

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
JULY 8, 2019**

The following are the minutes for the regular meeting of the City Council held at 7:00 pm on Monday, July 8, 2019, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 590 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E., Columbia Heights, Minnesota.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mayor Schmitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Mayor Schmitt, Councilmember Buesgens, Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., Councilmember Novitsky, Councilmember Williams

Also Present: Nellie Bing; Kelli Bourgeois, City Manager; Gilbert Evans; Steve Forseth; Paula Haller; Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director; Jim Hoeft, City Attorney; Pastor Bill Hugo, St. Matthew Lutheran Church; KT Jacobs, 2020 Census Complete Count Committee Chair; Andy Newton; Lindsey Schell-Edwards; Amada Simula, HeightsNEXT; Frost Simula, HeightsNEXT; Theresa Strike; Nicole Tingley, City Clerk

**2. INVOCATION**

Invocation provided by Pastor Bill Hugo, St. Matthew Lutheran Church

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**4. MISSION STATEMENT**, Read by Mayor Schmitt

Our mission is to provide the highest quality public services. Services will be provided in a fair, respectful and professional manner that effectively address changing citizen and community needs in a fiscally-responsible manner.

**5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Schmitt announced an addition to the agenda, "HeightsNEXT Announcement."

*Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to approve the agenda as amended. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.*

**6. PROCLAMATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, RECOGNITION, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GUESTS**

**A. HeightsNEXT Pride Event Announcement**

Amada Simula, HeightsNEXT, announced the first Columbia Heights Pride Festival would be held Saturday, July 13, 2:00-5:00 pm at Sullivan Lake Park, adding that Sun Focus newspaper had included an article about the upcoming festival. She said there would be live music, vendors, food trucks, free ice cream sundae bars, bouncy house, face painter, crafts, and invited all to attend and celebrate the City's diversity.

**7. CONSENT AGENDA**

(These items are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted as part of the Consent Agenda by one motion. Items removed from consent agenda approval will be taken up as the next order of business.)

Mayor Schmitt reported there had been a request to remove from the Consent Agenda item C, "Adopt Resolution 2019-53, being a resolution accepting bids and awarding the contract for the 2019 Sanitary Sewer Lining, City Project No. 1904."

**A. Approve Minutes of the City Council**

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the City Council Meeting of June 24, 2019.

**B. Accept Board and Commission Meeting Minutes**

MOTION: Move to accept the minutes of the Traffic Commission Meeting of March 4, 2019.

**C. Adopt Resolution 2019-53, being a resolution accepting bids and awarding the contract for the 2019 Sanitary Sewer Lining, City Project No. 1904**

Removed

**D. Approve Resolution 2019-54 designating "No Parking" on the north side of 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE from University Avenue (TH 47) to 5<sup>th</sup> Street**

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution 2019-54, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to adopt Resolution 2019-54 designated "No Parking" on the north side of 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE from University Avenue (TH 47) to 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

**E. Approve Resolution 2019-55 designating "No Parking" on the south side of 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NE from 991' east of Washington Street to Central Avenue (TH 65)**

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution 2019-55, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to adopt Resolution 2019-55 designating "No Parking" on the south side of 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NE from 991' east of Washington Street to Central Avenue (TH 65).

**F. Approve Business License Applications**

MOTION: Move to approve the items as listed on the Business License agenda for July 8, 2019, as presented.

**G. Review of Bills**

MOTION: Move that in accordance with Minnesota Statute 412.271, subd. 8, the City Council has reviewed the enclosed list of claims paid by check and by electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$1,098,500.98.

*Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., to approve the Consent Agenda as amended, noting the exclusion of item C. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.*

**C. Adopt Resolution 2019-53, being a resolution accepting bids and awarding the contract for the 2019 Sanitary Sewer Lining, City Project No. 1904**

Director Hansen reported the reason the resolution was removed from the Consent Agenda was because the City received five bids during the day for the 2019 Sanitary Sewer Lining Project that encompasses 8,800 lineal feet of pipe throughout the entire City. He said bids ranged from \$202,000 to \$249,000, compared to Engineering's estimated base bid of \$250,000; and an Alternate is for lining the sewer connections where separation issues have occurred where service connections come into the main, 10 of the 15 being included in the bid.

*Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to waive the reading of Resolution 2019-53, there being ample copies available to the public. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.*

*Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to adopt Resolution 2019-53, being a resolution accepting bids and awarding the contract for 2019 Sanitary Sewer Lining, City Project No. 1904, including Alternate 1 for installation of main to service lateral connection liners to Hydro-Klean of Des Moines, Iowa, based upon their low, qualified, responsible base bid for lining in the amount of \$202,024.20 and \$34,100.00 for Alternate 1, with funds to be appropriated from Fund 652-51904-5185; and, furthermore, to authorize the Mayor and City Manager to enter into a contract for the same. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.*

## **8. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **A. Other Ordinances and Resolutions**

#### **B. Bid Considerations**

#### **C. New Business and Reports**

##### **a. City Manager's Performance Evaluation Summary**

Mayor Schmitt reported Councilmembers had met with Manager Bourgeois immediately before the evening's Council Meeting to review her performance as City Manager for the past six months.

Councilmembers said she'd done an outstanding job, citing her great communication and interaction skills, thanked her and said they looked forward to working with her the next six months and beyond.

## **10. CITY COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

Councilmember Buesgens attended the Minnesota League of Cities Conference in Duluth, where she was able to meet and discuss comparable issues with members from other cities; attended a communication workshop on projects and hoped to be able to share that information at a future Council work session; participated in the Jamboree parade, which received a great turnout, and attended the royalty party, adding that she had mixed feelings because the program is being discontinued in Columbia Heights; and attended the Boosters Merchandise Bingo.

Councilmember Williams attended the Jamboree, being very appreciative of the large turnout.

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., attended and described the Jamboree as a total success, as was the car show, waffle breakfast and fireworks.

Councilmember Novitsky thanked Lions members, City staff and Councilmembers for their work on the Jamboree, as well as the community, and said the \$2 admission change enabled more families to attend. He attended most of the events and was glad there were no incidents during this year's Jamboree.

Manager Bourgeois shared the happy news that she had received notification from Police Captain Erik Johnston that Dwayne Hopkins, a Public Works employee, helped Metro Transit Police rescue eight ducklings from the City storm sewers.

Mayor Schmitt said she assumed many attendees at the evening's Council Meeting were present in response to the denied Mayoral Proclamation Request for the upcoming Pride event on Saturday. She stated that a Mayoral Proclamation is merely a ceremonial document signed by the Mayor, a Mayoral Proclamation is at the discretion of the Mayor and does not constitute an endorsement or vote by the City Council.

Her reasons for denial were: 1) it is not a historical celebration, not celebrating a 25 to 100 years event in Columbia Heights, 2) has no direct relationship to the City of Columbia Heights and is not a City-sponsored event, 3) the City does not write proclamations for outside groups (groups need to submit a proclamation appropriate for a city and then Columbia Heights would determine whether it would be presented as written, edited or rejected). She said the City never received a Columbia Heights proclamation submission from HeightsNEXT and that it takes only one reason for a request to be denied.

She said, "The key to remember in this denial is nowhere does it say, as has been implied or vehemently stated, that the Mayor is against individuals in the LGBTQ community," also citing three other proclamations that were denied over the past few months: 1) a New Brighton resident asked for a proclamation for an event at the Heights Theater, and it was denied because it was not requested by a Columbia Heights resident and no proclamation was submitted; 2) a Columbia Heights resident requested the Mayor encourage residents to read the Mueller Report, and it was denied because it was considered a political request and no proclamation was submitted; and 3) an out-of-state group requested a proclamation to honor Stillborn Baby Month, and it was denied because it wasn't a Columbia Heights resident who requested the proclamation.

Mayor Schmitt noted reasons why the City has established guidelines for the Mayoral Proclamation: It is because none have been officially written down for over 97 years; and, though not perfect, they are a starting point of what is expected. She said residents are free to celebrate a family-friendly event in a City-owned park and do their own advertising for that event as any other group that is willing to pay for the park rental, and a piece of paper from the Mayor isn't needed to do this.

