

East Wenatchee(EW) Pride Banner Exclusion Timeline

September 2025 - One month before the EW city council proposes to change the banner policy specifically to exclude “diversity/equity”

2nd: Taylor Stimmel is appointed to the East Wenatchee City Council

4th: The Douglas County Republican Central Committee (DCRCC PAC) makes a contribution to Paul Harrison who is running for East Wenatchee City Council - the single largest campaign contribution Harrison receives for 2025

8th - GOP DCRCC Monthly Meeting - Where Ettore Castellente, candidate for East Wenatchee City Council and current appointed council person, spoke about the banner policy receiving applause from the partisan crowd. Taylor Stimmel also attended and spoke.

- We confirmed with the Chair of Douglas County Democrats Castellente did not attend a single democrat event during 2025 even though the city council position is nonpartisan

9th - Ettore Castellente sends email to add banner policy to September 25 workshop agenda

- Page 1
- *(The 16th the city council meeting. The workshop is September 18 which is where the topic is added)*

15th - 2:49pm the Workshop agenda for the 18th is posted with Castellente’s addition of the banner policy review

5:06pm EW City Clerk send copy of banner policy to Castellente

- Page 2-3

9:08pm The DCRCC and specifically Dan Wheat GOP Chair releases an official endorsement of Ettore Castellente and again for Paul Harrison for the City of East Wenatchee City Council

- DCRCC website

A social media posts asking for people to respectfully attend and listen makes rounds

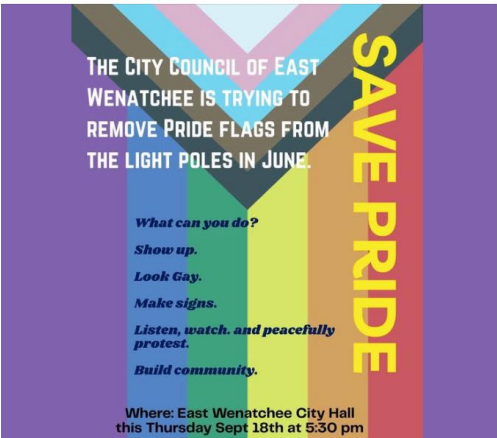
 **Progressive Devilry**
September 16, 2023 · 🌐

🔴 Call to action! 🔴

East Wenatchee city council just shifted to a conservative majority. Their first order of business is to go after the queer community. They want to remove the Pride flags from the light poles in June.

We need people to attend a "work session" Thursday at 5:30 pm at East Wenatchee City Hall. Wear rainbows. Be courteous.

We need to be present they need to see us and our community here, witnessing, and watching-- keeping our local elected officials accountable to everyone including the LGBTQ community. See less



16th - Castellente thanks clerk for technological help with "tablet" and joining city council meeting on zoom from wife's computer

- Page 3
- *(Two devices that must be compelled into evidence as city work was done on them)*
- The 16th was the city council meeting

17th- 2:51 pm Jackie and Gary Babst email Castellente:

- "I am writing in regard to the upcoming workshop concerning banners and Pride flags. I strongly support the removal of Pride flags from city displays, as they do not represent the majority of citizens in our community.

"As a taxpayer, I resent seeing public funds used for cultural or social issues that divide rather than unite. The city's resources should remain focused on services that benefit all residents equally. I also want to inform you that a group is being organized to protest at the meeting tomorrow night, and I have included the related post for your awareness."

- Page 5-9

3:07 pm Oscar Rodriguez from the Wenatchee World emails Castellente

"It's Oscar at The Wenatchee World. Could you elaborate a little bit about the banner display policy discussion scheduled on tomorrow's workshop agenda? I originally reached out to Laura about the matter, and she told me she didn't know too much about it but that it was added to the agenda at your request."

- Page 4

3:09 pm Castellente thanks Jackie Babst for their email.

- Page 5

3:25 pm Castellente responds to Oscar Rodriguez from the Wenatchee World:

- "Thank you for your email. My request to review the Banner Display Policy is now on the workshop agenda. My request is to have council review the policy and make any amendments that may be necessary after the review process. This will be the first council opportunity to hear my thoughts. One of the ideas I plan to share with fellow council members is that I want to suggest expanding the short list of categories of typical banner applications for display-not excluding a category that appears on the current policy list."

- Page 10

18th - 2:25pm forwards Jackie Babst email to himself at ettorej@yahoo.com

- Page 13
- *(Likely to respond from there. Missing all emails to and from this personal email)*

5:30pm the workshop commences with a large audience of attendees. The City council directs comments to the audience about why they are talking about the banner policy and Councilmember Christine Johnson is recorded by the Wenatchee World as saying:

- "Now, I don't have a single issue with equity and diversity, not one whatsoever, and most of those people(referring to complaints about the pride banners in June), I don't believe do either, but they do have a problem with the inclusion of the Pride flag on that. I'm just going to come out and say I disagree with it too, not because I have a problem with equity and diversity or with the Pride flag. I don't think they go together, and I do not believe that public funds should be used to hang those."

19th - City Council including Castellente receive three emails in support of Pride flags

- Page 15-16
- *(Note that Castellente did not respond to any of these emails)*

7:55pm - Dan Wheat's chairman's comments from the DCRCC are released entitled, "Why special status for Pride banners?" In which he says that councilmembers, ostensibly Ettore Castellente, privately told him that they wished to replace the pride flags:

- "While privately saying they want to replace Pride banners with something else, a majority of council members said little on the subject at a Sept. 18 work session"
- Wheat also repeated Christine Johnson's disputed tale that, "the city has received more complaints from people opposed to the banners than any other issue since the city began flying them during the month of June several years ago" and "99% are unhappy with a diversity and equity plaque and inclusion of Pride flags."
- In this editorial Wheat also asks why "White Pride" isn't included in equity/diversity

22nd - 8:54 am Castellente receives an email from Mark VanHorne, a GOP donor, advocating for removal of Pride flags:

- "The toxicity and danger posed by the advocates of sexual deviancy are clear. Their ideology of hate, violence, and murder are nothing to be "proud" of and certainly should not be sanctioned by any government. Please modify the banner policy of the City of East Wenatchee to prohibit display of pride banners on city property."
- Page 19

9:11am Castellente responds to Mark Van Horne:

- "Thank you for your email. The council is now in the process of reviewing this policy and my first suggested changes are: Eliminate the imbedded guarantee that the Equity/Diversity banner has pre-approved status to be the June banner displayed by the city. Add the display of banners for Memorial Day, Flag Day, Father's Day and Independence Day. Efforts to provide these banners is under way by churches and veteran groups."
- Page 20
- *(This is in direct conflict to what he told Oscar Rodriguez from the Wenatchee World just 5 days previous. At this point he has received 2 emails against pride representation and 3 for)*

2:53pm VanHorne replies to Castellente's thanks with more talk of sexual deviants having attended the last workshop.

- Page 21

23rd - City Clerk received five emails, between the 20-21st, in support of Pride flags and forwarded it to the rest of the Council including Castellente.

- Page 23-27
- *(Current for/against count is 9 for 2 against this count will be important later when Castellente references number of emails sent to him)*
- Castellente does not respond to any of these emails

11:39pm Castellente received an email from Jaime Krish with an attached letter regarding their support for pride representation in East Wenatchee

- Page 28
- *(Current count 10 for 2 against)*

26th - 3:13pm Castellente responds:

- "Thank you for your email that has finally arrived in my inbox. I appreciate your letter and thank you for your medical service in our community."
- Page 29
- *(3 day lapse before response)*

27th - 10:31am Dan Wheat(*Douglas County GOP Chair who endorsed Castellente on the 15th*) sends an email to the entire city council including Castellente:

- "East Wenatchee City Council Members, Thank you for reviewing the city's streetlamp banner policy. Current policy states that "street banners are not a forum for free expression by the public. Rather, street banners may only be displayed as an expression of the City's own sentiments." The policy also gives the mayor the power to approve theme banners for, "sister city, equity/diversity, federal holidays, city sponsored events," without council approval. Allowing gay Pride banners in June for the past several years violates the policy because the city has received voluminous complaints about the Pride banners and therefore they are not an expression of city sentiment but of one group of people. Placing "equity/diversity" as a category exempt from council approval gives that category exclusive recognition. That's unfair and is not equitable. Why not then banners by race, ethnicity, hobbies, clubs, victim groups, gangs, you name it? Does the city really want to go down that road? Why should the city promote the idea of dividing ourselves into special groups? Regardless of how many people are for or against a particular banner, when it comes to use of city property, that is streetlamps for banners, it makes sense that such use be reserved for things society as a whole agrees on. Things that bring us together, not divide us. Such things like federal holidays, city-sponsored events, sister city relationships, Mother's Day, Father's Day. Furthermore, as stated in the Sept. 18 council work session, it costs the city about \$1,300 to put banners up and city employees have

been harassed when they put up Pride banners. That's not indicative of public support, but the opposite. Please remove "equity/diversity" as a special category and allow the council, not the mayor, to approve banners. Thank you, ~ Dan Wheat Douglas County GOP chairman

10:44am Castellente forwards Dan Wheat's email to his personal email: ettorej@yahoo.com from his iPad tablet

2:25pm the city council, including Castellente, received an email from Liane Hickman against pride representation in East Wenatchee. Specifically saying they agree with Dan wheat's email:

- "I agree with all that Dan Wheat wrote here. And especially that city employees should not have to hang these questionable banners, and how would they get hung?! Liability would no doubt be horrible if you let individuals do it!"

8:57pm the city council, including Castellente, received an email against pride representation in East Wenatchee from Susan Wetherald. Specifically echoing the Mayor should not have a say, but the power should lie with the City Council. Echoing Wheat's post:

- "I would like to voice my opposition to "Gay Pride" banners on East Wenatchee street poles. The decision on what is displayed on City banners should belong to the City Council and the choices should not be pre-selected by the Mayor for the Council to approve."

- Page 30-34

- *(no responses to these emails on record. Count is 10 for 5 against)*

28th - 7:18pm Castellente receives an email from Ms. Baziak at St. Paul's Lutheran School against pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- "Placing equity diversity as a category exempt from Council approval gives category exclusive recognition. That's unfair and is not equitable. There are many people in our community that do not want the pride banners flown in June."

10:07pm Castellente receives an email from Laura Watkins, from Scott Watkins email, against pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- "Ettore, thank you for broaching this subject with the City Council. I first met you at the Sept. Douglas County GOP meeting. Honestly, if May was represented with Apple Blossom, Mother's Day and Memorial Day; June with Father's Day and Pride (if we need to keep Pride banners), it would be closer to 2 weeks per instead of Pride getting a full month and the rest a shorter time. I understand there are more banners for fallen soldiers than will fit on the light poles. I would like to voice my opinion on the Pride banners which are displayed for the month of June each year. It would seem to me that banners displayed as a city sponsored/approved item should represent the city, as in promoting Apple Blossom, Wings and Wheels, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc. When we interject a controversial subject such as Pride Month, half of the citizens of East Wenatchee object. I understand that those supporting these banners are a vocal group, while those of us opposing might not be inclined to speak

out, but generally drive an alternative route during the month of June in order to avoid the Pride banners.”

