From: Smith, Shane
To: Levesque, Jennifer; Medina, Alejandra
Subject: Fw: Council Item - Flags not United States Flag and California Flag
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 12:33:26 PM

Written Communication re H.2 or L.1.

From: Belinda Burnett [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 12:11 PM
To: Smith, Shane <smiths@cityofmerced.org>
Cc: Serratto, Matthew <serrattom@cityofmerced.org>
Subject: Re: Council Item - Flags not United States Flag and California Flag

Shane,
I am concerned about flags flying on our city flag poles that are not US flags and California flags. Those two flags represent all of us living in the US. Our flag poles should represent all. When flags that are not those two flags it segregates us. It says that a group who is represented by that flag is more special than the rest.

Also, not every group has a flag and there is a limited amount of opportunities for flags to be part of those selected.

Can we make our city flag poles a symbol of All?

The City Council does a great job recognizing each groups that support the city at council meetings and supporting their activities.

Please stop allowing any group to post flags on our city poles.

Thank you for your service to our community,
Belinda

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Levesque, Jennifer

From: Jeffrey Carter [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2025 2:34 PM
To: cityclerk
Cc: McBride, Scott; Cornwell, Craig
Subject: C7 policy

Merced City Council

You definitely need to review your C7 policy. Did any of you even read it. Commemorative flags only. No pride flag. Someone's sexual orientation is neither an achievement nor a holiday. No Christian, jewish, Hindu or Muslim flags. Separation of the city and religion. Only POW/MIA, memorial Day, veterans Day, d-Day and related commemorative flags. Listen to the people of Merced, if you would ask them and not what somebody's kids told you to fly.

Jeffrey Carter
And our neighborhood

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Merced -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

From: Smith, Shane
To: Levesque, Jennifer; Medina, Alejandra
Subject: Fw: C7 commemorative flags
Date: Monday, February 17, 2025 8:33:22 AM

From: Steven Donahue <stevedonahue1@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2025 1:29 PM
To: Smith, Shane <smithS@cityofmerced.org>
Subject: C7 commemorative flags

Councilman Smith

The pride flag is not a commemorative flag of the raid on Stonewall. The rainbow flag was stolen later. The rainbow, a promise from God, not a symbol of pride.

The raid on Stonewall in 1969 was a drug raid. That bar was known for selling illegal drugs. The female that was arrested for drug possession and sales happen to be lesbian. Which the police did not know at the time of her arrest. She tried to make the arrest, a gay hate thing to beat the drug possession charges. Read your history. The raid had nothing to do with gays it was about illegal drugs being sold in that bar. It worked, she beat the drug charges. Her claiming that it was about gays is what led to the stonewall riots. That's where it all began.

Thank you for your time
Steve Donahue
Please share!
[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Merced -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Levesque, Jennifer

