



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Jessica Matson, Legislative & Information Services Director/City Clerk

**SUBJECT:** Supplemental Information  
Agenda Item 9.f – Consideration of Authorizing the Display of the  
LGTBQ+ Pride Flag During the Month of June 2023 at Heritage Square  
Park and at City Hall

**DATE:** May 22, 2023

Attached is correspondence received prior to 4 PM for the above referenced item.

cc: City Manager  
Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director  
City Attorney  
City Clerk  
City Website (or public review binder)

**From:** [Tanya Schoenheide](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Pride flag  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 1:46:33 PM

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Arroyo Grande City Counsel,

I wanted to state my concern over the thought of flying the pride flag at City Hall. I do not think this is acceptable. This is showing favoritism to one group of people. At the same time excluding many others. The only flag that should be flying is the American flag!!! Because that is truly the only flag that is all inclusive!!! Please do not consider the pride flag as one that would be a beneficial to our community!!!

**From:** [Becky Mosgofian](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Support for flying Pride flag at City Hall  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 12:44:39 PM

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My name is Becky Mosgofian and I am a resident of Arroyo Grande. I ask for your unanimous support of flying the rainbow flag at City Hall for Pride month.

With hate crimes and political agendas against queer and trans communities on the rise, nationally, Arroyo Grande needs to proudly fly the rainbow flag now more than ever - to visually announce we stand in solidarity with these marginalized groups and celebrate the beauty of Pride.

Queer and transgender people experience significantly higher rates of depression and suicide, among other concerns. This is not because of their identity or who they love. It is about navigating an unsafe world where they consistently hear that they don't belong.

Flying the rainbow flag, when used to celebrate Pride or the LGBTQ+ community, is not just a celebration of identity, it is a powerful beacon indicating allyship and symbolizing our community's commitment to being a safe, welcoming space where all belong.

Thank you,  
Becky Mosgofian  
Arroyo Grande resident

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Display of flags  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 12:44:14 PM

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To whom it may concern,

Please vote to maintain the current practices of AG flag flying. Keep it simple; US, CA, and city flags only. Including other interest groups will only lead to more division. There will be no end to who should be represented.

Thank you,  
Diana Vasquez

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [anitaik](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** LGBTQ flag display  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 12:04:33 PM

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To Whom It May Concern:

I respectfully request that we not display the LGBTQ flag, or any other of any type, than the flag of the USA.

All these labels, not matter what label, race, religion, economic status, LGBTQ, etc... that we are giving one another are dividing us. These labels only foment hate and division and exacerbate our differences. Each group, no matter who, or what they are, or represent, don't need special recognition. A symbol or sign or whatever else is not needed. For some reason we are falling under the banner that we have to condone or acknowledge these divisive issues. We each have an individual choice and our individual choice should not be forced upon anyone else to recognize them.

What's needed is just more kindness and love to one another as individuals. Let's promote that rather than division and forced controversy.

I personally choose to look at us all, as human beings that bleed the same red blood and are meant to love one another and live peacefully with one another. I don't need to approve or condone a lifestyle or personal choice of someone in order to just be kind to them, feed them, clothe them, help them. A flag or symbol does none of those actions just stated.

Let's put a flag up that says and promotes those things instead...

Respectfully,  
Anita Ikeda  
Resident of Arroyo Grande

**From:** [barbara dyer](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Flags  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 11:44:07 AM

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I'm very disappointed that the gay pride flag will be waving in Arroyo Grandy for a month. I am a Christian, and I would love it if you waved a Christian flag for a month. If you believe in diversity and you are representing the gay community for a month I believe we should represent the Christian community for a month. Otherwise don't put any flags except the American flag and the California flag.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Tom Olmstead](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** City Council of AG  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 10:49:16 AM

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**Greetings City Council,**

**I am writing as a resident of AG living on Bakeman Lane to request that you do not allow the Pride Flag to be flown at our Heritage Park or the City Hall. Folks who identify with this flag are already afforded all the rights, privileges, and protections of being an American citizen. It's my conviction that we do not need to give our community's young people and our visitors the impression that we promote this lifestyle and these values. The values this flag represents could actually confuse young people and percentage wise results in much greater volatility of emotional and psychological duress. It's clear, to me, that our government and community should do more to encourage our children to have the family values that built this lovely community over generations. Please just fly our American flag!**

**Blessings,**

**Tom Olmstead**

**From:** Sally Woelper <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 9:21 AM

**To:** Caren Ray Russom <crayrussom@arroyogrande.org>

**Subject:** Pride week flags

Dear Caren,

A friend told me that council is voting on flying pride week flags on city property. I am not in favor of this proposal. I'm asking you to vote against it.

