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# ESTEVAN MERCURY

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2023

READ IT ONLINE AT **SASKTODAY.CA**

## Council denies request for straight pride flag to be flown at city hall

By David Willberg

Estevan City Hall's council chamber was packed for Monday night's council meeting, thanks to a discussion about a controversial flag and proclamation.

A group known as Concerned Citizens appeared before council, with Myles Fichter serving as their spokesperson. He wanted to know why Estevan city council denied their request to have the straight pride flag flown in front of city hall from July 11-17, and to have a Mom and Dad Week at the same time.

More than a dozen members of Concerned Citizens were in attendance. Meanwhile, several supporters of the gay pride movement were also present, while a few members of Estevan city council were dressed to support gay pride.

Fichter said Concerned Citizens found the denial "extremely disturbing", since the city has held activities for Gay Pride Month in the past. While he was uncertain of what happened this year, he pointed out that in the past it has been in co-ordination with Moose Jaw Pride.

The first event was in 2016 with a flag-raising



A group called Concerned Citizens SK appeared before Estevan city council on Monday night to express their desire to see the straight pride flag flown in Estevan. **Myles Fichter** was the presenter.

and a proclamation. Then it became a gender-diversity awareness week in 2017 with activities in the community. Events also occurred in 2018 and 2019.

He also pointed out the Estevan Public Library had Pride Month activities this year.

"Concerned Citizens fully support the concept of pride and inclusivity, which is essentially enshrouded by the Canadian Charter [of Rights and Freedoms].

The public promotion of sexual diversity by the City of Estevan, however, we do not," said Fichter. "This can and often does, by nature, provide a standing, violated constitutional right of parents to raise and educate their own children. These rights include parents knowing where their children are, who has access to them, and what materials they're exposed to and whether or not they are safe."

He recalled that one of the Concerned Citizens SK members has a child at Hillcrest School. The student received a school-sponsored invitation to a free pizza and bowling event promoting diversity, inclusion and anti-bullying. Fichter said it proved to be an event in which the child was exposed to symbols and literature for pride and sexual diversity.

Concerned Citizens SK had three questions

for council, he said. One is in the new policy that governs flag raisings and proclamations, and why it was used to deny their request.

Next, are outside organizations like Moose Jaw Pride or the Saskatchewan Pride Network co-ordinating with members of council on these events. Finally, they wanted to know which council members voted down their request.

**A2 » COUNCIL**

## Estevan Market Mall gears up for facelift

By Ana Bykhovskaia

The Estevan Market Mall is gradually proceeding with major renovations, making the building and the entire property more modern, convenient and welcoming.

It's been four years since First Aberdeen Properties Ltd. took over the Estevan mall, and a lot of things have changed and continue to change.

"The vision is unfolding," said Martin Blair, managing director of First Aberdeen Properties Ltd.

Before the end of this year, the east side of the building, as well as the relevant part of the northern parking, should see the completion of works, which started with upgrades to Peavey Mart and its area,

continued with Dollarama's facelift, and now moves over to The Brick area, and finally will get to the food court and brand-new central entrance and mall approach, currently under construction.

The city is working on putting in a new intersection at King Street and Pine Avenue, while the mall is rebuilding its parking infrastructure, approach and landscaping the northeast side.

Blair talked to the Mercury about the updates that have been done over the past year and are currently underway. He noted that while some of the work they are doing is obvious, like the northern parking lot or The Brick's store, there is a lot that the public can't see yet or at all, but

it will improve the overall mall experience.

"The obvious part is our new entrance," Blair said. "We're waiting for the curbing guys right now that will put in the sidewalk and all the curbs. Then after that's done, we're not actually doing asphalt, we're doing concrete, like we did on the south side. Very strong. It's a little bit more expensive, but it's permanent."

The new approach will come into Mark's and will be landscaped to make it more presentable and nicer for pedestrians and drivers alike to come to the mall. The LED lights at the parking lot will be moved closer and will also benefit the modern and more unified appearance.

The mall is currently working with its main architect and contractors to

ensure everything is in place to start working on the new glass entrance, which will be about 10 feet higher than the existing one and will give the building a new fresh look.

"The next thing that we'll be doing here in the next month is, this will all be boarded off, enclosed and gone," Blair said pointing at the central entrance.

"And then we would like to have all this done and closed up with the new doors and everything before the snow arrives."

The south side has seen a patio addition for Global Golf Plus recently. There is also more landscaping work underway.

The work is in full swing inside the building as well. The food court communications are completed and

it's getting closer and closer to welcoming its tenants and guests. The hope is to have a sushi place, a coffee shop and some other kind of eatery that's popular with teenagers, available throughout and outside mall hours.

"The mall can be closed, but this food court and new washrooms can all operate until 11 o'clock at night or whenever," Blair noted.

The Ardene space is planned to be subdivided to accommodate smaller local tenants.

"It'll work out that there'll be two spaces here, one about 2,000 and the other about 2,500, and we're going to do it kind of village style," Blair said, adding that they hope to have it completed by fall.

**A2 » EVEN**

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SALE 8<sup>99</sup> /lb

Co-op Boneless Beef Striploin Grilling Steaks Cut by Your Local Butcher Aged 14 Days Value Pack

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Co-op Gold Water 12 x 500 mL FIRST 6

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