- Page 35-36
- *(this email confirms Ettore’s speech at the DCRCC meeting on Sept 8th beyond the endorsement penned by Dan Wheat. Count is 10 for 7 against)*

29th - 11:03am Castellente responds to Laura Watkins:

- “Thank you for your helpful email. You have provided some additional information that will help as I navigate through this banner policy review process.”

11:05am Castellente responds to Ms. Baziak from St. Paul Lutheran School:

- “ Thank you for your email. The points you make will be helpful as I work through the banner policy review process.

11:08am Castellente responds to Liane Hickman:

- “Thank you for your email and thoughts regarding the banner display policy that is currently being reviewed.”

11:10 am Castellente responds to Susan Wetherand:

- “Thank you for your email and thoughts regarding the banner display policy which is currently being reviewed.”

7:52pm the City council, including Castellente, received an email from Thera Judd against Pride representation in East Wenatchee. Specifically copying and pasting Dan Wheat’s email:

- “East Wenatchee City Council Members, Thank you for reviewing the city’s streetlamp banner policy. Current policy states that “street banners are not a forum for free expression by the public. Rather, street banners may only be displayed as an expression of the City’s own sentiments.” The policy also gives the mayor the power to approve theme banners for, “sister city, equity/diversity, federal holidays, city sponsored events,” without council approval. Allowing gay Pride banners in June for the past several years violates the policy because the city has received voluminous complaints about the Pride banners and therefore they are not an expression of city sentiment but of one group of people. Placing “equity/diversity” as a category exempt from council approval gives that category exclusive recognition. That’s unfair and is not equitable. Why not then banners by race, ethnicity, hobbies, clubs, victim groups, gangs, you name it? Does the city really want to go down that road? Why should the city promote the idea of dividing ourselves into special groups? Regardless of how many people are for or against a particular banner, when it comes to use of city property, that is streetlamps for banners, it makes sense that such use be reserved for things society as a whole agrees on. Things that bring us together, not divide us. Such things like federal holidays, city-sponsored events, sister city relationships, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day. Furthermore, as stated in the Sept. 18 council work session, it costs the city about \$1,300 to put banners up and city employees have been harassed when they put up Pride banners. That’s not indicative of public support, but the opposite. Please remove “equity/diversity” as a special category

and allow the council, not the mayor, to approve banners. Thera Judd, First VP Chelan/Douglas Republican Women, POC #212 Douglas County”

- Page 36-40
- (*Count is 10 for 8 against*)

30th - 9:25am Castellente receives an email from Dave Goetsch against pride representation in East Wenatchee. Another copy and paste from Dan Wheat:

- “East Wenatchee City Council Members, Thank you for reviewing the city’s streetlamp banner policy. Current policy states that “street banners are not a forum for free expression by the public. Rather, street banners may only be displayed as an expression of the City’s own sentiments.” The policy also gives the mayor the power to approve theme banners for, “sister city, equity/diversity, federal holidays, city sponsored events,” without council approval. Allowing gay Pride banners in June for the past several years violates the policy because the city has received voluminous complaints about the Pride banners and therefore they are not an expression of city sentiment but of one group of people. Placing “equity/diversity” as a category exempt from council approval gives that category exclusive recognition. That’s unfair and is not equitable. Why not then banners by race, ethnicity, hobbies, clubs, victim groups, gangs, you name it? Does the city really want to go down that road? Why should the city promote the idea of dividing ourselves into special groups? Regardless of how many people are for or against a particular banner, when it comes to use of city property, that is streetlamps for banners, it makes sense that such use be reserved for things society as a whole agrees on. Things that bring us together, not divide us. Such things like federal holidays, city-sponsored events, sister city relationships, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day. Furthermore, as stated in the Sept. 18 council work session, it costs the city about \$1,300 to put banners up and city employees have been harassed when they put up Pride banners. That’s not indicative of public support, but the opposite. Please remove “equity/diversity”

10:40am Castellente responds to Dave Goetsche:

- “Thank you for your email and sharing your views.”

10:42am Castellente responds to Thera Judd:

- “Thank you for your email and sharing your views.”

11:07am Castellente receives an email from Scott Risley in support of Pride Representation in East Wenatchee:

- “Hello Mr. Castellente, I attended the city council workshop on 09/18/25 and was alarmed and confused by what I saw there. You asked the council to review the banner policy, but then you did not go into detail about what your concerns or changes would be, apart from a vague reference to, “mothers day and fathers day.” What are your intentions? The issue that rose to the forefront was the DEI and LGBTQ+ banner, with councilwoman Johnson going so far as to say that city employees have been harassed while putting up the banners, that she does not believe that these issues represent city sentiment, and that the city council has gotten many complaints about the banners. As to city employees being harassed, I do not believe that has a place in this argument, as it is not the banners’ fault that certain individuals chose to be rude and aggressive. Behavior like that only seems to underscore the importance of the banners all the more. As to the

notion that these banners do not represent the city's sentiment, how can one make that claim? DEI and the pride flag represent marginalized populations, and there are certainly many here in East Wenatchee that feel represented by these symbols. As to her report that the city has gotten many complaints about the banners, that may be true. I know that I, for one, sent the mayor a card back in June or July thanking her and the council for displaying the banners. On that final note, I would like to again express my support for the DEI/Pride banners. They represent kindness and inclusion and what is best in us. I hope that you will keep these thoughts in mind as you and your fellow council members review the banner policy. I look forward to seeing you all again on 10/21/25."

- Pages 41-44
- (*Count is 11 for 9 against*)

OCTOBER

1st - 4:29pm Castellente receives email from Cliff Carlson against pride representation in East Wenatchee

- "Dear City Council Member Ettore Castellente, Is it true that the current banner policy for East Wenatchee states that street banners are not a forum for free expression by the public street and that banners may only be displayed as an expression of the City's own sentiments? May I respectfully ask you a few questions regarding the matter? Is promoting a statement about one's sexuality on a lamp posts really in the city's best interest? Does their appearance cause any disharmony or possible controversy? Do the banners convey a message of unity or possible division? Instead of opening up can of worms so-to-speak concerning special interest groups, wouldn't it be best to only concentrate on positive and uplifting subjects that we can all agree on such as: Mother's Day, Fathers Day, Forth of July, Veteran's Day, etc? Our street lamp banners should honor people and events, where honor is due! Why subject our city workers to possible harassment (which has been reported throughout the years) by dealing with controversial concepts? NOW we must deal with safety issues as they pertain to the folks who hang the banners, do we not? It is time to take a stand for common sense (and common interest) by banning Pride banners in our beloved city! I don't intent to sound self-righteous, but shouldn't we all strive to uphold the following teachings found in God's Holy Word: 'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, think about these things.' -Philippians 4:8 (NASB) Thanks for your consideration and may you prayerfully decide what is best for our community."

- Pages 45
- (*Count is 11 for 10 against*)

2nd - 10:23am Castellente responds to Cliff Carlson:

- "Thank you your email. I appreciate hearing your views. If you want to have further discussion, please provide your phone number and I will call you."

10:27am Castellente responds to Scott Risley:

- "Thank you for your email and providing important points for consideration."

5:38pm Castellente receives an email from Megan Wetherall against pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- "Hello- I am a resident of East Wenatchee, and I would like my voice to be known that I do not appreciate or desire to have the "gay" banner displayed in my town each year. I don't not think it is a proper place for a few to display their opinions about sexuality. This is not a unifying or patriotic community stance. Please review the idea of displaying banners that most Americans don't support at the cost of their hard earned money."

6:11pm Castellente responds to Megan Wetherall:

- "Thank you for your email and thoughts about the banner program."
 - Pages 46-49
 - (*Count is 11 for 11 against*)

4th - 4:35pm the city council, including Ettore Castellente, received an email from Marisa Brewer against Pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- "Request for Neutral City Banner Policy Dear East Wenatchee Mayor and Council Members, As a resident of East Wenatchee, I'm asking the city to keep public spaces free from displays that promote specific political groups and ideologies. The "Pride" banners displayed in June conflict with the faith of many of our residents and they are inappropriate for city property. They do not show "inclusion", but rather division and they're simply unwanted. Please consider adopting a neutral policy for all future banners and displays so our community spaces remain welcoming to everyone."

4:42pm Castellente responds to Marisa Brewer:

- "Thank you for your helpful email."
 - Pages 50-51
 - (*Count is 11 for 12 against*)

6th - 7:33pm Castellente receives an email from Nathan Scott against pride representation in East Wenatchee, suggesting the WA flag, US flag, or official city flag only. As well as asking for the power of the application decision lie with the City Council.

7:46pm Castellente responds to Nathan Scott:

- "Thank you for your email and letter. You offer many new views on this topic that I brought to the council floor."

10:36pm Castellente receives an email from an anonymous person claiming to be "concerned citizens of East Wenatchee" against pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- "We feel that government property should not be used as a billboard for private organizations to advertise their messages. Please eliminate these types of banners."
 - Pages 52-61
 - (*Count 11 for 14 against*)

7th - 8:28pm City council, including Castellente, receives an email from Dan Wheat (Douglas County GOP Chair) with his suggested edits to the banner policy that was "unanimously adopted Oct 6th by the DCRCC."

-
Douglas County Republican Central Committee
Resolution regarding East Wenatchee City street banners

Whereas, the City of East Wenatchee has a city street banner policy stating that “street banners are not a forum for free expression by the public. Rather, street banners may only be displayed as an expression of the City’s own sentiments.”

And whereas, city policy states, “As such, only street banners reflecting City-endorsed programs, policies, or causes may be authorized and displayed. As such, only theme banners reflecting City-endorsed programs, policies, or causes may be authorized and displayed.”

And whereas, many people have complained about the Pride banners flown in June for years; therefore it is evident the Pride banners are a free expression by a segment of the public, not an expression of any collective city sentiment.

Therefore, the city council should remove “equity/diversity” as a category for banners as there is nothing equitable about giving exclusive special recognition to one category or group of society.

Furthermore, the policy should be changed to provide that the council, not the mayor, grant any and all approval of banners and that they recognize city-sponsored events, federal holidays and sister city relationships.

Unanimously adopted
by the Douglas County Republican Central Committee,
Oct. 6, 2025.

Dan Wheat
Chairman

8:33am Castellente responds to the anonymous email from the anonymous “concerned citizens”:

- “Thank you for your email and views.”

8:42am Castellente responds to Dan Wheat’s suggested edits to the policy:

- “Thank you for your email and attached resolution document regarding the topic that I brought to the council floor.”