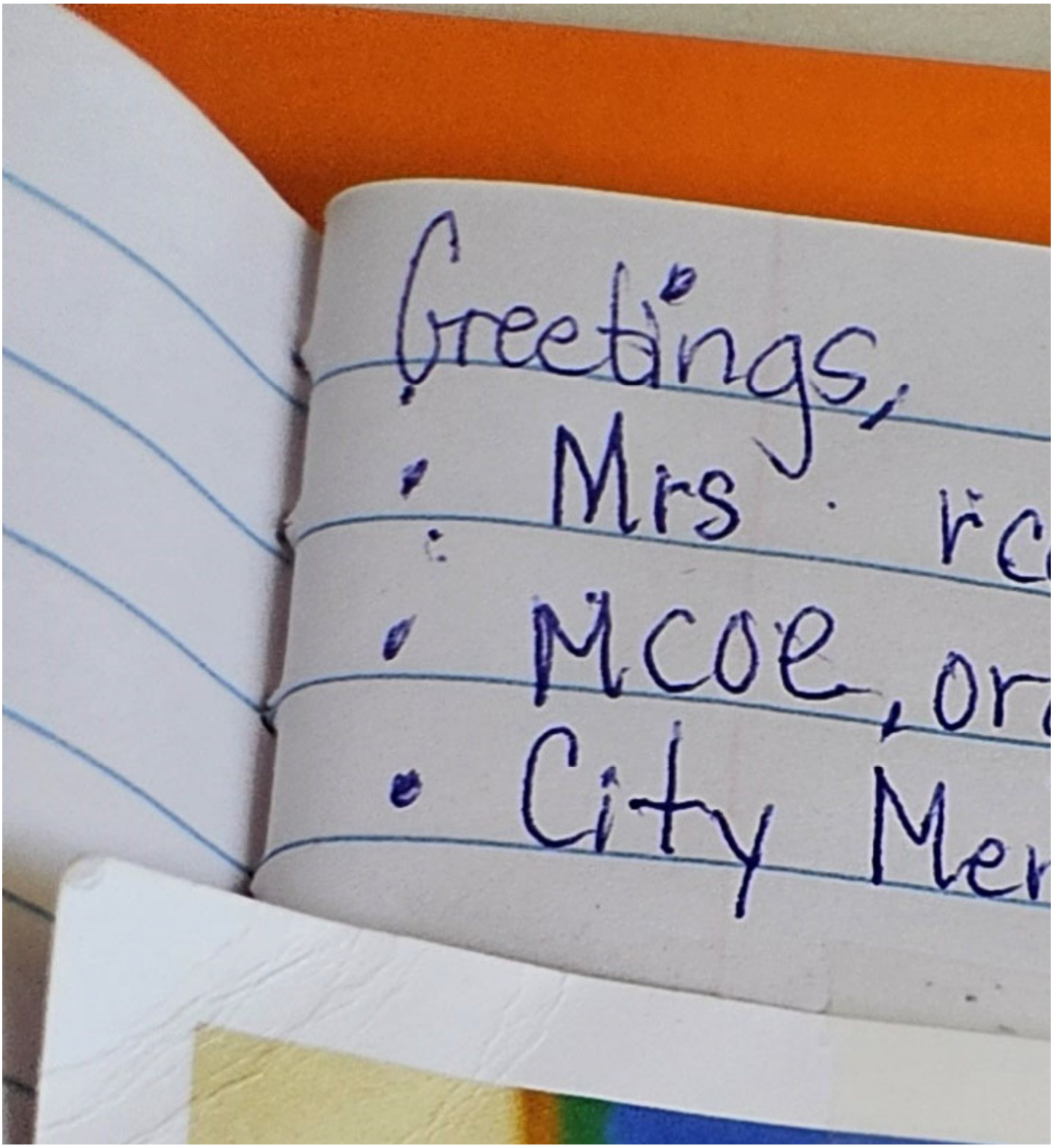
From: Steven Donahue <stevedonahue1@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2025 12:21 PM
To: cityclerk
Subject: Flag policy

City Council
Your C7 flag flying policy does not allow for the flying of the flag that displays someone's sexual choices. It is none of the cities business. The city should not be making choices one way or the other on which sexual flag should be displayed on behalf of the people of Merced. You should be neutral. It is for commemorative flags only.

Steve Donahue
[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Merced -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Angela Lara <[redacted]
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2025 2:34 PM
To: cityclerk; ihernandez@mcsd.k12.ca.us
Subject: visited Madera Forum complain/griev mcoe notes



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From: Smith, Shane
To: Levesque, Jennifer; Medina, Alejandra
Subject: Fw: Christian flag
Date: Monday, February 17, 2025 2:31:38 PM

Written communication for 2/18/25 meeting. Thank you.

From: Hal Shurtleff [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 10:52 AM
To: Smith, Shane <SmithS@cityofmerced.org>; Boyle, Sarah <BoyleS@cityofmerced.org>; Serratto, Matthew <SerrattoM@cityofmerced.org>; Dupont, Darin <DupontD@cityofmerced.org>; De Anda, Ronnie <DeandaR@cityofmerced.org>; Harris, Michael <HarrisM@cityofmerced.org>
Subject: Fwd: Christian flag

> Some people who received this message don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Hal Shurtleff** [redacted]
Date: Fri, Feb 7, 2025 at 1:42 PM
Subject: Christian flag
To: <XiongF@cityofmerced.org>

Dear Mr. Xiong:

I just read about your opposition to flying the Christian flag in your city.

Back in 2017, the City of Boston denied me a permit to fly the Christian flag to celebrate Constitution Day. As a result, I filed a lawsuit against the city. Liberty Counsel was my legal team. In May of 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 9-0 in our favor. It cost the city well over $2 million in legal fees, but more importantly, it was a victory for religious freedom and free speech.

A link to ino on the case: www;lc.org/flag

Hal Shurtleff, Director
Camp Constitution
Alton, NH

BOSTON Herald
BOSTONHERALD.COM

FALL FLICKS!

