

From: Eric [REDACTED]
To: -- City Clerk
Subject: City Council Meeting: General Public Comment
Date: Monday, October 2, 2023 1:03:29 PM

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Dear Mayor and Council Members,

As you are aware, there were multiple hate speech attacks across both Marin and Sonoma counties in the past few weeks. In Petaluma, haters posted white supremacist / antisemitic hate in downtown. In Sonoma County, the board of supervisors and Santa Rosa school board meetings were among several that were zoom bombed with hate speech attacks.

We need to be prepared as a city ASAP to respond effectively to these incidents. Describing white supremacist hate speech attacks as merely "vandalism" lacks vital context to what happened, and does not offer our community the knowledge they need to make safety decisions for themselves.

STEP 1: Council should quickly adopt unanimously a resolution against antisemitism and ALL forms of hate speech. Sonoma County unanimously passed a gold resolution this year:

- Sonoma County Approves Resolution Condemning Antisemitism and All Forms of Hate Speech: <https://www.antisemitismaction.org/resolution-approved>

STEP 2: The resolution should be a catalyst for improvements - for example:

>> **ACTION:** Accelerate implementing the recommendations of the AHCAC: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/documents/ahcac-final-report/>. Many recommendations are not completed from these 2021 recommendations.

>> **ACTION: "law enforcement and local jurisdictions to report all hate crimes"**

- In this instance, since the vandalism was hate speech, the city should have reported this. The city needs to strengthen its communication strategy regarding hate attacks.
- Source: Page 27: Strategic Goal 2.2 Ensure Robust Engagement Between Law Enforcement, Government Leaders, Civil Rights Organizations, and the Communities They Serve to Combat Hate Crimes. U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf>

>> **ACTION: "mayors, governors, and municipal leaders to establish a liaison to serve as a central coordinator for Jewish and other faith communities, especially as security needs arise. Many elected leaders have advisory groups or task forces that include faith leaders."**

- The Petaluma Ad Hoc Community Advisory Committee (AHCAC) recommended years ago a "new permanent commission on on race relations and public safety"
- Source: Page 29: Strategic Goal 2.3 Enhance the Physical Security of Jewish and Other Religious Communities and Institutions. U.S. National Strategy to Counter

Antisemitism:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf>

>> ACTION: "local governments to strengthen social services to support survivors of hate crimes and their communities. These may include victim compensation programs, victim advocate programs, culturally competent mental health services, and solidarity building initiatives such as restorative justice programs."

- The Petaluma Ad Hoc Community Advisory Committee (AHCAC) recommended years ago the creation of a multicultural center including restorative justice programming along with a committee of residents to oversee the program.
- Source: Page 33: Strategic Goal 2.6—Strengthen Support for Victims of Antisemitic Harassment and Attacks. U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf>

This is undeniably a lot of work. It is very important work, particularly for those of us with the privilege and fortune to not have to live with constant harassment and regular attacks like these. We simply cannot remain a safe and vibrant community without very strong, coordinated, inclusive responses to these attacks.

Eric Leland

Antisemitism Action Team

<https://www.antisemitismaction.org/>