6:40pm Josh Delay emails the clerk and council members including castellente a copy of budgetary information including the yearly cost of raising flags/banners:

- Budget for banners: Salaries \$5,150, Benefits \$2,120, & Supplies \$2,000. Total \$9,270.
- Budget Banner Fees total \$750 in Revenue.
- YTD Fiscal expenditures for banners as of Oct 7th: Salaries \$3,119.30, Benefits \$1,276.03, & Supplies \$1,698.26. Total \$6,093.59.
- YTD Fiscal revenue received: \$670
 - Pages 62-67
 - *(Count 11 for 14 against)*

8th - 5:21pm Castellente emails a copy of the projected revenues to himself at ettorej@yahoo.com from his iPad

5:24 Castellente emails a copy of the Revenue YTD to himself at ettorej@yahoo.com from his iPad

- Page 68-69

9th - 8:25pm Castellente emails from his personal email account ettorej@yahoo.com to his official public disclosure email a copy of his revised banner policy that redlines the items specifically requested by Dan Wheat (Douglas County GOP Chair of DCRCC). Including specifically redlining “equity/diversity” from accepted banners and moving the power of application approval to the city council.

- Page 70
- *(this shows that he uses his personal email for work as well as the device he sent it from at home)*

Banner Display Policy

(revisions by Ettore 10.9.25)

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for display of different types of banners within the City.

1. Theme Banners Not Spanning A Right Of Way

It is the policy of the City of East Wenatchee that theme banners are not a forum for free expression by the public. Rather, banners may only be displayed as an expression of the City’s values own sentiments. As such, only theme banners reflecting City endorsed programs, policies, or causes may be authorized and displayed.

City Council may make amendments to this policy as needed.

Applications involving theme banners exhibiting one or more of the following subject matters are exempt from final Council approval. However, the list of subject matters will be adjusted by the City Council through amendments to this policy made from time to time.

The City retains priority placement of banners in the following categories:

Sister City (Misawa, Japan)

Equity/Diversity

Federal Holidays or days of Federal Commemoration

City-Sponsored Events

10th - 10:18am The City Council including Castellente receives an email from Linda Kehoe requesting “equity/diversity” be removed from the accepted banners. This is a partial copy and paste from Dan Wheat’s email:

- “Thank you for taking the time to review the streetlamp banner policy for East Wenatchee. I want you to know I believe it is important for any entity to adhere to their own policies. Unfortunately, your policy has been modified to allow a single individual, in this case the Mayor, to approve banners that are not in line with its own policy that “street banners are not a forum for free expression by the public, rather a display of the City’s own sentiments”. A category of “equity/diversity” is not in keeping with the Councils own policy as it is placed as a “special” category requiring only the Mayors approval. Why is the city promoting the idea of dividing ourselves into special groups? The use of city property should be saved for things the city residents as a whole agree on. Please remove “equity/diversity” as a special category and allow the council, not the Mayor, to approve banners.”

10:31am Castellente responds to Linda Kehoe:

- “Thank you for your email this morning. Your views are noted and thank you for taking your time to share them.”
 - Page 71-72
 - *(Count 11 for 15 against for received emails. Current response to emails is 2 for and 15 against. At this point according to public records Castellente has received a total of 26 emails and responded only to the ones against pride displays with the exception of Scott Risley and Jaime Krish, one being a fellow elected official. This will be important later)*

11th - 1:12pm the city council including Castellente receives an email from Rich Metcalfe who supports pride representation in East Wenatchee

- “My name is Rich Metcalfe. I was born and raised here in the Wenatchee/East Wenatchee Valley. Some of my family member still live here within the East Wenatchee City limits. I am writing a brief note to express my concern of not being represented in East Wenatchee during the times this city posts / flies rainbow LGBTQ banners. I live right on the border of Douglas County / City East Wenatchee City limits. I do much commerce here. I as a daily visitor, my family members who live within the city limits, and most of East Wenatchians living within and outside the city limits of East Wenatchee are being excluded when the City of East Wenatchee policy is to fly / post your rainbow banners representing a minority few. Couldn't you find a banner to post that represents all people? Please consider this concern when your reviewing changes to the banner policy. Please don't exclude the majority of us from being represented during the times of flying / posting rainbow LGBTQ banners.”

2:23pm Castellente responds to Matcalfe:

- “Thank you for sending your email. I appreciate hearing your views. At this time, council members have submitted their individual suggested revisions of the banner display

policy of 2023. Our attorney is compiling these suggestions. The revised draft policy is tentatively scheduled to be presented at the October 21 council meeting.”

- Page 73-74
- *(Count 12 for 15 against for received emails. Current response by Castellente to emails is 3 for and 15 against)*

12th (Sunday) - 8:36pm the city council including Castellente receives email from David Houghland MD against pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- “I am writing from the other side of the river as a Wenatchee Valley resident concerned about our mutual neighborhood. The banner promoting the LGBTQ ideology is a banner of conquest and a symbol that commands submission. I urge that the demand to display this on public properties be denied.

10:23pm - Castellente replies to Houghland on a Sunday after 10pm:

- “Thank you for your email and your shared views on this topic that I brought forward to city council.”
 - Page 75-76
 - *(He confirms to Houghland that he shares these views that ‘banner promoting the LGBTQ ideology is a banner of conquest and a symbol that commands submission.’ Count is 12 for and 16 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 3 for and 16 against)*

13th - 4:09pm City Clerk received two email in support of and one against Pride representation in East Wenatchee on the 9th and forwarded it on the 13th to all city council members including Castellente.

- Page 77-80
- *(Count is 14 for and 17 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 3 for and 16 against. He does not respond to any of these emails)*

15th - Ettore Castellente contributes \$100 to Paul Harrison’s campaign

17th - City clerk forwards an email in support of pride representation in East Wenatchee to the city council including Castellente from October 16th.

- Page 81
- *(Count is 15 for and 17 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 3 for and 16 against. He does not respond to any of these emails)*

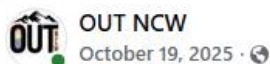
18th - 12:24pm City Council including Castellente receive an email from Matt & Marie Bergman who are against pride representation in East Wenatchee, using the same wording as Dan Wheat:

- “East Wenatchee City Council Members, We are opposed to the hanging of pride banners by the city. Showing support of this specific group of people is divisive and unfair. Please remove "equivity/diversity" as a special category and allow the council, not the mayor, to approve banners.”

3:29pm Castellente responds to the Bergmans' email:

- "Thank you for your email sharing your views regarding the current banner policy. I brought this matter to my fellow council members because I believe that a revision of the policy is needed.
 - Page 82
 - (Count is 15 for and 18 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 3 for and 17 against.)

19th (Sunday) - A social media post from a local non-profit posts a call to action to attend and speak support for the Rainbow diversity banners in East Wenatchee:



🚩🚩🚩 CALL TO ACTION 🚩🚩🚩

Date: October 21st

Location: EJH auditorium

Time: 5:30pm

We've been informed that as its stands right now East Wenatchee City council will ban Rainbow banners provided by the NCW Equity Alliance normally hung in June.

Right now the votes are going to be 4 yes - 1 no - 1 abstention unless we change their minds.

These banners have been a beautiful addition to our valley for years and it's time to let the East Wenatchee City Council know that they are about to make a big mistake.

You are invited to attend, peacefully, the City Council Meeting this Tuesday to let them know how you feel about the decision they are planning to make.

Sign up to comment. You will have 2 minutes to make yourself heard. They will prioritize East Wenatchee Residents, so if you live in East Wenatchee make sure to come and speak. [See less](#)



6:33pm City Council receives an email from Jessica Bennett in support of pride representation in East Wenatchee

- “Although my home sits just one block outside the city limits, my address has read East Wenatchee for over 20 years. I have four children — two of whom have graduated from Eastmont, and two who are still attending. My daughter wrestles for Eastmont and plays in the jazz band. My son serves as the elected choir treasurer and was honored as Homecoming King this fall. I’m also a member of the newly formed Eastmont Music Booster Club. All of this is to say: we are deeply invested members of the East Wenatchee community. I attended the council workshop in September. I heard Councilmember Johnson express uncertainty about whether the four subject areas (Sister City, Equity/Diversity, Federal Holidays, and City-Sponsored Events) were exempt from the preapproval process. She also said she did not recall that Resolution 2022-49 included the statement: “...street banners may only be displayed as an expression of the City’s own sentiments.” After the meeting, I reviewed the resolution on the city’s website. The record clearly shows that during the public comment period, a citizen requested that the LGBTQIA+ flag be included in the pre-approved list. The final resolution does, in fact, include the language about banners expressing the city’s sentiments. Councilmember Johnson not only seconded the motion to exempt those four subject matters from pre approval; she also seconded the motion to adopt the resolution itself, which passed unanimously (7–0). It’s entirely understandable that a detail may have been forgotten. We all need reminders sometimes, and that’s what I hope this serves as. I trust that Councilmember Johnson, and the full council, will stand by that original vote and uphold the resolution as it stands. Reversing this policy now, after it has been in place and embraced since 2022, would signal instability and send a message that the values affirmed by the council can be undone without cause, eroding the trust built between the community and its elected officials. Every single person in this city knows someone for whom representation matters. Someone for whom these flags send a message of inclusion. Our colleagues, our co-workers, our teachers, our loved ones, and our family members. These identities are part of the fabric of our city. The Pride flag is not an external symbol imposed on the city; it is an expression of its own people. As a reminder, the mission of the City of East Wenatchee is: “To maintain the trust of and give quality service to all who live in, work in and visit the City of East Wenatchee.” Please honor that mission by continuing to stand with all who call this city home.”

6:42pm Castellente responds to Bennett:

- “Thank you for your email this evening and sharing your views regarding the banner display policy.”
 - Page 83-87
 - *(Count is 16 for and 18 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 4 for and 17 against.)*

20th - 9:19am City Council including Castellente receive an email from Julie Rickard, a licensed mental health professional, supporting Pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- “I’m writing in strong support of continuing the Pride banners displayed in East Wenatchee during Pride Month. These banners are not merely decorative—they are a practical, public-health tool that strengthens safety, belonging, and economic vitality while modeling our city’s commitment to dignity for all residents.
 - Why Pride banners matter—especially for suicide prevention
 - Belonging protects life. One of the strongest protective factors against suicide is a felt sense of belonging and community connection. Public inclusion cues—like Pride banners—tell LGBTQ+ youth and adults, “You have a place here,” which can reduce isolation and despair and make it more likely people will reach out early for help.
 - Reduces stigma, increases help-seeking. When the city signals acceptance, individuals are more likely to talk to a counselor, call a hotline, or confide in family. As a licensed psychologist, I see how small, consistent signals from civic leaders lower barriers to care and encourage earlier, lifesaving intervention.
 - Supports families and allies. Clear city support makes it easier for parents, grandparents, teachers, and faith leaders to stand alongside loved ones, a known protective factor against self-harm.
 - Safety without taking sides. Inclusion is not endorsement of any one viewpoint—it is a public safety posture that says everyone’s life has value.
 - Addressing controversy with respect and fairness
 - In a diverse community, disagreement is expected. The solution to disagreement is not to erase representation but to model respectful pluralism using content-neutral program rules that apply equally to all city banners (e.g., application windows, installation dates, maintenance standards, and safety requirements). Keeping the Pride banners up while applying the same standards to all groups demonstrates fairness, steadiness, and good governance.
 - Additional community benefits
 - Public health readiness: Visibility during Pride creates timely opportunities for clinics, schools, and nonprofits to share resources and trainings.
 - Local business and tourism: Inclusive cities attract visitors and events; Pride month reliably drives foot traffic to downtown merchants, restaurants, and hotels.
 - Civic reputation: The banners align with East Wenatchee’s practice of recognizing many parts of our community—veterans, cultural heritage, seasonal celebrations—without diminishing anyone.
- Thank you for your service and for considering this request. Please continue East Wenatchee’s Pride banner program each June and communicate—clearly and consistently—that our city is a safe place for everyone to live, work, learn, and visit.”