VERNIERE MOVIE PREVIEW

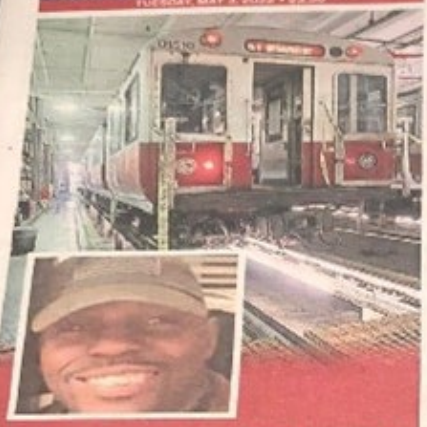
Kim fires *another* missile

NO FLY ZONE

CITY HALL REFUSES TO RAISE CHRISTIAN FLAG

GROUP THREATENS LAWSUIT: 'WE DESERVE A VOICE TOO'

BOSTON Herald
BOSTONHERALD.COM



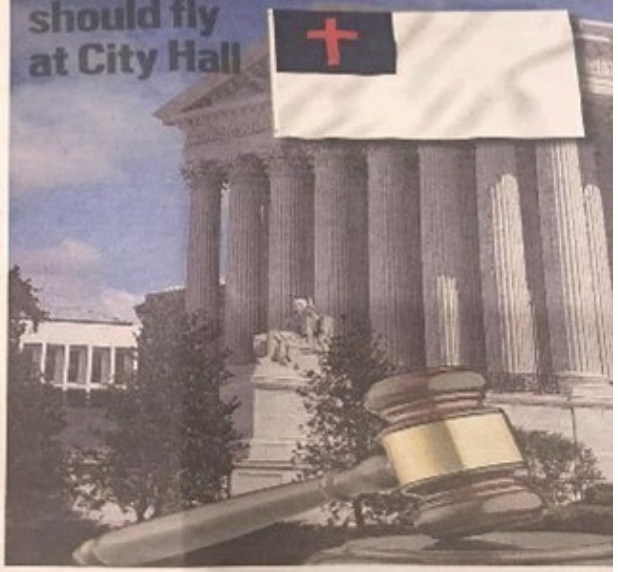
SEEING RED

WHY CAN'T THE T KEEP US SAFE?

READ BATTENFELD

SUPREME SPANKING

High court says Christian flag should fly at City Hall



The legal battle over the Christian Flag being raised at City Hall Plaza will now cost the city $2,125,000.

STUART CAHILL — BOSTON HERALD

Hub ordered to pay $2.1M for 'Christian Flag' fight legal fees

By Sean Philip Cotter
sean.cotter@bostonherald.com

The city will have to pay more than $2.1 million to cover "Christian Flag" activist Hal Shurtleff's legal fees after losing the case that spent several years winding its way up to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Liberty Counsel, the law firm that successfully represented Shurtleff in the case, trumpeted the announcement in a statement on Tuesday, saying "We are pleased that after five years of litigation and a unanimous victory at the U.S. Supreme Court, we joined with Hal Shurtleff to finally let freedom fly in Boston, the Cradle of Liberty."

The two sides agreed to the amount, which more specifically was $2,125,000, per court documents.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously sided with Shurtleff and his conservative Christian organization Camp Constitution, which then-Mayor Marty Walsh rejected from flying its white flag with a red cross on a blue square on the city's flag pole back in 2017.

Shurtleff and company sued, alleging that the city picking and choosing flags arbitrarily and rejecting his group's infringed on its First Amendment rights. The case made its way through the federal court system and the Supreme Court unanimously sided with Shurtleff earlier this year.

The city, which had paused its typical ceremonial flag-raisings on the third pole outside of City Hall — next to the U.S. and city banners — since last October, flew the "Christian Flag on Aug. 3 and then revised its policy to get in line with what now-retired Justice Stephen Breyer prescribed in the opinion adopted by SCOTUS.

Now the city takes possession of flags and flies them itself by council resolution or mayoral decree, making it city speech, which it has more say over. Previously, it had been letting different groups fly their own flags, so it was the speech of others that the city either was allowing or denying — which is how it ran into trouble.

A spokesman for Mayor Michelle Wu said this is a matter of course as Liberty Counsel emerged victorious.

"The City's Law Department determined this number to be reasonable based on the detailed billing statements provided by Liberty Counsel and through their own analysis of rates charged by attorneys with similar experience in Boston as well as nationally among attorneys practicing in the Supreme Court," the city said. "Settlement at this time also allows the City to avoid the costs and uncertainty associated with further litigation in this case."

The Herald reported last year that the city is no stranger to million-dollar payouts, as between 2016 and last November it forked over $18.4 million in more than 300 settlements and judgments to close out suits on claims that ranged from stiffing contractors to discrimination suits to an allegation of wrongful death.

In 2021 alone, Boston paid more than $4.2 million to resolve at least 42 lawsuits against the city, according to the results of the Herald's records request.

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