

**ADDITIONAL
CITIZEN TESTIMONY
SUBMITTED FOR
June 12, 2024
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

(Received as of 5 p.m. on June 11, 2024)

From: Daniel Howlett <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, June 10, 2024 10:56 AM
To: Melissa Thompson
Subject: Public Testimony for the June Council Meeting

Hi Melissa,

Please add this to the public testimony:

I want to condemn the discrimination that occurred at city hall a few weeks ago at the Coffee with Manager and Mayor public meeting on May 30th. City councilor Hayes showed up about 10 minutes after the meeting started. When the mayor noticed her presence, he told her in a stern voice that she was not welcome, and that city councilors were not allowed to be there. Councilor Hayse maintained her composure, but did not leave. This awkward moment ended with the mayor saying that he was disappointed in her. Someone in the audience shouted at her to get out! This disgraceful interaction was embarrassing and outrageous. This is not the kind of community spirit that we expect from our elected leaders. It is unthinkable that a sitting city council member could be banned from attending a public meeting at city hall.

I respectfully ask the council to condemn discrimination in all forms and affirm the commitment to inclusiveness and tolerance. When it comes to community engagement, goals, needs, and interests will differ on matters great and small. It is up to our elected leaders and city staff to create a safe and welcoming place for diverse ideas. I ask the mayor, city manager and city council to please try to be more tolerant, and give everyone equal respect. If you don't like someone's ideas, that is perfectly ok. It doesn't cost anything to listen to opposing voices. If we are going to solve problems together, we need leaders with good communication skills, and a willingness to be fair. Banning people from public meetings is discrimination, and the voters of Rockaway Beach will not accept this behavior from our elected leaders.

Daniel Howlett