10:01am - Castellente responds to Rickard’s email:

- “Thank you for your email and very comprehensive views on this topic.”

10:26am City Council including Castellente received an email from Tessa Timmons, a behavioral health professional, supporting Pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- “My name is Tessa Timmons, an East Wenatchee resident and behavioral health professional who works with youth, adults, and families across our valley. I’m writing in support of continuing the Pride banners during Pride Month. My focus is simple: the banners help our community function better—they support safety, civility, and family stability, and they do so without taking sides in anyone’s private beliefs.
 - What Pride banners accomplish for East Wenatchee
 - Promote calm and reduce conflict in public spaces. Clear civic messaging that everyone belongs lowers tension. People who feel seen are less likely to escalate in schools, workplaces, and customer-facing settings. That means fewer crises for teachers, law enforcement, and businesses to manage.
 - Help families support their kids. When the city models respectful inclusion, parents and grandparents tell me it’s easier to keep communication open at home—even when family members disagree. That stability is protective for youth.
 - Strengthen our workforce and local economy. Employers, healthcare systems, and first responders recruit better when a city demonstrates its welcoming. Pride Month is also a draw for diners, shoppers, and visitors who spend locally.
 - Normalize help-seeking. In my work, people are far more likely to reach out early when they sense their city is safe to do so. Early care is almost always simpler, cheaper, and more effective than crisis care.
 - Suicide prevention impact
 - In behavioral health, belonging and connection are core protective factors. For LGBTQ+ residents—especially youth—public inclusion cues like banners can be the difference between staying silent and telling someone they’re struggling. That moment of openness is often what connects a person to counseling, a trusted adult, or 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) before risk escalates. Keeping the banners, and pairing them with visible resources during June, is a cost-effective, practical prevention step.
 - Addressing controversy with fairness
 - We are a diverse city. The way through disagreement is content-neutral governance, not removing one group’s visibility. Apply the same banner rules to everyone—clear timelines, placement and safety standards, maintenance expectations—and enforce them consistently. That approach protects free expression, community harmony, and the city’s credibility.
 - Thank you for your service and for considering this request. Continuing the Pride banners is a modest action with high return for safety, civility, and family well-

being. I'm glad to answer questions or share practical ideas from the behavioral health perspective.

10:32am Castellente responds to Timmons:

- "Thank you for your email and sharing your views on this topic."
 - Page 86-91
 - *(Count is 18 for and 18 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 17 against. 36 total emails received at this point. Split directly down the middle. He has responded to all except one against and less than half of the email for.)*

1:04pm Castellente receives an email from Oscar Rodriguez from the Wenatchee World asking about his revisions to the banner policy asking for clarification:

- "It's Oscar at The Wenatchee World. I've reviewed the councilmember's proposed display policies. I've attached your proposed revisions to this email. Please correct me if I've misidentified your revisions. You previously said it wasn't your intention with the discussion over the display policy to exclude any category currently on the policy list but instead expand it. I see the inclusion of " days of Federal Commemoration" being added as part of the themes but you also crossed out the Equity/Diversity theme already on the list. Please help me understand your reasoning. Why eliminate it from the list? Did you change your mind about your goals concerning this topic? Was this always your intention and I misunderstood? Any information is helpful. Thank you.

2:34pm Castellente responds to Oscar Rodriguez's email:

- "I requested to have the Banner Display Policy added to the council workshop scheduled for September 18. Typically, a workshop is generally an opportunity for council members and department heads to share information in preparation for a future regular council meeting where topics are addressed in an official council capacity for action or development. As a recently appointed council member, the workshop was meant for me to gain an understanding of the history of this policy. As it turns out, I never did have the opportunity to gain valuable information on this policy from other council members as the meeting transitioned into a well-attended gathering of citizens concerned about both sides of the Pride banners. Instead of helpful workshop discussion, council members and staff directed comments to the gathering and at the end of the session council members were directed to forward any suggested revisions to the city clerk. To address your questions, my initial intention was to discuss adding other traditional and longtime celebrations such as Mothers Day; Fathers Day; Memorial Day; Flag Day; and Independence Day. Days of Commemoration are generally known as Pearl Harbor Day; D-Day, etc. **Since the September 18 workshop, I have received 41 emails sent directly to my city email service. I answered and thanked all of the senders for their email and their views. Additionally, I received 39 emails forwarded to me from other recipients. After giving full attention to all of these collective views, I decided that I would now remove the Equity/Diversity category from the pre-approved list.** However, my suggested revision to the policy did not exclude any organization from the application

process of the policy. If you have any additional questions, feel free to reach out to me after tomorrow night's meeting."

- **Insight:**

- *Castellente was appointed June 17th, 2025 and filed to run as well so was also actively campaigning at the time. Stimmel was appointed September 2, 2025*
- ***There was no public comment during the Sept 18, 2025 workshop and no interruptions. The council did in fact talk about the history of the policy and their views. At this time Council person Christine Johnson shared her views on the record that she did not believe that pride flags should fly on city property. The council directed comments to the crowd that came to support pride representation but they were not kept from the workshop. Which was why the potential policy change was added to the agenda of the October 21st City Council Meeting. The council was comfortable enough to move forward with a potential policy change.***
- *Because of the response in attendance they also knew there would be a large showing on the 21st so they moved to an auditorium of the nearly by junior high to accommodate the large crowd the council was expecting.*
- ***According to our records we only received copies of 36 total emails so there are at minimum 5 missing according to Castellente's records of 41.***
- *He did not in fact answer all emails. Not according to the records.*
- ***The additional 39 emails Castellente references are nowhere to be found by this date in public records, he must be referencing emails from his personal email: ettorej@yahoo.com***
- *After listening to a direct down the middle split in views, not a majority via email, he decides to do what the GOP chair told him to do - remove diversity/equity from the approved banner applications*
- ***He says his revisions don't exclude any organization but he has made his views clear that he sides with people who want to remove pride representation in East Wenatchee***
 - *(Count is 18 for and 18 against, current to date response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 17 against. 36 total emails received at this point, included those forwarded by the clerk. Split directly down the middle. He has responded to all except one against and less than half of the email for)*
- Page 88 - 97

21st - 2:03pm Castellente receives an email from Wanda Hackett against pride representation in East Wenatchee

- "Applications involving theme banners exhibiting one or more of the following subject matters are exempt from final Council approval. However, the list of subject matters will

be adjusted by the City Council through amendments to this policy made from time to time.

- Sister city
- Equity/Diversity
- Federal Holidays
- City Sponsored
- Events To Johnson's point, it appears Pride banners violate the policy in that they are free expression by the public and are not an expression of the city sentiment, at least not a majority of city sentiment. Further, it makes no sense and is not fair that one group or category should receive exclusive special treatment and recognition. If equity and diversity is a special category, why not a myriad of other groups or causes? Why not Straight Pride? Why not Asian American Pride? The list has the potential of never having an end. Why do we have to divide ourselves into special groups on city streetlamp banners? To promote a sense of community, it is common sense to keep banners non-controversial by honoring major holidays and community events and honoring those whose service has benefited our nation and city. With little discussion, the council agreed that any motions for changes to the banner policy be taken up at the October 21 council meeting where public comment will be allowed. Please consider omitting the Equity/Diversity category since it seems not to really be Equity at all."

2:21 - Castellente responds to Hackett:

- "Thank you for this follow up email, I appreciate you sharing your views"

4:03pm The clerk receives a public comment submission from Kim Schooley and forwards it to the city council including Castellente:

- "Dear City of East Wenatchee Council members and Mayor Crawford, **I will preface my comments by saying that I am not a homophobe or prejudice against anyone** who categorizes themselves as part of the LGBTQ community. I have friends who identify as such and, while I may not agree with their lifestyle or choices, they are loved regardless. However, as a resident of the City of East Wenatchee, I am writing to express my opinion against the display of Equity and Diversity flags. I do not feel that the City should authorize special interest groups to portray flags that express personal viewpoints as a representation of the City's values. I believe that as the elected leadership of our community you should make this relatively simple for yourselves. It is my opinion that any flags displayed should represent only particular national holidays like Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, or 4th of July; flags displaying our beautiful changing seasons of winter, spring, summer, fall; or local longstanding community events like Apple Blossom, Classis Chassis, Wings and Wheels, etc. That would keep it fairly simple and would bar any argument or decision that had to be made about appropriateness now and in the future. To be honest, it is ridiculous, frustrating, and embarrassing to me to witness the "circus" this whole matter has become. Certainly, all of you and city staff have far greater matters to attend to. I am so very tired of these individuals ranting, raving, pounding their chests, and bullying society as a whole to recognize them. Why do we allow it or even give any merit to it? We are talking about a group of individuals who by definition are

identified by their sexually deviant choices. Why do they shove this in our faces and down our throats? Why do they demand to be recognized? And why do or should we consider promoting their personal choices by allowing them to fly flags in our community? Love and tolerance is one thing. But do we have to advertise their gender and sexual orientation in order to somehow validate it for them? **I identify as a member of the WCHMW (White Christian Heterosexual Men and Women) community.**

Where is my flag? Are you going to fly it too? No. Because I would never ask, expect, demand, or argue that it was my right and your responsibility to do so. We are talking about a complete lack of humility and modesty from these people. We are talking about bullies who claim to be discriminated against and victimized and yet they are the ones that will fill your auditorium Tuesday night with their colors blaring, flags and signs flying, speeches and comments demanding, and numbers intimidating you in order to get their way. Please, please, please, for the sake of those of us who have a limited voice in this, please protect us, our rights, and what our community stands for! We should not have to have people's sexual orientation shoved in our faces or flown on main street anymore. Let them be who they want to be and do what they want to do but leave the rest of us out of it. At this stage in our society we will certainly no longer escape their drama and spectacle. But you can do your small part to protect our community from their manipulation. If not, then are you prepared to open the door for where it goes from here? Because if you allow this then where do you draw the line for equality and representation of everyone's personal choices? **Do we allow signs with leather whips and handcuffs for those who identify as sadists? Do we allow pentagrams and symbols for those who identify as witches and warlocks? Do we fly flags for the Ku Klux Klan** or those who identify with the local, California, and Venezuelan gangs operating in our community? Where do you draw the line? How do you make the choice? Again, I say just simplify it and end the debate or questions now and in the future. Thank you for the work that you do. But the decisions that you make truly need to represent and protect our community as a whole. The City should only be flying flags that can represent our City as a whole."

