

**MARCH 5, 2024 CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**POSITION STATEMENTS & WRITTEN COMMENTS**

**PUBLIC FORUM**

***WRITTEN COMMENT ONLY***

1. Bruce Baylor Breydor (Naperville), LGBTQ+ Naperville – I am writing to make a public statement in support of the year-round display of LGBTQ+ flags in public spaces, as well as the painting of rainbow-colored crosswalks and other painted flags / representation in downtown Naperville. These visible symbols of pride and inclusivity encourage acceptance, representation, and dialogue in our community. The benefits of such initiatives go beyond symbolism. By prominently displaying LGBTQ+ flags and rainbow crosswalks, we foster a sense of community among LGBTQ+ people and all others. This sense of inclusion is critical for promoting mental health and well-being because it conveys a clear message of acceptance and support. Furthermore, celebrating LGBTQ+ pride demonstrates our dedication to diversity and inclusivity. By demonstrating our respect and appreciation for people of all backgrounds, we not only represent the diverse populations that make up the Naperville community, but also attract tourism and promote economic growth in LGBTQ+-friendly environments. I urge the community to recognize the significance of these initiatives and to continue efforts to promote equality, representation, and acceptance for all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. I also urge the community to provide other forms of recognition for other populations of our community to be up all year around in one form or another. Show all of our true colors! Thank you for paying attention to this matter.
2. Abby Bingham (Naperville) In support of resolution for ceasefire in Gaza. As a Naperville resident, I implore the City Council to pass a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in the ongoing genocide in Gaza. The US-backed, Israeli-led siege of the 2.2 million residents of Palestine has resulted in tens of thousands of deaths, and is now, horribly, resulting in the slow death of civilians due to forced starvation. Permanent ceasefire is the first required step to support Palestinians, who have suffered under the illegal occupation of their lands by the Israeli government for almost 76 years.
3. Areeg Faisal (Naperville), Palestine/ceasefire resolution, I would like to affirm my desire in having Naperville city council address and approve a Gaza ceasefire resolution as soon as possible that explicitly calls for the end of the ongoing genocide and ethnic cleansing carried out against the Palestinian people in Gaza.

## **I8 Approve the proposed CY2024 SECA Grant Fund Program Allocation**

### **WRITTEN COMMENT ONLY**

1. Corvin Ezri - I am writing to express my support for Naper Pride to be a recipient of the 2024 SECA grant. Naper Pride is the first pride fest that our family felt safe at, the first pride fest that my 62 year old mother attended as an ally, and the first place my children felt seen and celebrated. I urge you to consider Naper Pride to show your continued support for the LGBTQIA+ community. With so much tragedy and loss surrounding our community, it is vital to continue to endorse safe spaces, and show our youth they belong in Naperville. Thank you for your support and consideration.
2. Elizabeth Hernandez (Chicago) I am writing to express my strong support for city funding for the 2024 Día de Muertos event (Day of the Dead) organized by the Alliance of Latinos Motivating Action in the Suburbs (ALMAS). The celebration last year was a profound expression of cultural pride and community engagement, which I had the honor to be part of. The event allowed our community to come together in a meaningful way, celebrating our cultural heritage while educating others about the significance of Día de los Muertos. It was inspiring to see people from all walks of life participating, learning, and honoring the traditions of the holiday. I can attest to the importance of these cultural events in fostering a sense of belonging and representation, especially for the Latino community in Naperville. It is crucial for us to support and celebrate each other's cultures and histories. I urge the City Council to provide funding and support for the upcoming Día de Muertos celebration and look forward to seeing our city come together once again for this important cultural celebration.
3. Margie Wolf (Naperville) Naper Pride, I apologize not appearing in person as I am recovering from surgery. I appreciate your time in taking my comments here. Since organizing in 2019, Naper Pride works to create & support important programming for LGBTQ youth, adults, and seniors in Naperville and the surrounding area to ensure that access to critical resources is made available to all individuals in need.  
Through hard work, the Naper Pride – Naper Cares initiative has provided;
  - 500 holiday meals for families and individuals in need
  - Support small Naperville businesses struggling through and post pandemic
  - Outreach and support to over 400 senior citizens
  - Assisted in finding housing for 5 individuals
  - Assisted over 20 individuals in career counseling, job training, placement, and created a resource network for local businesses to engage with career candidates
  - Volunteer assistance in restoring downtown Naperville after a peaceful protest turned violent
  - Assist an individual to obtain the necessary legal services and support his path to legal citizenship
  - Provide enough home goods to fully furnish 4 complete apartments for unhoused LGBTQ youth

- Partnered with local medical service providers to ensure the availability of health and wellness resources for our community
- Partner with the DuPage County Health Department to provide Covid, Flu, and Mpox vaccinations to over 1,000 people
- Host a candidate meet & greet and voter registration to promote and encourage residents to vote

Our work is far from done. As part of our 2024 programming goals, we hope to expand our ability to provide health and wellness resources, grow our youth service options while supporting partner organizations like 360 Youth and Youth Outlook, develop a stronger support network for our senior citizens, and nurture our relationship with the City of Naperville to bring more visibility and inclusion for the local LGBTQ community.

Naper Pride Fest is a key component to bringing the whole community together, not just for celebration, but for community building. Naper Pride has faced a few challenges in trying to build momentum for this event, Covid-19 caused the cancellation of our event in 2019 & 2020. In 2021 we finally got the event off the ground and completed it successfully. After an audit, we found that we broke even on 2021. Pretty impressive for a first-year event!

2022 was very different for us. We had made significant changes in order to improve event performance in expectation of the event being revenue positive. Unfortunately, we did not get the results that we had projected or hoped for. The event management company incorrectly reported funding from several sources. This created a significant gap in our final budget that we were not able to see until we audited the event at its conclusion.

Our contract with the event organizer was going to renew in 2024. Naper Pride requested revisions that would have corrected financial reporting through the event, lowered our expenses, and increased revenue. In spite of our best efforts to negotiate a fair deal, we could not come to an agreement. We understood that ending our contract with the event management company would also mean that we would not have enough time to secure another provider in time to host Pride Fest in 2023, and that most likely we would have to cancel the event. Naper Pride has always strived to be a good steward of any funding that we have received. We made the difficult decision to cancel the event and return the funding to the City of Naperville in hopes that it could be given to an organization that was prepared and ready to go. We feel strongly that this was the ethical and right thing to do under the circumstances.

Since then, Naper Pride has signed a contract with Lou Dog Events. This is a local company recommended to us by West Suburban Irish & Naper Settlement, and who has a good reputation with the City of Naperville. We are very comfortable with the event plan, transparency and reporting of financials, budget, and outlook for the future of our event. We feel like we are on the right path.

Naper Pride is an all-volunteer organization. 100% of all donations are devoted to our programming and initiatives to help people right here in Naperville. Our deep

sense of responsibility to our community fuels the passion for the work that we do. You have the power right now to touch the life of another person and positively affect them in ways you may never have imagined possible.

I will make myself available to answer any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Thank you for your time and your continued support.

Margie Wolf

Executive Director

Naper Pride