Sincerely your neighbor,

Sally J Woelper

[REDACTED]

Arroyo Grande Sent from my iPhone



**From:** [Candy Welch](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Opposition of item 9F, flying of pride flag at City Hall and Heritage Square Park  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 10:28:56 AM

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Dear Mayor Rossum and City Council Members,

As a 30 year member of this community and a frequenter (many times per week) of numerous businesses in the Village of Arroyo Grande, I would like to voice my strong opposition to the flying of the pride flag at City Hall and Heritage Square Park (or any other city or state government or community locations) for the month of June; I urge you to vote no on the authorization to do so. Flags flown at those locations should be limited to those that include all of the constituents of that area, for example the state or American flag. The pride flag does not represent me or many others of this community. That in no way means the members of that community do not carry the same rights as all other individuals in our country under the flag of the United States of America. I reason that a flag that was commissioned in 1978 by a San Francisco City Supervisor (with at least a dozen new versions in the past decade to include the ever expanding group of individual's personal identities) does not belong on the flagpole with the flag of the United States of America, representing the founding and union of our nation in 1776 and those that have died in service to that which the flag represents. The American flag unifies a nation of unique individuals of many different nations, ethnicities, religious and personal beliefs under a banner of freedom. I argue that the pride flag seeks to set apart and draw attention to a select group which is unnecessary at a city or state level because as stated previously the individuals in that group already have the same rights and privileges as every American citizen. So just like Italian Americans are free to fly the flag of their homeland, Italy, at their Italian restaurant or Mexican Americans are free to fly the Mexican flag at their restaurant or when their team is playing in the World Cup (or anytime for that matter), those that resonate with the values of the pride flag are free to fly it on their businesses or homes anytime they want. We are all free to express our opinions in this great nation but we should not expect the whole nation of individuals to adopt our personal belief system. Therefore, flying the pride flag, representing a small group of individuals, should not be done in a public square or city or government setting. Again, I urge you to represent the wishes of the whole of your constituency, rather than a select few, and vote no on the authorization to fly the pride flag at City Hall and Heritage Square Park. I believe that if you choose to authorize the flying of the pride flag at these locations, business will suffer as long as the flag flies. I personally will not go to businesses in the Village of Arroyo Grande for the month of June as a statement against the divisive nature of that decision. You can look to recent issues with Budweiser (leading to a profit loss of over over 1/3 in a few short weeks) to know that the majority of Americans do not support this agenda and are willing to speak with their pocketbook!

Thank you for taking time to read my email.

Sincerely,

Candy Welch

**From:** [logan wais](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Flying the flag  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 9:56:50 AM

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Hello Arroyo Grande City Counsel ,

The gay flag is not a symbol to fly above our public institutions.

Is it the role of our public officials to decide which sexual fetishes to promote?

Think about it. A whole group of people who have unnatural sexual desires for the same sex assemble, call it their "identity", complain that they are not accepted and then start to pressure everyone into accepting their actions as normal.

It's the same story over and over.

The truth is It won't be normal and accepted because men putting their [REDACTED] into other men's [REDACTED] will never be normal. it's not natural. It's a sexual fetish. It shouldn't be accepted in society so you shouldn't fly a flag supporting a particular sexual fetish.

How about a rule where we just don't fly flags where the group of people establish their group identity by what type of sex they like?

How about we fly flags that unite us? That we can all identify with. We are all Americans. Let's fly the American flag. Why can't that be enough?

Do you want other organizations who want their other sexual fetishes knocking on your door demanding you to fly their flag next year? The beastiality group, minor attracted people group, trans movement.

"Oh that'll never happen." yeah right.

All this is is people who have unnatural sexual fetishes trying to be accepted by society because they want their feelings validated by society. But it's their own consciences that betray them. That's why they aren't content with all the legal backing and protections california has given them.