6:00pm East Wenatchee City Council Meeting begins. It is packed with standing room only and the large majority of speakers for over an hour and a half tell the council they want to keep rainbow diversity banners on East Wenatchee city property during June. Specifically 30 spoke in support of allowing rainbow diversity banners in East Wenatchee and 12 against.

6:14pm - clerk forward email that had been received on October 20th in support of Pride Representation in East Wenatchee that cautions the council on its actions as they could be discriminatory

6:47pm - the clerk receives an email against pride representation in East Wenatchee from Zach and Amy Williams that was forwarded to the City Council including Castellente

7:30pm - **City Lawyer Bob Siderius** lest the council know that changing the policy with any of the proposed changes (including Castellente's) would open the city up to liability and potential discriminatory litigation

7:57pm - the clerk receives an email supporting pride representation in East Wenatchee from Carli Ludlow who includes statistics and surveys about LGBTQIA2s+ youth suicidality in Washington State and forwards it to the city council including Castellente

8:57pm - the City Council Meeting adjourns

- Councilmember Castellente motions to table the revision of the banner policy with not date to reconsider at that time

11:49pm - the clerk receives an email supporting pride representation in East Wenatchee speaking of the bigotry they experienced from East Wenatchee before they from there and decided to move to Leavenworth. This was forwarded to the city council including Castellente

- Page 98-111
- *(Count is 51 for and 33 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 18 against. 42 total emails received and 42 in-person comments received. For now leading by a large margin)*

22nd - 1:31pm Castellente receives from the city attorney Bob Siderius saying he heard Castellente wanted to talk from the Mayor:

- "Mayor Crawford tells me you would like to speak about comments from last night. I am happy to talk with you. You can call either number below. If I am not available leave a message and I will call you back."
- **There is an offline phone conversation between Castellente and Siderius**

2:04pm Siderius sends Castellente an email with the requested information about how tabling topics work and how to add or move it from the next agenda and adds the specific code from city policy for reference.

2:10pm Castellente responds and thanks Siderius and asks an additional question:

- "Thank you very much. On the application form requesting banner display, it calls for IRS 501 (c) Certificate. It doesn't clarify (c) 3. I wonder if (c) 9 for profit qualifies or not?"

2:33pm - Castellente forwards this exchange to his personal email: ettorej@yahoo.com

2:36pm - Siderius responds to Castellente's 501(c) question:

- "I don't see the 501(c) designation on the application. If it is designated it should probably be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit as I believe the Council did not want to have any displays that were from a for-profit entity."

2:48pm - Castellente responds to the designation email from Siderius and offers to pay him?

- "Thanks again, Bob. Here is my address for any billable time: (redacted)"

3:01pm - Siderius responds to Castellente's payment offer:

- "Glad to help. There is no charge to you for discussing your questions or concerns. That's part of my job as city attorney."

3:50pm Christine Johnson, Ken Arnold, Ettore Castellente, and Taylor Stimmel received an angry and threatening email from Dan Wheat Douglas County GOP chair. In which he demands potential quid pro quo through hinting at 2027 endorsements, tells them to fire the city lawyer Bob Siderius and do what he wants, demands the removal of equity/diversity from the banner program, demands they add the policy change back to the agenda at the next meeting to pass his changes, and tell them that they should just ignore the pro-crime lunatics who spoke out against the change. He also asserts without fact that those who are opposed to pride representation in East Wenatchee are the "silent" majority and do they really want more gay people in East Wenatchee? He also is intent in removing power from the mayor.

- "Christine, Ken, Ettore & Taylor ~ Procedurally you have to do something, even just set a work session on banners, at the next regular meeting or the current effort to revise the banner policy dies. Pride banners go up for another June and that's what the mayor wants. So set a work session in November. It should only take you an hour, two at the most, to hash things out because the four revisions you all submitted are very similar. They are not that far apart. They all eliminate "equity/diversity" as a special category and remove the mayor from pre-approval. You can get it done! You could even get it done in the next regular meeting. You should have gotten it done last night and I'm disappointed that none of you took the lead to do that! You all had each other's revision proposals since Friday so you could see that you were all on the same page. The main difference seems whether you keep a pre-approval process for certain banners with a few council members and staff replacing the mayor. That seems an unnecessary bureaucratic step that cedes power to staff. The process should just be straight to council. The longer you let the other side drag this out the BIGGER THE MOUNTAIN BECOMES. More publicity. More gay pride people showing up at your meetings to threaten more lawsuits. Maybe The Seattle Times. Maybe national media. Find a different attorney. Siderius says the current policy was drafted to be consistent with U.S. Supreme Court rulings by limiting banner "content to neutral topics." That's BS! "EQUITY/DIVERSITY" IS NOT NEUTRAL. There were 10 rows of 11 seats each on the two sides of the audience last night. Mostly filled. That's roughly 200 people. Probably 50-50 or maybe 60-50 for gay banners. The silent majority stays home. Doesn't want to get involved. Like the one guy pointed out only 2% of the American public turned out for No Kings Day. These are pro-crime lunatics who want to destroy America. The guy's point was you are hearing from a loud but very distinct minority in East Wenatchee. So please represent the majority. The ones who have been waiting several years to get these banners gone. Four council seats are up for election in 2027. You should fear the majority of voters more than you fear a loud minority. If you set a work session at the next regular meeting, it is imperative that you also do as Ettore says and suspend all theme banners until this is resolved. Otherwise, you end up with another year of Pride banners. Trying to split the baby by preserving a week for gay Pride banners only keeps the controversy alive. And do you really want to be in the business of approving banner for one week for this and one week for that?

There are only 12 months in the year and 52 weeks in the year. If you're trying to cut city expenses, how many hours and days of city crew time are you going to spend changing banners? If in trying to reach some sort of compromise, the council ends up split 3 to 3, the mayor can break the tie. Also she maybe able to veto what you pass and you'll need a supermajority of 5 to override her veto. So you will need Harrison. Several people advocated having only U.S., state and city flags. That makes sense. Opening the door beyond that invites controversy. Please show some backbone and get this done and don't be conned into dragging it into next year! If you stay together you have the votes!

~ Dan WheatDouglas County GOP chairman"

- Page 112

- ***(It is to be noted here that GOP Chairman Wheat did not include Councilmember Hepner or Magdoff in this email. Taylor Stimmel was confirmed to have attended and spoke at the RCDCC meeting September 8th before the kick off and likely Christine Johnson and Ken Arnold were there as well. The likelihood is confirmed with a picture of Ettore Castellente, Christine Johnson, and Ken Arnold at the RCDCC fundraiser June 14, 2026)***



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- Page 112-127
- It's also to be noted that Ken Arnold and Christin Johnson are married

9:15pm - Kathryn Metcalfe replies all to Dan Wheat's email from earlier in the day to Councilmembers Johnson, Arnold, Castellente, and Stimmel revealing that she was a part of a BCC on the email thread. Likely how others had known to copy and paste his original complaint to the city council about pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- "I agree with you Dan."
- Page 128

24th - 12:35pm Castellente receives an email from Lisa Long opposing pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- "Dear Mr. Castellente I attempted to participate in the Tuesday evening city council meeting, in regards to the Banner Policy. It was very unfortunate for me as the audio of those who spoke were inaudible and garbled. I'd like to take this moment to express my opinion on the matter.
 - 1. Hanging LGBTQIA banners DO NOT REFLECT my values.
 - 2. What people do in their personal lives, sexually speaking, SHOULD NOT be forced upon anyone!
 - 3. Those who profess and/or live the LGBTQIA lifestyle are citizens and have the same rights as everyone else. So let them live it like everyone else! It does NOT have to be forced upon the entire community!!! If they want to hang their LGBTQIA flags, banners, etc... how about they display at their personal residence? I don't care if they paint their house to express themselves.
 - 4. The ONLY Banners displayed to reflect the community and bring us together, without further division, ought to be the USA Flag, State Flag, and Official City Flag.
 - As a conservative, Christian, and fellow citizen of East Wenatchee, I'm fed up with the division in our state and nation over this nonsense! The LGBTQIA citizens need to stop shoving it in the face of everyone else and trying to force acceptance of their lifestyle on those who simply disagree with it! I DO NOT GIVE A FLYIN' FLIP what others do in the privacy of their bedrooms! This special interest crap has got to stop!!! I plead with you to do the right thing and end the hanging of banners for special interest groups! It's time for unity not further disunity!!!

2:03pm Castellente responds to Lisa Long:

- "Thank you for your email today and for sharing your valuable thoughts. I brought this matter to council last month and I am still working on my efforts to revise the policy."

2:08pm Lisa Long thanks Castellente for his prompt response.

2:11pm Castellente offers his PERSONAL phone number to her so she can call him off the record.

- “You may call me if you wish. Leave a voicemail so that I may call you back 509.881.5230”
 - **It is to be noted that his office phone number is 509.884.9515**
 - Page 129-134
 - *(Count is 51 for and 34 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 19 against. 43 total emails received and 42 in-person comments received)*

27th - 10:38pm Castellente receives an email from Julie O’Leary, an East Wenatchee Resident and active voter entitled, “Deep Concern About Your Reversal on the Equity and Diversity Clause”:

- “I read the Wenatchee World article about the City Council’s discussion regarding the city’s banner policy and was troubled to learn that you reversed your position on the equity and diversity category. I believe you initially said that you brought the topic forward to expand the list of approved items, not to exclude anything. Yet your most recent statement indicates that, after further consideration, you decided to remove the equity and diversity category from the pre-approved list altogether. I would like to understand what Changed. Removing this language is not a minor adjustment — it’s a clear step backward. The equity and diversity clause signals that East Wenatchee values belonging, fairness, and inclusion for all residents. Erasing it tells a different story — one of retreat and fear at a time when leadership should stand for courage and unity. As a resident and active voter, and as someone whose family has lived in this valley since the late 1890s, I am deeply disappointed in your reversal. You had an opportunity to lead with integrity by broadening inclusion, and instead chose to narrow it. That choice matters. I urge you to reconsider and to restore the equity and diversity clause to the city’s banner policy. True leadership listens to all views, yes — but it also upholds the values that make a community stronger, kinder, and more just.”
 - **Meta Data suggests that Castellente never opened or read this email**
 - Page 135
 - *(Count is 52 for and 34 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 19 against. 44 total emails received and 42 in-person comments received)*

28th - 7:05pm an email by Julie O’Leary was forwarded from the city clerk to the city council, including Castellente, by request of Mayor Jerrilea Crawford:

- “I’ve been following the ongoing discussion about the city’s banner policy and proposals to remove the equity and diversity category — a change that would effectively end the Pride banners displayed during Pride Month. I understand that you and the Council have chosen to gather additional information, consult with legal counsel, and consider public feedback before revisiting the policy — possibly in 2026. I appreciate your thoughtful approach and the recognition that decisions like this deserve care and clarity. I hope you’ll include this citizen’s perspective as part of that public feedback: I strongly support keeping the equity and diversity category in place and maintaining the Pride banners as a visible reflection of belonging in our community. The Pride banners are not political statements; they are a sign that East Wenatchee values diversity and welcomes everyone who calls this city home. The strong turnout and heartfelt voices at recent

meetings made clear that many residents want to see that message preserved. Delaying a decision is understandable, but the spirit of inclusion these banners represent deserves active protection, not quiet postponement. My family has lived in this valley since the late 1890s, and I've seen how much our community thrives when leaders act with fairness, empathy, and courage. As mayor, you have the opportunity to ensure East Wenatchee continues that tradition — by keeping the equity and diversity category intact and affirming that this city stands for respect and belonging for all. As a resident and active voter, I ask that you continue to lead with transparency and care, ensuring that the process ahead strengthens trust rather than uncertainty. The choices made in the coming months will speak powerfully about the kind of community East Wenatchee wants to be.”