She continued on, "It saddens me that a like group like HeightsNEXT has moved from being a group focused on sustainability to one that has become politically charged and divisive. Apparently, some are even posting obscenities on my personal Facebook page, which I have chosen to stay away from at this point. Something to think about in our society: morality is not uniform from one person to the next. Go out and celebrate gay pride if you wish to do so. I support your right to associate and promote as it is allowed by our government. Wherever you stand on this issue, I hope you extend the same tolerance to those who don't follow your moral compass. (Mahatma) Gandhi said, "Peace is not the absence of conflict but the ability to cope with it." The key to a peaceful and cohesive community is recognizing that your neighbor may not agree with everything you do and that you may not agree with everything they do but is your right to act in accordance to your individual liberty that makes this a functioning and free society."

## **11. COMMUNITY FORUM**

Frost Simula, a City resident speaking on behalf of HeightsNEXT, summarized the history of the group, stating it is a nonprofit run by volunteer citizens focused on building a sustainable community. He said since 2015, the group's been promoting green technology, waste reduction and earth-friendly practices as well as organizing public events centered on diversity, service and neighborly fun and focuses on other individuals and organizations contributing toward these goals, partnering with them whenever possible. He said the group recognizes Mayor Schmitt and Councilmember Buesgens as two founding members of HeightsNEXT and is thankful for their service and contributions to Columbia Heights. HeightsNEXT has partnered with the City on a number of occasions, including Fix-It Clinics, Library workshops, Dog Day Afternoon, Truck or Treat, Community Picnic and the City's new Food Forest, as well as providing compost services for the City at the Fire and Ice Plunge and at the Jamboree.

He further stated that, as a City of peace, the group recognizes the City's commitment to fair, ethical and generous treatment of all people, welcoming diversity with open arms. HeightsNEXT recognizes the City Council and staff for their hard work every day and considers it a very fruitful partnership, adding that the group is very proud to volunteer for the City.

However, regarding inquiries to the City, he said it seems reasonable that any person or group should be able to expect a clear and timely response from the City and expressed feeling troubled to learn that it "attacked and threatened" HeightsNEXT. He stated that on June 17 he contacted City staff with a procedural question because the group did not know the process for requesting proclamations and left a message for Mayor Schmitt. Having heard no response, a second attempt was made to reach Mayor Schmitt on June 19, and an example proclamation was sent that would be appropriate for the group's purposes. Mr. Simula said that after 12 days of no response, the group contacted Mayor Schmitt on July 1 and finally heard back from her on July 3, when she requested to meet with the group in person that same day. He said during the meeting, Mayor Schmitt explained the City had no official procedural policy for proclamation requests, so she created one and decided that HeightsNEXT's request did not meet her criteria. Going on, he said Mayor Schmitt made it clear that she would not make any proclamation the group brought forth regardless of the new process. While the group did not agree with the decision, it accepted it and left the meeting on good terms.

He said the suggested proclamation would have been a historic recognition of the City's LGBTQIA-plus residents, a vital part of the City's diverse community; and by crafting a policy that denied the proclamation's request, the City actively discriminated against the LGBTQIA-plus community. In response, he stated that Mayor Schmitt has stated that HeightsNEXT, an organization she helped incorporate, was denied the proclamation request because of the group's refusal to follow a procedure, a procedure that did not exist when the inquiry was begun. He went on to say that Mayor Schmitt insulted the HeightsNEXT chair, who has children in the LGBTQIA-plus community, and stated that there can be no exceptions or special treatment, suggesting that the 501(C)3 nonprofit status of HeightsNEXT was somehow in danger. Mr. Simula addressed the Council, saying that what began as a procedural inquiry did not result in a clear and timely response from the City, instead receiving threatening statements towards the volunteer organization, a City partner. He said this leaves questions about the mutual partnership and future endeavors and said it is now clear that any resident in the group can now expect retaliation from the City for opening a simple dialogue, and this is unacceptable.

KT Jacobs, City resident and 2020 Census Complete Count Committee Chair, stated that any comments she would make should not be mistaken for anything against the LGBT community. She said her son is gay and she feels his pain, watching him live "behind a curtain" as his father cannot accept him for all that he is. In addition, she has a niece that is transgender and has other nieces, cousins and friends that struggle against the stigma that prevents their acceptance. Ms. Jacobs said she has advocated for and provided assistance to members of the LGBT community for over 12 years when they faced personal crises and said, while she can never know what it is like to walk in their shoes, she thinks she is fairly grounded in personal sensitivity and awareness of their struggle.

