to give any handbook. Law has already been established law even though it was not in handbook because handbook printed a long time ago.

But the ordinance already been established, as soon as published, it's already law. I cannot argue with my manager or my attorney or, even though me argue with them, who is saying, "What is the law I have to follow?" There is the law everybody knows.

So again, I want everybody same place, insult is enough insult, we're not doing anything unconstitutional, we're not discriminating anybody. We want to stay here, peaceful life. I've been seeing this over 28 years. I want to see this peaceful life, rest of my life, this city.

So I'm requesting everybody live together, learn how to live together and stay together. There is nothing other issue going on here. Thank you.

Mayor:

All right, Thank You Mr. Mayor Pro tem. And we move to the city council reports of any-

Councilman Refai:

Mr. Chair.

Mayor:

Councilman Refai.

Councilman Refai:

I want to take this moment to thank everybody that showed up here today. Individuals who had complaints, we will take that inconsideration, especially on the taxes. I want to thank you guys for coming here. Regarding vandalism on either flags, me personally and I think this entire body, we're against anything, against anybody who vandals any property, to either private or business.

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I think we have a great police department. If anybody has an issue, having videos, anything that someone is damaging your property, our police department will take care of it. And then there's court. So we're against it. People are saying, "Well there's no statement."

We're saying here today, we'll continue mentioning that we're against any vandalism to any flag, it could be pride flag or any flag. And like the mayor have said, we have spoken to imams, leaders to always continue educating teens who might think it's fun or go egg people's houses.

This is unacceptable, we will not accept it or either our police department. One more thing, people are complaining that are garbage issues in the alleys, somehow some garbage are being picked up and some are not. I don't know what's with that issue.

So you can address it to the company and see what's up with that. And people are saying, "Well he's driving by two, three houses and not picking up my trash." So I don't know what's going on with that. So hopefully you could-

Speaker 25:

Councilman, we're very much attuned to that, I mean we field complaints weekly on this type of thing. So if anything comes in, I usually personally handle it. I interfaced directly with the president of that company, had one happen where they missed one over the weekend and they made sure they came out the next morning.

But bottom line is we need to hear, if they miss something, we need to hear about it. Someone needs to let us know, someone has to call it in, somebody needs to email us.

Councilman Refai:

All right. Well, that's what I have, everyone have a great night and be safe.

Mayor:

Thank you.

Councilman Choudhury:

Mr. Mayor.

Mayor:

Yes. Councilman Choudhury.

Councilman Choudhury:

Thank you. First of all, thank you for being here and I like to say this, I wanted to apologize if there's any vandalism happened or happening in our city. I condemn any hate crimes to anyone. It's not acceptable. They're allowed to fly their flag at their own property.

You got to understand that. The thing we banned is that any government's property on public property not allowed to have a LGBTQ flag. So please respect that they have their own rights to do their own flag at their own peace of mind and their own places.

I don't want to talk about that, I would like to discuss something important. The Hamtramck border, I know all those things are important, but this is one of the things that happening lately. The Hamtramck border and the Detroit border, that side and this side, there has been multiple accidents happening lately, a lot the accidents causing from the intersection.

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The Detroit, Hamtramck... When the police call for Hamtramck to show up, they try to say that it's the Detroit side and then the Hamtramck police don't show up for an hour or two hours. But the incident happened, the combining from both side.

I have requested Belmont and Conant, that intersection to have a study there because of the multiple accidents and during the prayer time and other gathering, they concluded. I'd like to request our city manager and attorney to open a discussion or dialogue with the Detroit Police Department or county to see how we can study, how we can respond each other to the city of Hamtramck and Detroit Police department, especially.

Multiple times I called in for 911 to get somebody there to mitigate the accident. Hamtramck responded, it's not on our premises or our adjudications, it's Detroit who is responsible for that. We got to do something that can help each other because Hamtramck and Detroit together we are neighbors.

So I strongly suggest that we do something for this, Detroit and Hamtramck together just like we do it for the fire department. That'll be a great thing to do for these both cities. Thank you for being here and everyone salam alaikum.

Mayor:

Thank you councilman. Anyone else?

Speaker 25:

No, thank you again.

Mayor:

All right, I guess we are done with the reports of the city council.

Mohammed Hassan:

Mr. Chair, if you guys don't mind, I have to mention one more thing. Okay, I'm sorry. So yeah, my banner, election banner, few banners I have. So somebody put the sticker on my banner, my face, mouth and with the logo and when I scan that one, showing the LGBTQ.

So these kinds of thing is still we politely handling all those things. Okay, so I did not tell anybody but how good we are, how we do the patient and everything, nobody should touch my property, nobody should touch my banner. But still we want to stay here peacefully. Thank you.

Councilman Musa:

Mr. Chair, I'd like to share a little bit.

Mayor:

Yeah.

Councilman Musa:

Really, really wonderful time for Eid. After 20 years, my older brother from London, younger brother from Sydney bring whole family, enjoy Eid al-Fitr with me.

Mohammed Hassan:

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Never invite us.

Councilman Musa:

It is after 20 years. So it is really, really humble and finally they leave today back to their own destination. It is really, really good [inaudible 02:12:54] opportunity for me. And last thing I'm going to ask, telling you, I fully denounce all those violations going on for the LGBTQ friends.

Please, I'm asking you if you have any cameras there or anything else there, give some information, give some evidence to the police department. We like to be take care of you and make to stay everybody safe in the city. Thank you.

Mayor:

All right, Thank you so much.

