

From: Eric [REDACTED]
To: -- City Clerk
Subject: City Council Public Comment on Agenda Item #9 Resolution Supporting Human Rights
Date: Sunday, October 15, 2023 7:54:54 PM

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Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I strongly support the resolution condemning hate speech, racism and acts of extremism.

Extremist hate continues to spike year after year.

Hatred against LGBTQ+, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Jews, Sikhs, Muslims and other minority groups has spiked to historically high levels. Now with the recent massive violence in the Middle East, hate crimes against Muslims, Jews and other groups are spiking. According to the Anti Defamation League, Anti-Jewish threats on social media have surged since the beginning of the conflict. Two days ago in Plainfield Illinois, a town not much smaller than Petaluma, a man motivated by anti-Muslim hatred stoked by the recent war - stabbed to death a 6 year old Palestinian American boy.

What can Petaluma do? Pass this resolution, but fast and concrete action makes the difference.

Please finally form the permanent Commission focused on race relations and public safety. City Council strongly supported this top recommendation from the AHCAC two years ago, and has yet to implement the Commission.

> Proposal for a Permanent Commission, AHCAC August 17 2021 meeting, #38 (pdf page 20): https://petaluma.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=31&clip_id=3368&meta_id=501259

> December 13 2021 City Council Workshop: AHCAC Recommendations, page 9 (pdf page 12):
https://petaluma.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=31&clip_id=3491&meta_id=512628

Why is a City Commission focused on our safety important? Because extremists are targeting our residents with hate.

A torrent of racist hate speech hit Petalumans at the last Council meeting. The extremists have made it too risky for many to speak out publicly against hate. This past summer, visitors to our library were targeted with hate. In recent weeks, people walking downtown

were targeted with white supremacist hate. This is a huge safety issue for Petalumans. City staff and Council Members have been targeted with hate.

The safety of Petalumans is THE paramount concern for any city. We need local Petalumans empowered to focus on safety for a Council that is stretched in too many directions to give this issue the attention it deserves. Our safety cannot be a policy focus simply every time hate attacks flare up in our community.

I urge you to take fast action. Agree tonight to form this permanent Commission - fast track this work. Hate does not wait. We have waited two years, we cannot wait any longer.

Eric Leland (he/him)
Petaluma Resident