What else are they lobbying for? They can get "married". Discrimination is illegal. The problem is cultural not political. They want everyone to see something that is unnatural as natural.

Deeper down is the question "what type of sex is good or bad". Moral or immoral. That's a religious question. If you fly the flag you are making a religious statement that homosexual sex is good.

Is it the role of our public officers to assert religious statements? No. You would be supporting the religion of atheistic humanism.

Now you get yourself into supporting particular religions. So then you have to be prepared for all the other religions to start demanding you to fly all their flags too. Honestly, I'd love for you to be a tool to advance my religious beliefs but decent people realize that this is not the duty of our public institutions.

So how about we keep it simple and just fly the American flag.

Sincerely,  
Logan wais

Logan Wais

**From:** [Marja Rafiee](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Pride Month & Flag Support  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 9:36:03 AM

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Dear AG City Council,

This message is to express my support of the City of Arroyo Grande declaring June as Pride Month (agenda item 6a) and my support of displaying the Pride Flag at Heritage Square Park and at City Hall (agenda item 9f). Let's show our city and county how AG is the best of both small town and progressive worlds. Let's show all our community members that they are supported.

Thanks for your consideration,  
Marja Rafiee  
AG Resident

**From:** [Seth McMillan](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Item 9.f Withdrawal LGBTQ+  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 9:01:00 AM

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Dear Councilman,

I respectfully request you withdrawal this item from consent and have an open discussion of the merits of such action.

My position is not to use city facilities for a display singling out a portion of culture created by choice and not circumstances beyond their control. This council as many others, are already willing to proclaim June as a month to celebrate choices which adversely effect our community and culture especially our children.

On the legal side I'll suggest you look into which flag you are going to fly. There is no such "LGBTQ+ Pride Flag." I guess staff and council are confused on this issue as I am.

Though this action has been approved in the past, in my opinion, it is not a matter of routine business. This issue is, by it's very nature, divisive and your opinions and direction to staff need to be clearly articulated in a public form. Yes, it is uncomfortable, but that is what you signed up for.

If you'd like to speak about this further please contact me.

Respectfully,  
Seth McMillan



Nipomo, CA 93444

**From:** [Darsie Cole](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** The American Way  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 8:12:56 AM

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Hello Arroyo Grande City Council,

Can we please hang a White-Pride Flag? I'm joking, but how Un-American that sounds.

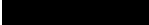
I am writing to voice my opposition to the City of Arroyo Grande's decision to fly a "Gay Pride " flag at City Hall. As hanging a white-pride flag would be, hanging a pride-flag is also Un-American. And, by the way, I have decades-long gay and lesbian friends and associates and most of them do not agree with flying a pride flag either.

I believe that the only flags that should be flown in front of city government buildings are the U.S. flag, the California state flag, the city flag, the county flag, the POW/MIA flag and flags representing the six branches of the military.

The gay community should not be persecuted or mistreated and neither should I or my family and friends because of our beliefs. Humans' chromosomes determine that there are two, and only two, genders. Everyone is either one or the other, from birth until death. No one should be obligated to address those of some imagined gender by some imagined pronoun.

You folks are elected to lead, so step up and lead. We appreciate your devotion in representing our community and we understand that you are faced with challenges and pressures from many different directions. However, keep it simple and stick with the basics of standing for the American way, tried-and-true American traditions that contributed to the wonderful, free country in which we are fortunate to live.

Thank you for reading my email and considering my comments.

All the best,  
Darsie Cole  
 (cell)

**From:** [Caleb Cole](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** My Opinion On The Pride Flag at Arroyo Grande City Hall  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 6:52:17 AM

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First off I ask that whoever reads this values my voice and doesn't blow this off. We have a great community where people can make their voices heard, but when people in power don't consider both sides of an argument we have a problem. I believe that we should not fly a gay pride flag at the city hall. It is as simple as that, we should not fly a gay pride flag at the city hall.

Thank you for listening to the people who drive through the village everyday and shop there, and eat there, and live there.