- **Meta data suggests this one was read**
- Page 136-137

9:06pm city clerk forwards email from Randi Allred to the city council opposing pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- “My family and I are new to East Wenatchee and we are enjoying much of what the area has to offer. I was happy to get a chance to vote in my first Douglas County election cycle. It was recently brought to my attention that the city council is considering removing the equity/diversity category as one of the city's approved banner themes. I support the removal of the equity/diversity category. I came from a city in a large Washington county that was the only city which did not display pride flags. My city enjoyed strong support among its citizens, and a community that worked and played well together. We were able to accomplish these feats without city-sponsored pride flags. The neighboring cities that flew those flags continually dealt with negative fallout; the flags were an annual reminder of the discord and heartfelt disagreements regarding what the pride flags are intended to accomplish. The people in East Wenatchee who want to fly niche-issue flags are free and welcome to do so--and may they be well. But the pride flag endorses favoritism to a segment of the population who desire to be recognized and celebrated for their sexual practices, and increasingly invites negative attitudes towards those who for religious or other lifestyle reasons don't want to be part of the celebration. If pride flags were meant to foster inclusivity and community, they have clearly failed. Perhaps it is time to try something new. Thank you for your time spent considering my comments. If you do further this discussion in the Nov. 4 city council meeting, please add my comments to the list of public comments.”
- Page 138-139
- **Meta data suggests that this was read and Allred included his personal number for contact - no reply email was sent**
- *(Count is 52 for and 35 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 19 against. 45 total emails received and 42 in-person comments received)*

November

3rd - 10:05am the clerk forwards an email in support of pride representation in East Wenatchee from Suellen Harris to the city council including Castellente:

- Dear East Wenatchee City Council and City Clerk, I write today to support the display of colorful banners during Pride month. Each year I look forward to our rainbow banners that remind me that our city is inclusive and welcoming. The rainbow is a traditional symbol of love and safety. Please keep our current policy in place. The banners harm no one and encourage many. They are an asset to our community. Removing them would send the wrong message about our safe and welcoming city.”
 - Meta data suggests this was read
 - Castellente does not respond

11:36am - the clerk forwards a second email from Cliff Carlson with the same sentiments of his October 1st email:

- “As you decide on the city’s banner policy, may I ask two questions of you? Do you realize that homosexuality was once recognized as a mental illness by the Medical & Psychiatric communities and that Same-Sex attraction (Gender dysphoria) is a condition currently recognized in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as a mental disorder? Only after the involvement of political and social activist groups has the tide of public opinion changed (and not necessarily for the better)! God’s word, on the other hand DOES NOT change as ‘Jesus Christ (and His word) is the same yesterday, today and forever.’ (Hebrews 13:8). Our Designer only created two genders: Male or Female. As a Christian I feel compassion and pray for the folks that are mislead and trapped in that unproductive lifestyle. Christ freely offer a better way for all who will accept it. The bottom line to this whole banner debate is: Does the City of East Wenatchee really want to endorse and flaunt a banner that blatantly dishonors our Creator in the process??”

3:29pm - Castellente responds to Carlson’s second email:

- “Thank you for your email and sharing your valuable views.”
 - Pages 140-143
 - *(Count is 53 for and 35 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 20 against. 46 total emails received and 42 in-person comments received)*
 - Carlson’s second email will not be counted a second times in the against number as he already made his opinion known, but Castellente’s second positive response to Carlson’s email in the responses will be recorded

4th - City Council suspends Banner approved banner applications as demanded by GOP Chair Dan Wheat on October 22nd after the previous meeting where the council tabled the banner discussion - specifically to block June 2026 from having pride representation as told by Dan Wheat in his Nov 14th editorial

6th - 12:11pm Clerk forwards email to city council including Castellente supporting pride representation in East Wenatchee from Becca Freimuth:

- 'I am a lifelong resident of East Wenatchee and am writing to express my support for the Diversity banners the city has been hanging the last several years. I want to live in a community that welcomes and respects everyone, and the banners are a public display of that. I hope the Council continues to display the Diversity Banners in support of the City's vision of a "diverse, well-planned, safe, and thriving city with a strong sense of community that provides equal opportunity for all."
- **Meta data suggests this email was read but never responded to**
- Page 144
- *(Count is 54 for and 35 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 20 against. 47 total emails received and 42 in-person comments received)*

14th- GOP Chair Dan Wheat releases the editorial titled, "Harrison landslide bodes well on banner policy // Democrats spent \$1,500 on losing school candidate" in which he brags about the Douglas County PAC's contribution to Paul Harrison and the fact that Ettore Castellente donated to him as well.

- **In this editorial Wheat brags that the nonpartisan city council is now GOP partisan 5-2 and that Johnson, Arnold, Castellente and Stimmel intend to remove diversity/equity from banners in East Wenatchee**
- **He also specifies that the DCRCC welcomes specifically extremist Republicans**
 - "The Douglas County Republican Party particularly welcomes true America First conservatives. We meet at 6 p.m. the first Monday of the month, except when it's a holiday"
 - **This is supported by the fact that at this July's fundraiser they specifically had extremist candidates like Adam James and Jerrod Sessler speak**
 - **An example of the extremism for Sessler is liking comments from constituents that advocate for "blowing" people up and oppressing Indigenous people:**



 24

 16

 2

Most relevant ▾



Terry Finkbeiner · 4h ·  by Author

Blow them up , and while you're at it, stop Grant County from giving land from the King Ranch to the Indians. I thought we won those wars 150 years ago.

 2



Justin Stickel



Jerrod Sessler for Congress

January

20th - 9:16am Castellente sends a new policy revision draft for the banner policy from his personal email ettorej@yahoo.com to his public office email.

10:30am Castellente sends new policy revision draft for banner policy from his public office email to the clerk for dissemination in preparation for the January 22 workshop with the banner policy on the agenda

1:03pm the workshop agenda is posted to the City of East Wenatchee Website

2:08pm Nathan Scott emails the city council including Castellente asking that they record and stream the workshop for archive.

6:00pm City Council Meeting
- Page 145-147

21st - 10:20am Castellente receives an email from Mark VanHorne who first made his opinion known on September 22nd:

- "Hi Ettore - I appreciate what you're doing with the banner policy revision and support what you are trying to do. I'm wondering about the status of the policy revision proposals. The last I heard was that this issue would be discussed sometime in early 2026, but I don't see anything on the council agendas for this topic. Can you tell me when the council will consider the proposals and take a vote?"

12:12pm Castellente responds to Vanhorne:

- "Thank you for your email this morning. The topic is on the agenda of the Council Workshop scheduled for tomorrow @ 5:30 pm in the city hall chambers. This is the opportunity for council members to review my version of the revised banner display policy, and any other revised versions from the other council members. We have been waiting for this progress since October 21, 2025 when our meeting was held at the Eastmont Junior School. If we come to an agreement on a revised policy, the matter will be placed on a regular council meeting of February 3 or February 17 for an official vote. This workshop is open to the public, however, there is no public comment opportunity this type of meeting."
- Pages 148-150

22nd - 4:42pm Clerk sends an email with case policy for the city council, including Castellente, to review in regards to the Banner Policy Revision to avoid discriminatory practices:

- "Good afternoon Councilmembers, Attached please find two cases that our Legal Counsel, Bob Siderius, thought you should review when considering the Banner Policy. One is the US Supreme Court decision that led to the changes to the Banner Policy a few years ago. The other is a more recent application of that decision."

- The attached cases are Scaer v City of Nashua New Hampshire & Shurtleff v City of Boston Massachusetts

5:30pm the workshop commences with an audience. The city attorney spends a long time explaining to the city council that the current policy complies with current laws and changing it could risk liability exposure.

- [Taylor Stimmel spends more than 15 minutes talking opining on how confusing diversity, equity, inclusion are and why it was every added to the City's mission and values. Then claims after an explanation from Councilmember Hepner that while you can't "convert" to being and African American you could identify as one.](#)
- Taylor Stimmel is caucasian

7:13pm Workshop adjourned

8:31pm - Castellente emails city attorney Bob Siderius to send him a copy of his revised banner policy:

- "I am reviewing the cases that you sent via Laura. I am not aware that you received my recent compiled banner policy draft. I am attaching it."
- Pages 151-156

29th - Wenatchee Valley Chamber of commerce "Business after hours" event co-hosted by Center Investments, Treasure Trove, Pinnacle Beerworks, and Golf Dojo

February

3rd- City Council Meeting

5th- 10:26am Castellente sends and email to City Attorney Bob Siderius:

- "It was nice to see you at the Chamber event last week. I have a few comments regarding the topics and rewrites of the workshop: Rules of Procedures - I now have Word installed on my official city iPad and now able to view your red lines. I don't have any additions other than the items offered during the workshop discussion. Banner Display Policy - I would like the policy to clearly identify that council approve any banners for the city's events banners, as well as banners donated."

10:50am Siderius responds:

- "Thank you Councilmember for your email. I will have some draft language with your proposal for the banner policy for discussion at the next workshop."
- Page157-159

17th - City Council Meeting

19th - 11:15am Castellente receives an email that is also addressed to Dan Wheat from Mark Vanhorne, marking his third email since September 22:

- “Hi Ettore - I appreciate what you're doing with the East Wenatchee banner policy revision and hope that a policy revision is soon passed that will eliminate pride flags from East Wenatchee. But there may be a threat on the horizon: Senator Schumer will soon introduce legislation "to defend LGBTQ+ Flag forever at Stonewall & across the country." As I understand the proposed revision to East Wenatchee banner policy, it would only allow displays only for "federal holidays" and "city sponsored events". I hope the exact wording of the proposed policy by the city attorney protects us from Schumer's threat. I'll be at the workshop on February 19 2026 to listen to the discussion.”

