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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
Date: 7/23/2019 9:19:58 PM
Subject: Pride and VPL- More information

Good Evening Mayor and Council,

As I mentioned earlier via email, today the City has been informed that the Vancouver Pride Society has decided Vancouver Public Library (VPL) is not welcome to march in the Pride Parade this year as an organization due to the draft room rental policy that the VPL board is considering. As a result, the VPL bus and banner will not be in the parade. All VPL staff are invited to march with other City of Vancouver staff.

As public institutions, libraries recognize that it is through exposure to different ideas and opinions that society can make informed choices about their core beliefs. And as a public library, VPL is committed to providing a venue where diverse ideas and opinions can be shared and discussed. VPL acknowledges that this value has led to concerns related to room rental policies and has caused a loss of trust among some members of the LGBTQ2+ communities. VPL has been listening to these concerns during the six months that they have been reviewing their room rental policies and they have had many conversations with individuals in communities, and among their Board members.

This decision by Vancouver Pride Society is disappointing to me as City Manager, as well as our colleagues in VPL who have been participating in the Pride Parade for more than twenty years and who, over the past decades, have worked hard to raise the voices of and showcase the diverse talent and perspectives of LGBTQ2+ communities.

We all, as part of the City, remain committed to listening and reflecting as VPL continuously promotes dialogue and raises marginalized voices through programs and services. VPL has and continues to actively work to reduce discrimination and create a welcoming environment for queer and transgender people and is a leader in this area among libraries. The City supports VPL's position of not excluding one group of people in order to include another.

We value and support all of the staff at VPL, including our queer and transgender colleagues, and are proud of the work they do. VPL staff are still welcome to participate in the Pride Parade, as they always have been in the past, but not in association with VPL as an organization. The City will continue to have a presence in the parade, and all VPL staff who would like to march are welcome to join the City group. We hope that VPL, as an organization, will have a presence again next year, celebrating our queer, transgender and Two-Spirit staff, Board, and community members, and continuing our commitment to LGBTQ2+ equality.

I am in strong support of our colleagues in their continued work, including during difficult times like this. I hope everyone feels they are welcome to attend the Pride Parade this year, and that in the future, Pride and VPL can work in partnership toward a shared goal of upholding inclusion and respect for everyone.

Best,
Sadhu

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.