-Caleb Cole

**From:** [John Cole](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment Regarding Pride Flag  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 6:40:44 AM

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I am writing to voice my opposition to the City of Arroyo Grandes decision to fly a "Gay Pride " flag at City Hall. I believe that the only flags that should be flown in front of city government buildings are the U.S. flag, the California state flag, the city flag, the county flag, the POW/MIA flag and flags representing the six branches of the military. I have a live-and-let-live attitude towards gay people. The gay community should not be persecuted or mistreated. I should not be persecuted or mistreated for my belief that their lifestyle is not normal behavior. Our chromosomes determine that there are two, and only two, genders. Everyone is either one or the other, from birth until death. No one should be obligated to address those of some imagined gender by some imagined pronoun.

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John Cole



**From:** [Scott Kohlbusch](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Arroyo Grande Flag Display Policy  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 11:05:07 PM

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May 23, 2023

Dear Members of the Arroyo Grande City Council,

I respectfully request that the Arroyo Grande City Council revise and adopt a Flag Display Policy that is fair for all the citizens of Arroyo Grande. A genuinely non-partisan policy, one that avoids even the appearance of government bias, would only allow for the flags of the United States, California, and the City of Arroyo Grande to be displayed at city-owned or maintained facilities. The display of commemorative flags such as the LGBTQ+ Pride Flag or the flag of any other organization, nation, or social movement should be relegated to the private sector.

The Charter of the City of Arroyo Grande explicitly states that “Local government will promote the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens of this city.” Community representatives such as yourselves, therefore, should not endorse the LGBTQ+ movement - a movement that demeans women by allowing trans athletes to dominate women’s sports and biological men to enter women’s restrooms - a movement that harms children and teens by encouraging them to seek radical treatments such as puberty blockers and non-medical mastectomies, both of which can result in permanent bodily damage.

Additionally, one of the stated goals of this Council’s May 21, 2021 Flag Display Policy is to highlight the “Role of the Arroyo Grande City Hall as an inclusive gathering location.” Flying the LGBTQ+ Flag does not accomplish this goal. Instead, it sends a strong message that those who disagree with the LGBTQ+ viewpoint are not full members of the political community. True inclusivity, the kind that promotes civic unity, would respect a diversity of opinions and be better served by only displaying the flags of the United States, California, and Arroyo Grande. I urge this council to adopt such a policy.

Sincerely,  
Scott Kohlbusch

Arroyo Grande resident since 1998

**From:** [Steven Rice](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Gay Pride Banner  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 9:18:44 PM

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Hello, please add my voice to those protesting the flying of the gay pride banner.

**From:** [karina brevetz](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** 2023 Pride  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 9:18:00 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to request that Arroyo Grande flies the Pride and Trans flag's this year.

I'd also like it if AG would bring back our own Pride Celebration next year.

It has been missed.

Let's remind all our visitors that our town stands for Inclusivity, love and respect.

Thank you.

Karina Hughes

**From:** [Leah Close](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Gay Pride Flag  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 8:53:19 PM

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Hello,

I would like to express my opinion with the flying of the gay pride flag for the month of June. Personally, I think for our small town, it would be hard for people to see and to support that. We aren't LA or SF. So many families with young kids go through the village each week. I just don't think many would be happy with your choice to fly it. Please consider this before making your final decision. I love the feel of our small town. I think this would make it very different for many.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts.

With love,

A life long citizen of AG

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** flying the pride flag  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 8:49:15 PM

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It has come to my attention that the City of Arroyo Grande is planning to fly the rainbow flag for pride month. I don't feel you can justify flying this flag because you have not flown a flag for any nationality during their month of honor. What flag did you fly for Black history month? How about this month for Asian Pacific American month. I don't feel it is appropriate to honor one flag over another because pride month is not honoring a nationality. Bad idea.  
Sincerely,  
a concerned citizen

**From:** Sharon Billon [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 22, 2023 12:10:09 PM  
**To:** Caren Ray Russom <crayrussom@arroyogrande.org>  
**Subject:** Pride flag  
Hello, Mayor Ray-Russom!

It has come to my attention that there is an agenda item on the May 23rd agenda proclaiming Pride Month. While it is understandable to recognize people who feel victimized, this proclamation should not include a motion to fly the Pride Flag on city flagpoles. I oppose any flag begin flown over government buildings except official national, official state, official local government flags, and official military flags. Special interest flags being used in this way is divisive and shows preference for some citizens over others. Please vote NO on the any motion to fly the Pride flag during Pride Month.

Thank you.

