

Roxanne Maher

From: Chris Jelden <chrisjelden@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 04, 2024 8:20 PM
To: Town Council Group
Subject: Support for Community Relations Committee Sponsorship of "Pride Pizza Party"

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Dear members of the Ledyard Town Council,

I am writing today to voice my support for the Community Relations Committee sponsoring the previously planned "Pride Pizza Party." Town sponsorship and support for events like this go a long way in telling those residents who are a part of the LGBTQ+ community that they are welcome here.

As a father of two young daughters, I want them to live in a community where they feel free to be whomever they are without fear of discrimination. I have fallen in love with the Ledyard community over the last eight years we have lived here, and I plan to stay here for a long time. I can only hope my children continue to question not those who are in the LGBTQ+ community but those who would speak down to that community.

In speaking to the role of government, and in this case, the role of the Community Relations Committee, I look to its mission statement for quick guidance regarding its role in this situation. The mission statement states the committee is "tasked with being both an advocate and a resource for the community by listening, communicating, and engaging with the community, educating ourselves, and standing up to discrimination and racism in all forms."

I am not an expert on Pride, but I know enough to understand that it is a celebration of those living within the LGBTQ+ community by members of that community and those who love them. This is done largely in opposition to the long-standing marginalization of that community. By my reading, support of Pride is just the type of thing that the CRC of Ledyard has committed itself to supporting.

Setting aside false equivalence and offensive arguments about who gets an event, I would like to touch on one aspect from within the email threads I noted. This is where I am operating somewhat from a place of ignorance. From the emails, it seems that certain members believe there are certain steps and procedures that were skipped, namely a specific conversation and a vote in a meeting regarding CRC sponsorship of a "Pride Pizza Party."

To me, this does seem like a reasonable enough request that all committee members be able to weigh in on events with the CRC name attached. I am not familiar with the actual written procedures, rules, or historical norms, but just from a cold read of the situation, I can understand that position.

As reasonable as that position is, I also know that the residents of Ledyard voted in November of last year to elect a new slate of Town Council members, the very same ones now trying to ensure Ledyard is a place of acceptance and inclusion by hosting this event. Unless the written rules and procedures dictate that the committee must have unanimous agreement on all events hosted, I hope to see, in an upcoming

meeting, a discussion and vote, if required, regarding the event. I hope members can set aside the apparent animosity as shown in the email threads and work for Ledyard Residents.

Thank you for your time. I am sorry I won't be able to make the meeting scheduled for June 5th, but I look forward to hearing and reading about how the meeting goes.

V/R

Christopher Jelden (Ledyard Resident)