

Eric Stone

From: Delilah Walsh <Delilahw@City.Ketchikan.Ak.Us>
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 5:02 PM
To: Lacey Simpson; Kim Stanker; Taylor Lee
Subject: No Drag Queen Programmed Event

Mayor & Councilors,

I have been reconsidering my decision to include the drag queen story time in our June programming for the Library. My original direction to Pat was that another group was welcome to use the Library under our public use rules but the event would not be a City-sponsored event. After much consideration and *many* discussions with community members on both sides of the issue, I am resolved that my original direction was the right one for the organization. Therefore, as the chief administrative officer for the City, I am ultimately responsible for all operations of the organization and I am directing that the Library not program a drag queen story time. I apologize for the change and appreciate the opportunity for me to dig a bit deeper; I am now very firm in my resolve moving forward.

I have also directed Pat to consider programming that does focus on inclusivity and zeroes more specifically on the goals behind pride month. Pride Month is celebrated in honor of the 1969 Stonewall Riots and works to achieve equal justice and equal opportunity for LGBTQ Americans and one idea was for an adult program to screen the PBS documentary series "Stonewall Uprising – The Year that Changed America" and perhaps host a roundtable discussion. Again, I am not saying a drag queen story time is prohibited by the City but that it will not be part of City-sponsored programming.

I know you will be contacted by groups who disagree with this decision and apologize for that ahead of time and want to provide you with a heads up. I am sure this will rise to the level of the Mayor and Councilors. I am also very happy to make time to discuss my rationale if you wish to meet individually.

I completely agree with the City's commitment to inclusivity and equal access and not directly sponsoring an event does not prohibit it. If there are non-profit groups who would like to have this type of program, they may absolutely use the Library for such under our building use rules. Additionally, there are many ways our City can celebrate diversity and inclusivity without being polarizing in our community. This includes offering educational materials and providing a safe space for all people of Ketchikan to learn; a drag queen story time sponsored by the Library has proven to not be one of those methods.

Below is an email I received from the Pride Alliance and I have answered those inquiries in blue. I will send them the response in a separate email as I have also asked representatives of KPA to sit down and chat as again, I'm happy to discuss my rationale.

Thank you,
Delilah

In a meeting on 3/29/23 with the Ketchikan Public Library it was brought to our attention that the City Manager has verbally directed Ketchikan Public Library staff that;

1. Library programming, only for the month of June, must be submitted to the City Manager for review and approval. *I do discuss all programming with all department heads in my 1-on-1 meetings with department heads. Because I was aware of the controversy related to the drag queen story time event in 2022, I did request this ahead of time.*
2. Library staff cannot host a Story Hour with a drag queen as the guest, or any programming with a drag queen. *The Library will not sponsor a drag queen story time and we don't have any drag queen events programmed.*

It is also our understanding that this request has only been asked of the Ketchikan Public Library and not applied to other City Departments. As understood this directive is concerning and we would like for clarification on this situation. [Again, I do review programming with department heads.](#)

Would you be able to

1. Confirm if this request is an official directive of the City Manager. [Yes, it is my decision as the chief administrative officer of the City of Ketchikan.](#)
2. Provide clarification if the City Manager has directed any other City Department to submit their programming for approval. [Again, I do discuss programming with all department heads.](#)
3. Explain the protocol for determining whether programming is appropriate for a City Department, and [There is no protocol for determining appropriateness; as the chief administrative officer for the City, I am ultimately responsible for determinations that represent the best interest of the City.](#)
4. Explain why programming ONLY for the month of June, celebrated as Pride Month for the LGBTQ+ community has been requested to be reviewed. [Again, I do review activities with all department heads.](#)

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