Councilman Refai:

Mr. Councilman, I hope you showed your family of Hamtramck.

Mohammed Hassan:

No, he's got to pay the bill.

Councilman Musa:

Mr. City Manager see them, I bring them there.

Mayor:

So do you have any report Mr. City Manager?

Speaker 25:

I'm all set for today.

Mayor:

So, we have another round of public comments and then you guys can go home, if you have anything.

Speaker 31:

Please, Mr. Bill Meyer, are you ready?

Mayor:

No.

Speaker 31:

One and only. That's the only one.

Mayor:

We can take.

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Speaker 31:

No, really.

Bill Meyer:

Yeah, and I'm going to ask for an extra minute too.

Speaker 32:

You're the only one.

Bill Meyer:

Yeah.

Mayor:

You can talk about anything.

Bill Meyer:

First of all, what's the rule we decided on the number of letters you can read?

Speaker 31:

15 emails.

Bill Meyer:

15 emails.

Mohammed Hassan:

It should be in person, not in person.

Mayor:

I made a mistake.

Bill Meyer:

And another thing about the council rules that you all passed a while back, you can talk to people who come up and speak publicly, you can respond. And Muhith was cut off when he wanted to say something, he had a right to say something. So speak back to us if you want to.

Mayor:

Thank you. Too many times.

Bill Meyer:

Okay, so thank you for the compliment, I appreciate it.

Mohammed Hassan:

Oh no, I make you angry because of this. I'm going to make that compliment.

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Bill Meyer:

I was also the human relations commissioner for a while, but 40 years before I came here, I was a social justice activist. When I got here, [inaudible 02:14:47] and I decided to work, wanted to help work in the groups in communities of color that were being treated unjustly.

I wanted to fight Islamophobia especially, homophobia, racism. These are all things that tear communities apart and ruin the life for everybody. We wanted to live in a community where we were happy to live in with everybody else. And the last 20 years or so, we've been working mostly in the Muslim community because I know the Islamophobia, anti-Muslim hatred is the strongest hatred in the US right now.

According to FBI, it's like 93% of hate crimes are against Muslims and I don't hear anything in the city about complaining about that. But for a long time that's what it was, and that's the area that we were helping to work in.

Certainly, now that we have other issues coming up that, this is also very important too, but I want to say it took a long time for you guys to catch on what's going on with the Human Relations Commission. It's not serving this community and it's the most important commission.

It's, right now, the most important one to bring people together, issues like this. I went through a few of these issues like this in the past and it was very difficult. You have one side that only believes their right and the other side believes only their right. Some might have to try and compromise and most people weren't willing to do it.

But I can tell you, all the years I've been here, I don't remember one time that I saw a Muslim person be hateful against another person in these meetings. I saw respect and I didn't see that... When we got here, we called this the white power structure.

Even though they weren't all white, there were other people, and all white people weren't part of the white power structure. But basically all the employees in city all were white, all the police, all the fire, all the contracts, everything was white.

Until the longer we lived here and found out, "Wait, there's a lot of black people over here, there's a lot of Yemenis who live here, a lot of [inaudible 02:16:38]." And we got to know this community and realize you're more than 50%, now you're more than 70%, which still people won't recognize.

Even you guys won't even admit that, maybe that it's 70, 80 percent. And you were not treated equally and justly, and that's what we fight for justice. And now when we see the LGBTQIA2S+ community being discriminated against, of course we want to support them also.

Speaker 31:

Thank you Mr. Meyer.

Bill Meyer:

I want to ask for-

Speaker 31:

I gave you your extra minute.

Mayor:

Next time.

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Speaker 31:

Next time ask for two.

Mayor:

Two.

Speaker 31:

You won't get it but that you can ask.

Mayor:

All right, gentlemen.

Councilman Choudhury:

I'll make a motion to adjourn.

Councilman Mahmood:

I'll second.

Speaker 27:

Second.

Mayor:

All right.

Speaker 31:

We had five firsts and three seconds. They want to leave.

Councilman Musa:

9:19.

Speaker 25:

I just want to get some fresh air.

Mayor:

All right.

Mohammed Hassan:

Don't forget your-

Councilman Choudhury:

Yeah, you need this [inaudible 02:17:39].

Mayor:

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You're welcome, take care.

Councilman Refai:

Appreciate it man.

Mayor:

He's a good guy. Thank you.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [02:17:45]

EXHIBIT 7

RESOLUTION 2023-XX
RESOLUTION TO RESCIND AUTHORITY OF HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION TO MAINTAIN
AND FLY FLAGS ON CITY PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the City of Hamtramck Human Relations Commission has controlled and maintained the flags along Jos Campau; and

WHEREAS, on July 9th, 2023, members of the Human Relations Commission did willfully and blatantly violate the laws of the City of Hamtramck by flying a flag in contravention of the law designating that no flags of any religious, ethnic, racial, political, or sexual orientation group may be flown on City property; and

WHEREAS, in order to maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law, the City must act to rescind the Human Relations Commission's authority and control of the flag poles immediately and henceforth.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck, Wayne County, Michigan, that the Human Relations Commission of the City of Hamtramck be hereby and henceforth stripped of their authority and control over any and all flag poles on City property and that the City of Hamtramck shall henceforth hold dominion, authority and control over such flagpoles as the sole authority determining compliance under the laws of the City of Hamtramck and State of Michigan.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HAMTRAMCK, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN THIS 11th DAY OF JULY 2023.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Rana Faraj
City Clerk