She said she is the chair of the Complete Count Committee (CCC) for 2020 Census and Amada Simula is a member of that committee and has participated in discussions on how to reach the marginalized groups in Columbia Heights, LGBT being one of them.

Upon receiving the HeightsNEXT event calendar in April, Ms. Jacobs reached out to Ms. Simula about an informational Census table being at Pride, who responded that she was uncomfortable with a Census presence, fearing attendance would make them feel threatened. Going on, she said this was a strikingly odd response to hear, about an event supposedly open to the public, especially for someone with first-hand knowledge of the Census Committee's mission. On June 18, CCC members wanted to hear about upcoming events, and Ms. Jacobs shared the pushback received from Ms. Simula. The Committee found the reasoning unacceptable, and Ms. Jacobs reassured them that she would reach out again and did so the next day. June 19, the response was 180 degrees different from April, though she said there are reasons CCC feels the enthusiastic about-face remains suspicious. She went on to say that the resulting conversation with Ms. Simula leaves the impression of exclusivity at the Pride event by its means of, or lack of, promotion and marketing into the community at large. This is in direct contrast to the event's Facebook page stating that it is a community event. She read comments she received from Ms. Simula between June 19 and June 24, citing that HeightsNEXT and the Census would be the only vendors or tables that aren't specifically formed or by a member of the LGBT community. Ms. Jacobs said the most disturbing comment from Ms. Simula was when she replied that she doesn't have time to solicit all the local businesses to see if they would be interested in attending, stating that her group had just made a general post on Facebook that they were looking for vendors and nonprofit educational groups and some people applied, "pretty organic," shoulder shrug.

Having attended Pride events since the early 1990s in multiple cities and states, Ms. Jacobs said it has been her personal experience that Pride's purpose is to educate, create awareness of issues and resources, remove the stigma, and welcome the general public to achieve acceptance through inclusivity. Based on the event's shared comments, she did not see this as a foundation to the Pride event in Columbia Heights. Ms. Jacobs' confusion lies in the contradictions in the chair's comments and the actions that have followed, admitting no active solicitation to the general community for vendors or attendees and emphatically and repeatedly states LGBTQIA-plus involvement only. She went to say that yet, at the midnight hour (with the event on the calendar since at least April), the group solicited a proclamation from the City and then said they didn't respond to the invitation to support the event even though HeightsNEXT did not fulfill its own responsibilities. Ms. Jacobs feels the chair has turned the Pride festival into a politically-charged (not political) issue by soliciting and posting on Facebook that members of a political party offer support and then present themselves at the evening's Council Meeting rather than seeking amicable resolution with the decision-makers involved. She said the group should have invested their efforts for a successful event in early marketing and promotion, rather than at the late hour.

Lindsey Schell-Edward, a self-proclaimed bisexual and City resident, said her forthcoming comments would be her own and would not reflect any organization. She said she attended the evening's Council Meeting because of the Mayor's refusal to issue a proclamation of awareness for the LGBTQ persons in Columbia Heights and her subsequent defense and veiled threats when questioned about her decision. Ms. Schell-Edward said she was confused as to why her existence was being deemed a political issue and was an insult to her and every LGBTQI-plus resident of the City when Mayor Schmitt, elected to lead the community, refused to issue a proclamation that was asking for awareness of their lives. She added that she believed it was "quite an effort" for the Mayor to make up guidelines, however, adding insult to injury by adding a public statement dismissing them further in claiming the proclamation as a political issue.

Ms. Schell-Edward said what is not a political issue is being an 18-year-old and not being able to hold hands with a person she cares for in public for fear of violence or watching a couple who have loved each other for 30 years finally getting to say "I do" and given the right every other citizen has been privileged to. She went on to say that she does know something political, the division of church and state.