Sharon Billon

**From:** Omega Cox <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 22, 2023 11:54:28 AM  
**To:** Caren Ray Russom <crayrussom@arroyogrande.org>  
**Subject:** Flag 5.23.23 - items 6a & 9f  
Good morning,

I am sending this email with regards to the city council meeting that will be held tomorrow, in particular items 6a/9f:

Honorary Proclamation Declaring June 2023 as “Pride Month”

Consideration of Authorizing the Display of the LGBTQ+ Pride Flag During the Month of June 2023 at Heritage Square Park and at City Hall

I plead that we DO NOT authorize the “Pride” flag flown at either City Hall, or Heritage Square Park. In the memo from Whitney McDonald, I am perplexed about this terminology:

"As stated in the adopted Flag Display Policy, the City’s flagpoles are not intended to serve as a forum for free expression by the public. Rather, the City's flagpoles are to be **used exclusively by the City**, where the City Council may display a commemorative flag as a **form of government expression**. The City will not display a commemorative flag based on a request from a third party, nor will the City use its flagpoles to sponsor the expression of a

third party. Instead, the policy states that such flag, **as an expression of the City’s official sentiments**, must be requested by a member of the City Council itself.”

So as I understand it, **the public** citizens are bound to whatever the government authorizes and/or requests, including **it’s own expression or sentiment** for the flag poles, in this case the *private* matters of the Pride Flag. The commemorative Pride Flag, flown in June to represent the commemorative “Pride Month”— which by it’s own definition, is a month long observance in celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people — making it sexual in nature and therefore **NOT a public matter**. It is **private**, and should remain so. The Pride Flag does not belong at city government or public spaces.

Please maintain only the beautiful Arroyo Grande, State of California, and United States flags flying. It is the responsible thing to do.

This is simply a private matter vs. a public matter. That’s it, it’s not complicated and shouldn’t be controversial.

Thank you, see you at the meeting tomorrow.

Respectfully,

Omega Cox  
AG Resident, Voter, and Tax-Payer



**From:** [Doug Joseph](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Gay flag  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 5:38:21 PM

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I here'd that the city of Arroyo grande was planning to fly the Gay flag please don't do that it is telling our kids and grandchildren that it's ok . But it is not according to the Bible it is an abomination and as a Christian it is the wrong message. Besides that ,do we fly other unsatisfactory organizations flags that we don't believe in like the nazis? I don't think so. I'm a democrat and voted that way all my life . I don't want to have to vote otherwise.  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Cathy Joseph](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Gay pride flag  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 5:02:54 PM

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To who it may concern.

I have a real problem with the gay flag being flown from anywhere especially from a government building. God said that being gay is an abomination. What you would be telling the kids that it is an acceptable lifestyle. But actually it's a sin in the eyes of God. If an adult chooses that lifestyle that's their choice and God will deal with them. It's just not something we should encourage with our little ones. Please reconsider not flying this flag.

Thank you,

A very concerned voter.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Links contained in this email have been replaced. If you click on a link in the email above, the link will be analyzed for known threats. If a known threat is found, you will not be able to proceed to the destination. If suspicious content is detected, you will see a warning.

**From:** [Ardy Conway](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Pride flag  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 4:46:58 PM

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I am a resident of Arroyo Grande and I oppose the idea of hanging the pride flag in our city.

Ardy Conway

**From:** [DEBBIE & HORACE REEVES](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** flags  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 4:44:37 PM

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Please keep flying the national, city and state flags only in Arroyo Grande. We all can respect and honor these and others are more for certain groups only. We do not need PRIDE flags when we would all pay taxes to promote things we do not respect? I think not. Thank you for keeping AG respectful of our country.

**From:** [Jacki Mallory](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Flags flown at City Hall and City Parks  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2023 4:03:03 PM

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Dear City Counsel,

I am writing to ask that the counsel vote to only fly the American Flag, our State Flag and our city flag.

I appreciate your consideration,  
Jacki Mallory

**From:** [S S](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** LGBTQ Flag  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 3:30:30 PM

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Dear City Council,

I wish to express my concern over the proposed flag to be flown at the city hall and heritage park.

I feel that we should only fly our national, state and city flags and no other.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to your citizens' concerns.

Sincerely,  
Susan Story