12:26pm Castellente responds to Vanhorne:

- “Thank you for your email. I will see you at the meeting tonight.”
 - Page 160-161

5:32pm City Council Workshop with banner revision on the agenda

- Conversation includes whether or not the city can accept donated banners or if that would invite discriminatory practices if some organizations were accepted and not others
- Adjourns at 7:50pm

20th - 11:51am Castellente sends an email to City Attorney Bob Siderius:

- “Thank you for your professional efforts to provide a draft of the banner display policy that Mayor Crawford presented at last night’s workshop. During that discussion I added a ninth bullet point to include the federal holiday of Independence Day. I did mention in our discussion that I would suggest the federal holiday of Memorial Day for next year’s council consideration. Once the Mayor departed I gave additional thought to adding Memorial Day at this time to avoid any need to revise the policy again at the end of this year or next, thus preventing the expenses of another revision. Therefore, for the draft that should be before council by March 3rd, I am wanting bullet points 9 for Independence Day and 10 for Memorial Day. I understand that once council approves of a revision to this policy, it also requires actions by council to approve any funding for city-owned banners.”
 - Page 162-163

March

2nd - Rosalyn Leban sends an email to the clerk and cc'd the entire city council including Castellente to advocate for rainbow diversity banners in East Wenatchee title, “Public Comment on Banner Policy for Tuesday, March 3 Meeting”:

- “My name is Rosalyn Leban, and I'm a homeowner in East Wenatchee. Last year, my wife and I purchased a house on North Grover Place. We made the decision to live in East Wenatchee partially because we understood East Wenatchee to be a welcoming community where we would be safe from homophobic violence. The rainbow diversity, equity, and inclusion banners showed me that East Wenatchee would accept my family. I attended a City Council meeting last October, and was deeply hurt by the negative comments council members made about the LGBTQ+ community. We are human

beings. We are East Wenatchee and Douglas County taxpayers and members of the community. Removing the banners sends the message that my wife and I are NOT welcome here and will NOT be safe. LGBTQ+ people have always existed, and we will not go away if the City Council votes to silence us. However, many of us will feel alienated and unsafe in our own homes and neighborhoods. In addition to being a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I am also Jewish. In October, council members claimed that they opposed the Pride banners because some of their constituents do not support LGBTQ+ people (i.e., that some constituents are homophobic and/or transphobic). If I recall correctly, Councilmember Johnson stated that she did not want the city to be involved with any display that did not reflect the opinion of all of her constituents. In December, however, the front lawn of East Wenatchee City Hall became an enormous Christmas display. Not all East Wenatchee residents are Christian, yet the City Council apparently had no issue spending the city budget on the labor to install and the electricity to power the Christmas lights, in addition to the cost of acquiring the large, lighted decorations. This decision to platform Christmas, combined with the City Council's move to ban rainbow banners, indicates that I am not recognized as a full member of the East Wenatchee community as a Lesbian or a Jewish person. I also encourage the East Wenatchee City Council to think of the children in our community. LGBTQ+ youth have a disproportionate rate of suicide, four times as high as other children. One of the most important protective factors for LGBTQ+ youth is social acceptance. Children who live in communities that accept LGBTQ+ people attempt suicide at less than half the rate of LGBTQ+ youth who live in communities where they are not accepted. I encourage members of the City Council to visit the Trevor Project for more information. This issue is personal to me because I attempted suicide as a teenager. I do not want any other child to go through what I went through. Rainbow flags in the community can help youth feel accepted, and discourage youth from attempting suicide. I urge the East Wenatchee City Council to ask whether you prefer that LGBTQ+ children die by suicide rather than allow rainbow flags. LGBTQ+ people deserve to live with dignity in East Wenatchee and everywhere. Our existence cannot be erased. Please do not implement any banner police that would restrict or ban rainbow flags. Thank you for your consideration."

- **Meta data suggests that Castellente never read it**
- *(Count is 55 for and 35 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 20 against. 2 unread emails of supportive pride representation in East Wenatchee. 48 total emails received and 42 in-person comments received)*

2:04pm - The city council including Castellente is sent an email from a representative of Out NCW: an organization that offered to pay for banner costs if that was a factor in the Council's decision to not hang the banners at the October 21, 2025 City Council Meeting:

- "Dear East Wenatchee City Council Members, We have been informed that the City Council will be moving forward to change the current banner policy and take on the financial cost of the banners. This decision is fiscally irresponsible when you have \$0 set aside in the budget for 2026, and will potentially face a budgetary shortfall. This decision also has the intended effect of banning rainbow banners in June which is deeply

disappointing to me and my fellow community members. Rainbow banners in June represent love, community, and inclusiveness. By proceeding with your intended actions, it speaks loud and clear that you stand for the opposite with a yes vote. We condemn this action by the council and implore you to reconsider leaving the policy as it is."

- **Meta data suggests that Castellente never read this email**
- *(Count is 56 for and 35 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 6 for and 20 against. 3 unread emails of supportive pride representation in East Wenatchee. 49 total emails received and 42 in-person comments received)*

4:45pm the city council including Castellente receives a second email from Jessica Bennett in support of the banner policy as it stands including equity/diversity in East Wenatchee:

- "I am once again sending a request that you leave the banner resolution as it stands. I attended the council workshop last September. I heard Councilmember Johnson express uncertainty about whether the four subject areas (Sister City, Equity/Diversity, Federal Holidays, and City-Sponsored Events) were exempt from the preapproval process. She also said she did not recall that Resolution 2022-49 included the statement: "...street banners may only be displayed as an expression of the City's own sentiments." After the meeting, I reviewed the resolution on the city's website. The record clearly shows that during the public comment period, a citizen requested that the LGBTQIA+ flag be included in the pre-approved list. The final resolution does, in fact, include the language about banners expressing the city's sentiments. Councilmember Johnson not only seconded the motion to exempt those four subject matters from pre approval; she also seconded the motion to adopt the resolution itself, which passed unanimously (7–0). It's entirely understandable that a detail may have been forgotten. We all need reminders sometimes, and that's what I hope this serves as. I trust that Councilmember Johnson, and the full council, will stand by that original vote and uphold the resolution as it stands. Reversing this policy now, after it has been in place and embraced since 2022, sends a message that the values affirmed the council can be undone without cause, eroding the trust built between the community and its elected officials. Every single person in this city knows someone for whom representation matters. Someone for whom these flags send a message of inclusion. Our colleagues, our co-workers, our teachers, our loved ones, and our family members. These identities are part of the fabric of our city. The Pride flag is not an external symbol imposed on the city; it is an expression of its own people. As a reminder, the mission of the City of East Wenatchee is: "To maintain the trust of and give quality service to all who live in, work in and visit the City of East Wenatchee." Please honor that mission by continuing to stand with all who call this city home."

5:07pm Castellente receives an email from Rev. Debbie Sperry from Wenatchee First UMC in support of keeping diversity/equity in banners and having pride representation in East Wenatchee in June:

- "I have been informed that the City Council will be moving forward to change the current banner policy, effectively removing the exemption standards that include and allow for the Pride Banners traditionally hung in June. I am deeply discouraged by this action. As

a resident of Douglas County/East Wenatchee and someone who works with people all over our valley as part of my ministry at First United Methodist Church, I am invested in the decisions you make on behalf of our community. I have attended and watched the meetings and workshops that relate to this action. From what I have seen and heard at the related meetings it seems the policy change is largely motivated by discrimination, fear and prejudice. The policy change is not properly financially motivated (meaning it is unnecessary to save dollars or create revenue for the city). The “financial reasons” related to this change are baseless, particularly when considering specific offers to make donations to cover ANY and ALL costs of hanging the banners. The reasons the public has shared for motivation for the change are not rooted in community values or priorities and instead serve to directly harm the LGBTQIA community and allies. Our valley is comprised by a diversity of people. Young and old. Working class and upper class. Religious and non religious. Outdoorsy and artsy. Queer and straight. Immigrant and those born in the United States of America. As such, the government bodies, including you, who serve in this representative democracy have an obligation and responsibility to serve the interests and well-being of your constituents. This duty covers the fullness of our diversity. I ask you to leave the policy, not because it’s what I want, though, it certainly is, but because the exemptions affirm and hold space for your constituents in the fullness of who they are and that affirmation helps identify our city as a safe space for all people.”

7:34pm - Castellente responds to Bennett’s email:

- “Thank you for your email and sharing your thoughts on this matter.”

7:35pm - Castellente responds to Sperry’s email:

- “Thank you for your email and sharing your thoughts on this matter.”

7:45pm - the city council members including Castellente receive and email from Aubrey Lee, titled, “Opposition to Proposed Policy Changes”:

- “I have been informed that the City Council intends to move forward with changes to the current banner policy, including shifting the financial responsibility for banners to the City. This decision is fiscally irresponsible, especially when there are no funds set aside in the 2026 budget and the City may be facing a potential budget shortfall. The current program allows banners to be donated free of charge, with new banners installed only after the previous celebratory banner is taken down. This system has worked without placing any financial burden on taxpayers. In addition, this change appears to have the effect of eliminating rainbow banners in June, which is deeply disappointing to me and many members of our community. Rainbow banners displayed in June represent love, community, and inclusiveness. Moving forward with this policy change sends a clear message that those values are not being supported. I strongly believe our city should reflect and welcome all members of our community. I respectfully urge you to reconsider this decision and leave the current banner policy as it stands.”
 - **Meta Data suggests Castellente did not open or read this email**
 - Page 164-171

- *(Count is 58 for and 35 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 7 for and 20 against. 4 unread emails of supportive pride representation in East Wenatchee. 49 total emails received and 42 in-person comments received)*
 - **Notice that he responded to two emails and left three unread**
 - **This is less than 24 hours before the final decision to change the policy and he is ignoring constituents in favor of the minority**

3rd - 8:00am The city council including Castellente receive an email from Denali White in support of pride representation in East Wenatchee:

- "I've lived in the Wenatchee Valley almost my entire life, and though I live within Wenatchee city limits, I have spent a lot of time in East Wenatchee. In 2015, I helped start a group called The Spectrum, which was the first fully grassroots LGBTQ group in the Wenatchee area. We actually met at the Cascade Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in East Wenatchee for many of our meetings, and CUUF would go on to host the first Pride celebration in Wenatchee. From there, Pride grew so large that it moved to Pybus, and then to Lincoln Park, and finally Memorial Park. But it started in East Wenatchee. That should be a genuine point of pride for the city. You started a movement! We will likely never know how many lives were saved because of it, but I do know that at least one life was saved because East Wenatchee hosted that LGBTQ group. A trans teenager I knew at the time was severely suicidal due to a lack of support from his family, and community support was the only thing that kept him alive. The Pride banners are a small thing. For some people, they may be an eyesore or an annoyance, but for others, they may be a reason to keep living for another day. The Pride banners say: "you are not alone". Whether people are gay, straight, cis, trans, or any other identity under the rainbow of possibilities, there is a place for them under that banner. And some people desperately need that reminder. Right now, we live in a world where nearly everyone is struggling, either economically or emotionally. Every day, we hear news about war and violence, while groceries continue to get more expensive and it gets harder and harder for families to make ends meet. For LGBTQ people in particular, the world is often very unkind. Why add to that unkindness when you have the chance to ease their burden instead? You have the power to make a meaningful difference in people's lives, and can do so without having to spend a cent. There is no reason to change the current policy other than cruelty. I know you've likely been receiving lots of messages asking for the Pride flags to be removed. But I've always thought that part of the job of being an elected official is to be brave. We're counting on you to come down on the right side of history, despite any obstacles you might face. Sometimes the right thing is not the easiest thing to do or the Most-liked. I can tell you that years from now, the future residents of East Wenatchee are going to judge you for how you acted here. Either you will be seen as a craven, reactionary force for regressive politics that set our community decades back, or you will be seen as brave and principled leaders who made a decision that prioritized the needs of the most vulnerable in our community even if it was unpopular. We're all counting on you to make the right decision."

