From:	brandi jessup
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	Wednesday Council meeting and being an ally
Date:	Saturday, June 13, 2020 3:32:32 PM

To the members of the council,

I was one of the 40 or so people watching the council meeting on YouTube on Wednesday and I was very concerned by what I saw. I am aware that there is a specificity and order to council meetings, but watching all of the BIPOC guests sit silently while the entirely white council talked for two hours then watching concerned community members being actively silenced while white council members talked over them was too much. There was no time for questions, there was no conversation. It felt like the BIPOC guests were there purely for show.

I am a middle-class white woman. I am new to being an ally as well. I have not always done it correctly and I'm sure there are things I'm doing now that aren't perfect. I know that the members of the council were most likely not actively trying to be racist, however, it was a perfect example of how our privilege allows us to continue to feel like we're doing something, feel like we're allies when really we are playing into the same systems of suppression that have led us to this point, and as a member of the audience, it felt incredibly, actively anti-black.

I'm sure I'm not alone in wanting to hear from the BIPOC members of our community or to want to have an actual discussion on topics of police brutality, use of force, equal opportunities, etc. I want to know what the leadership of our town plans to do to move us forward and create an inclusive, safe community for all citizens. I want to know why the woman who tried multiple times to call in feels unsafe, and I want to hear the Police Chief and the mayor's response to her fear. I want to know what the chief's response to white militias counter-protesting and intimidating citizens will be.

I would like to see a "redo". I think the council made a mistake, not out of maliciousness, but out of misunderstanding, and I would like for you to give it a second chance. Can we have a second meeting with the same BIPOC community members where the goal is to listen, not to talk? Can we make a full hour of that meeting open to community questions, and can we listen and learn even if the things said are hard to hear.

I don't know what the proper response is right now, but I know that it is not to continue to talk over marginalized voices. We have been talking for 400 years and it is time for us to cede the floor.

I would be happy to help in any way to facilitate a second discussion. I would also like to suggest that there is someone on the council actively moderating the youtube chat during all publically streamed meetings and taking questions there as well.

I'm attaching a great video from Instagram that I have found helpful. I hope we can all continue working daily to become better allies.

Best,

Brandi Jessup