Ms. Schell-Edward said the Mayor has issued more than one proclamation in support of religion-based events or figures even though the guidelines she produced clearly state that a proclamation would not be issued over "matters of political controversy, ideological or religious beliefs." What all of this tells her, she said, and "every person paying attention" is that the City Mayor does not feel she has to represent the members of her community for whom she does not approve, which is reprehensible and horrifying. She addressed Mayor Schmitt directly and said she could keep her proclamation, didn't want anything from her, and just wanted City citizens to know that even the Mayor does not deem them worthy of acknowledgement, Ms. Schell-Edward and many members of the community do, and they are worthy.

Gilbert Evans, City resident, thanked the Mayor and City Council and said he had read the proclamation guidelines produced by the City and found that it reasonably articulates the policy. He said while it's easy to classify a Pride celebration within the City as a social, cultural and historically significant event, he can understand how the Mayor would also interpret a Pride event to be both politically and religiously controversial. While he may not agree with the decision made, he said he understands the complexities and humbly acknowledges the Mayor's choice. Mr. Evans said he doesn't agree with the decision because 2019 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pride movement, fighting for equal treatment and protection under the law and pushing against oppression, marginalization, abuse, violence and discrimination. He said 2019 marks the milestone with historic significance to the City and Nation and wonders in the next 50 years what history will say about the choices made today.

Going on, he said, after 50 years, progress has been made and protest marches that began the Pride movement have evolved into a celebration of diversity and recognition of values of all people. He said the group celebrates the rich culture and diversity that the LGBTQ community shares with all citizens, as well as the progress made and is reminded of the somber reality that the movement is not complete.

Mr. Evans said the Pride Festival is a way for the community to join together and stand with those oppressed for far too long; and while it is called a celebration, the movement remains a protest. He said the LGBTQ community and its allies continue to fight for equal rights, equal treatment and equal protection under the law, and he believes Columbia Heights is made up of a community that desires nothing more than the fair treatment of all people, without bias and without exception. Mr. Evans said proclaiming this fundamental desire speaks to the heart of the City's culture and social fabric.

And while he cannot deny the existence of political and religious ideology surrounding the LGBTQ community, he said he believes they are misplaced, that the LGBTQ movement is not about changing political systems or religious values but is, plain and simple, about equal treatment, equal rights and equal protection under the law. He said these are the same principles that founded the United States, freed slaves, ended segregation, created the Civil Rights Act, acknowledged women's right to vote and continue to work towards gender equality, which has resulted in the City's honorable mayor. Mr. Evans said these are not principles that are contentious or controversial; they are the fabric of the Nation and rooted in the lives of its citizens. When these core beliefs, he stated, become controversial, he believes it is the duty of each and every citizen to stand and proclaim that they will not sit silently while "brothers and sisters" are being oppressed and stand by them to proclaim that they are accepted for who they are without prejudice and without exception.

Mr. Evans said it is the duty of the government at all levels to proclaim that they support the fundamental core values of the country and proclaim that the City will be a place where discrimination and oppression are not tolerated. He said the community relies on elected government officials to take a stand and support the equal rights, equal treatment and equal protection under the law for all citizens; that is what a proclamation would mean to him.

Andy Newton, City resident, stated that telling someone they need to tolerate the intolerant is not teaching tolerance. He said, as residents of the Columbia Heights community and in lieu of a proclamation by the City Mayor, he and Nelle Bing, a self-proclaimed bisexual and City resident, had written the Citizens Proclamation to be presented on behalf of the people of Columbia Heights to commemorate Heights Pride Day on Saturday, July 13. He added that this would be the first time in the City's history that an event such as this would occur, an event "whose historical significance should not be lost on anyone."

The proclamation was read by Ms. Bing: *"The Citizens of Columbia Heights, Minnesota, Proclamation. Whereas the City of Columbia Heights has a diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex and asexual community, which is an integral part of the culture and climate therein and, whereas, the diverse LGBTQIA community continues to grow within our community, contributing to the academic, economic, artistic and social spheres within our community and whose families and supporters are an integral part of the fabric of our City, and, whereas, the people of Columbia Heights and the LGBTQIA community continue to support and encourage diversity in the workplace and throughout the community, and, whereas, positive images provide support and advocacy to Columbia Heights gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual youth and young adults and educates the greater community, and, whereas, the City of Columbia Heights, being a City of peace, exemplifies the promotion of peace by creating and administering the means to enhance the lives of others by offering fair, generous and ethical practices to all people no matter their race, culture, creed or sexual preference or identity, so we can all live together in peace in our community, and, whereas, the Columbia Heights LGBTQIA community for the first time in the City's history will be recognized and celebrated by the people of the Community with a Pride event. Now, therefore, be it resolved that we, the people of Columbia Heights on behalf of the Community, are pleased to present this proclamation of July 13, 2019, as Pride Day in Columbia Heights. Signed, the people of Columbia Heights."*

