

From: Kelly Stuart <kellystuart7@gmail.com>
Date: July 2, 2024 at 6:13:13 PM PDT
To: ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS <ALLELECTEDOFFICIALS@elsegundo.org>
Subject: WATER TOWER COLORS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY CAROL PIRSZTUK

Today I learned through a public records request, that an individual who has a history of obsessively posting hate speech on various El Segundo Facebook groups, requested that Council Members change the lighting on the water tower from "Rainbow" to Red White and Blue on June 14th. This was just two weeks into Pride Month. Shortly after that, Council Member Pirsztuk then texted the city worker in charge of the lights: "Can you now change the tower to red white and blue tonight through July 5th" Today is flag day so important to do it tonight. Thanks." The city worker replied, "I'm on it, done."

Question: Was this action by Carol Pirsztuk done independently, or did the entire city council discuss and agree to this?

Why does one voice that is consistently associated with hate speech - have such a strong influence with a city council member? Perhaps she didn't know?

Later in a comment on a Facebook post by a constituent who asked why the lights had been changed, Carol said it was just for flag day and for Biden's arrival at LAX, and then admonished people who had comments or questions that there's no guarantee of having any lights at all.

Here is her comment:

Carol Pirsztuk

The history of the ES Water Tower lights. As a child, I was always amazed when our ES Water Tower would turn into a great pumpkin to celebrate Halloween. Little did I know the effort it took for the city and community members to create something special for the town's children. As with everything, the city stopped the tradition over time, but I always remembered it. Thus, when I joined the City Council, I wanted to bring back once again the Great Pumpkin for the town's children. I asked the Public Works Director about six years ago if it was feasible, and to my delight, it was inexpensive to add singular color lights to the tower. So, the Great Pumpkin was back. Thankfully, technology has improved, and about a year and a half ago, we enhanced the lights to create things like the rainbow and the stars on the flag. So yes, as in The Wizard of OZ, there are people behind the curtain making the magic for our community,

*which is all relatively new. So, as you enjoy the lights, please know that the intent of the lights on the water tower is to make magic for the children in our community. It is not anyone's primary job to manage the lights; it is a voluntary bonus out of kindness and goodwill to celebrate with the community. **No guarantees or commitments are given.** We are hopeful the lights will continue, but as with anything, a cost is associated with doing it and if the public sentiment needs to be positive. Before I close, I want to clear up a couple of misstatements on this feed. This year, the tower was lit up with a rainbow for pride on June 1st. As I mentioned earlier, the technology to change the colors fairly simply is new, so we decided to celebrate our ESHS graduates this year. We changed the colors to blue and gold last weekend and then changed them back to rainbow. We then changed the colors for Flag Day on Friday, June 14th. Knowing that the President of the US was in town this weekend (Air Force One is parked at LAX), we decided to keep the US Flag flying in his honor (similar to the flags flying for the King of England when he is in residence). We will change the tower back to a Rainbow for Pride and then change it to celebrate the Fourth of July, Independence Day. But, as I said before, please understand there is no guarantee. Lastly, for all the people who have negative comments about the magic of lighting up the water tower, please know that we can only keep this tradition alive if it brings joy and happiness to our community. Thanks, Carol*

My question to the city council, do you stand by this statement to constituents?

Why is this statement in factual conflict with the sequence of events revealed by the public record?

Many of us just asked for transparency but our questions were not answered. I asked simply, can you tell us who decides when the tower will have its lights changed. No answer.

For folks who think it's a minor issue that the lights on the water tower are or are not displaying the Pride colors, it matters to kids.

LGBTQ kids are at an increased risk of suicide (provoked by bullying and intolerance) so it signals to those kids in our town they are accepted and loved. Carol Pirsztuk it IS ABOUT THE KIDS. And in this year when attacks on LGBTQ rights have increased, it's really Important.

According to a survey conducted by the Trevor Project, Twelve percent of LGBTQ kids attempted suicide last year.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trevor-project-lgbtq-survey-mental-health-suicide/>

I have appreciated the efforts our city has shown to support the LGBTQ community. I don't believe Council Member Pirsztuk's actions align with the efforts of the council as a whole. What steps can the council take to ensure more transparency for the future? I'm concerned about the blatant lie, but also about the influence of one hate speech purveyor who emails the city council and gets results. Are there steps to be taken so this doesn't happen again?