10:23am Castellente responds to White:

- "Thank you for your email and sharing your comprehensive thoughts on this matter."

6:00pm City Council Meeting begins - with the agenda to change the policy

- 12 people speak during the open public comments section
 - 1 not about banners
 - 10 for
 - 1 against who also sent an email in October to the City Council
 - *(Count is 69 for and 35 against, current response by Castellente to emails is 7 for and 20 against. 4 unread emails of supportive pride representation in East Wenatchee. 50 total emails received and 53 in-person comments received)*
 - **This is officially 66% of logged constituent comments FOR pride representation and diversity/equity in East Wenatchee and 34% against**
- Regardless of the overwhelming evidence that their constituents DO NOT want the policy change - there is a unanimous vote to change the banner policy
 - Understandably constituents present shout at the city council members and leave
 - [Ettore Castellente is caught on camera making the sign of the cross](#) as they exit
- Adjourned at 7:34pm

6:18pm City Council including Castellente received a thank you email from Chelsea GIII for their work on the banner policy

- Meta Data suggests Castellente never read this email

9:28pm the city council including Castellente received an email from Sasha Sleiman:

- "I wanted to tell you this in person tonight, but I was unable to leave work in time to speak publicly: You have disappointed the residents of East Wenatchee. I regret not being there tonight—not because I believed I would influence your decision. Your minds were clearly made up. They have been since Council Member Castellente asked to revisit the existing Banner Policy months ago. When Council Member Johnson took that opportunity to reverse her prior support of the existing policy. With Council Member Stimmel & her dutiful husband Council Member Arnold aligned with her, she could count to 4 and see there were enough votes to undo what she had once supported implementing. I regret not being there tonight because I feel you need to be confronted with the reality and gravity of the decision you just made as we all work to move forward from this embarrassing display of charade policy making. The outcome tonight appeared predetermined before any public process began. Rather than addressing real issues facing the city presently, and crafting thoughtful solutions, you felt it prudent to look in the past and pursue your agenda of stripping diversity out of an existing program that was working just fine. Under the justification of saving the city and taxpayers money, you spent significant time and public resources (\$\$\$) creating the appearance of debate and engagement, only to do what you intended from the beginning: strip the city's banner policy of content that reflected diversity. You ignored the majority of residents who spoke and wrote in support of keeping the existing policy crafted and passed by the previous

council. You are representatives of this community, not monarchs. Your responsibility is to ensure the city operates efficiently, safely, and equitably, and to steward public funds wisely while doing so. You are entrusted to uphold the Washington State Constitution and represent all residents, whether they voted for you or not. I have sat in your chairs and I understand that leadership sometimes requires making unpopular decisions. Representatives may understand the nuances and complexities of an issue in a way others don't or may have access to more information than the public does, and at times must act accordingly. But when the majority of engaged constituents consistently express support for an existing policy, that input should matter. You held meetings, directed staff to run numbers and compile research, and you invited (but didn't listen to) public comment. All of it led to the same conclusion: the policy did not need to change. Yet you voted to strip it anyway. The previous policy was not extraordinary or heroic; it was simply equitable. It aimed to create a fair playing field for community expression through banners aligned with city events and interests. It did not permit unrestricted free speech, just like your new policy. The difference is that yours removes language that signaled inclusion. The diversity banners you eliminated were not partisan symbols. They communicated that all residents are welcome. While displaying banners that support city & community events and make all residents feel welcome in the community in which they live is not an essential role of government by any means, I can admit that, but it does foster community and a strong community is a vital part of decent and effective government. This was never about cost savings or fiscal responsibility. Significant staff time and public resources were spent to pursue what appears to be a personal agenda. In doing so, you sent a message to everyone in the city who is not a straight, white, Christian male that their presence and contributions are less valued or even unwelcome. Diversity simply means including people from different backgrounds. Your vote suggested a value for sameness over inclusion. You value only opinions of people who look exactly like you and think exactly like you. Unfortunately for you Councilwoman Johnson, in the world you wish to promote and value you would have no seat at the table to make the decision you just made; only your husband Councilman Ken Arnold would have the seat at that table as a white man. You all just told this community you don't value diversity when embracing diversity and different views and experiences is how women like myself and other past female or non-white council members, including Council members Johnson & Magdoff and Mayor Crawford were ever afforded the opportunity to vote let alone be elected officials. You want to follow in the footsteps of your King and deem words like diversity, equity & inclusion as dangerous or problematic. Be my guest. Please know, as you sheepishly follow your herd you are chipping away at the bedrock of a free democracy. Democracy does not erode only at the national level. It weakens when local officials disregard the will and voice of their constituents. It weakens when decisions are made that lack broad public support. Local government is where trust is either built or broken. You were elected to conduct the city's business, ensure public safety, support growth & economic opportunity, and provide equal access to government for all residents. I urge you to refocus on those responsibilities."

- **Meta data suggests this was never read by Castellente**

- Pages 172-178

5th - 2:59pm Castellente receives an email from Pastor Adam Harris from First Baptist Church thanking him for changing the banner policy:

- "I just read the article by KPQ news about the council's decision to change the banner policy. I am very grateful for your common sense decision to use public, or city property for only city promotions, not agenda based propaganda, or as a "forum for free expression by the public." Well done! This decision has my full support, and that of First Baptist Church."
- Meta data suggests this was never read by Castellente
- Page 179

10th - 1:48pm the city council including Castellente receives an email from Rev Debbie Sperry as a follow up on her initial plea to keep the banner policy unchanged:

- "Dear Council Members, I am writing to follow up on the Diversity banner decision. I was disappointed and angry, though, sadly, not surprised, with the council's decision, and am aware it has already caused pain and harm among our LGBTQIA+ siblings. And, as disheartening as the decision was, I found it more troublesome that, in retrospect, it seemed the decision was a foregone conclusion due to the council's legal concerns. Admittedly, I haven't done research on that piece, though I struggle to imagine how so many cities can be "open and affirming" including banners, painted sidewalks, and more, and yet East Wenatchee would be more at risk for a lawsuit than those other communities. But even more frustrating to me is that the council treated this matter as an "open forum" soliciting community input and comment, when, at the end of the decision, it seemed all of that was for naught. Professionally, I work in a church that is part of a global denomination, which is a system that has plenty of rules and bureaucracy. We have a wide variety of viewpoints (political and theological), and we have infrastructure that often impedes progress, including inclusion. I understand legal liabilities. I even understand regrettable decisions that seem unavoidable to protect the larger system or assets. And, when those decisions present themselves, creating an open forum for discussion and input, when leadership already knows what decision they will make, is unhelpful at best, divisive and harmful at worst. In other words, I wish you all had framed the entire process differently if you knew early on that you would likely end where you did. The lack of transparency regarding your legal concerns (seemingly lumped as "financial concerns", which most assumed related to the hanging of the banners and not potential liability) is frustrating. It is impossible to have productive conversation when key elements are excluded. I would like to assume the best of each of you as leaders in our community. I cringe to imagine the bigotry you have been accused of is true at your core. And I am devastated by what appears to be lack of leadership and creativity through a very sensitive decision. I wonder (and worry) how you might rebuild trust with queer folk and allies to do the work necessary in our community. While I trust the care expressed by the two council members who joined online and Mayor Crawford was genuine, the timing of your words, in light of the unanimous decision, made your words sound perfunctory and void. I lament that. I do hope you who are invested in the diversity

and welcome of all people in our valley will take tangible measures to show your commitment and undo some of the incredible harm that has happened. I wish that more imagination and time had been spent on creating other avenues for inclusion while you headed toward the policy change, rather than it being mostly (only?) reactive after the vote. As a resident, professional, and a leader in this valley, I am committed to our good. I try to be extra mindful of those who are marginalized, targeted and oppressed, and in this case, the queer community, though, the Rainbow banners stand for more than Pride, including the BIPOC community too. I believe this policy change is problematic, and I will work toward visible public measures of care and inclusion to further the welcome, collaboration and participation that will make our community richer and stronger. If you would like to engage in conversation about any of my comments or conversations around the potential for repair, please feel free to reach out to me.”

- Meta data suggests this email was read
- Page 180-181

Sources:

[Emails](#)

[Douglas County Republican Central Committee \(DCRCC\) Facebook Page](#)

[DCRCC facebook event September 8th 2025](#)

[DCRCC website](#)

[DCRCC endorsement](#) of Castellente

[EW City Council Rules](#)

[9-16-25 City Council Agenda](#)

[9-16-25 City Council Meeting Minutes](#)

[9-18-25 Workshop Minutes](#)

[9-18-25 Workshop agenda](#)

[EW Boondoggle - comments from board members about the banner policy](#)

[Public Comments from Oct 21, 2025 East Wenatchee City Council Meeting](#)

[10-21-25 City Council Meeting Agenda](#)

[10-21-25 City Council Meeting Minutes](#)

[01-22-26 Workshop Agenda](#)

[01-22-26 Workshop Minutes](#)

[02-19-26 Workshop Agenda](#)

[02-19-26 Workshop Minutes](#)

[03-03-26 City Council Meeting Minutes](#)

[03-03-26 City Council Meeting Agenda](#)

[City of East Wenatchee Employee Handbook](#) - City Council is bound to its conduct page 10

[Prohibited arts for Municipal officers - RCW 42.23.070](#)

[Non-partisan city council](#)

[Comments from City Council about Banners](#) 09-18-25

[Douglas County Republican Central Committee PAC PDC page](#)

[Report showing that there was a \\$500 cash payment from the DCRCC PAC to Paul Harrison, an East Wenatchee city councilmember](#) - elected in November 2025

[Paul Harrison's PDC contributions which show the receipt of the \\$500 from the DCRCC PAC AND Ettore Castellente](#)

[PDC reported contributions to DCRCC](#) for 2025

[PDC reported contributions to DCRCC](#) for 2026 Castellente is listed as contributing

[DCRCC endorses Paul Harrison Aug 22, 2025](#)

[Jerrold Sessler Facebook comment](#)