Theresa Strike, City resident and 2<sup>nd</sup> vice chair of Senate District 41 DFL, said she had heard several mistruths about the subject and wanted to clarify some things. She said HeightsNEXT did not approach the DFL. She said she is a member of the community and her involvement with the DFL does not negate that. When she saw the proclamation had been rejected, as someone whose best friend is married to a trans woman who has been wanting to visit and suddenly didn't feel entirely comfortable with that, it was a concern to her. Ms. Strike said they have a closed discussion group where events and news of interest are shared, not all being partisan political such as visiting one of their members in a nursing home. She said she asked Ms. Simula if she would be comfortable with Ms. Strike sharing that as it was her event and she did not want to "step on any toes" and said a few members did reach out because they were concerned and wanted to ensure that fair process was in place. She said that she was concerned that, without speaking with any of them, the idea has been further raised that HeightsNEXT had made the event politically charged and, she said, that is not correct. Ms. Strike wanted to make it is clear that the issue was not about HeightsNEXT but, rather, it was the fact that there are members of DFL in the community that are involved, for the same reason that they are involved in the DFL and they want what is best for all members of the community, even the ones they don't agree with.



Paula Haller, a Fridley resident, said she supports the Mayor in that she doesn't see how the LGBTQ community needs a proclamation for the upcoming event. She said she supports them having a festival and what they are doing in the community but a majority of citizens in Columbia Heights, who are not intolerant, view the LGBTQ community as being no different and who wish true peace for all. Ms. Haller said if prejudice and discrimination are going on, that is wrong and that needs to be addressed; but she doesn't see an exclusive celebration for a particular group helping.

Steve Forseth, a self-proclaimed gay man and City resident, cited the Mayor's proclamation guidelines and said the Pride Festival's proclamation wasn't approved because it didn't have historical relevance to Columbia Heights. He said, though, that the Mayor is lying because the actual Mayoral Proclamation guidelines document cites "social, culture or historical celebrations with significance to the City of Columbia Heights." He said he couldn't understand why the proclamation was dismissed as a cultural or social event. And though he agreed it would not be a historical event, he said it does qualify for the other guidelines options and is a way to build public awareness. He said the residents of Columbia Heights, like him, want answers from the City as to what the "bigotry," the deep-rooted discrimination against the LGBTQ community, is about. He said Minnesota Statutes have a law against discrimination of LGBTQ people on sexual orientation discrimination; and if the law is being broken, it is being done to the whole Community, State and Nation.

He said it feels like he, a proud gay man, has been "pushed back into the closet because the Mayor doesn't want to acknowledge his existence." Ms. Forseth said he was born the way he is and, in 1974, the American Psychological Association deemed it not a mental illness to be homosexual. He said he wants to feel loved by the community, bought his residence in Columbia Heights because it was an all-inclusive, loving welcoming community; but he feels the City has a bigoted mayor that is doing everything to stonewall this simple process to acknowledge the LGBTQ existence, and that's unforgiveable. He cited the Mayor's acknowledgement on Facebook that she refused to sign the proclamation because it had no historical relevance, and he also stated that Councilmember Novitsky's father "chimed in with his bigoted view as well." And he said he feels that the internet now knows that the Mayor of Columbia Heights doesn't accept "his people," which he finds appalling, adding that if it continues, he's encouraging other members of the LGBTQ community to sell their units because they are not welcome, that the City is bigoted, reminiscent when "blacks were slaves" and not given their civil rights. He said he doesn't feel that the current Council accepts him, adding that he has nothing to do with HeightsNEXT.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to adjourn. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.*

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 pm.



Respectfully Submitted  
Nicole Tingley, City Clerk/Council Secretary