

Date: 12 January 2022

To: City of Encinitas Equity Committee

From: Ross Ridder, Equity Committee Member

RE: LGBTQ+ Recommendations

As a representative of the LGBTQ+ community appointed to the City of Encinitas Equity Committee, I wanted to present some LGBTQ+ equity recommendations to the committee and request that they be forwarded to the City Council for implementation. I have found that the committee meetings are understandably focused on equity issues as they relate to policing and affordable housing. However, I wish to ensure that important action items that relate to LGBTQ+ equity issues are also considered. As a result, I thought this written format would be the best use of the Committee's time with a narrower focus on LGBTQ+ equity.

Background:

On November 12, 2021, I met with Max Disposti, Executive Director of the North County LGBTQ Resource Center located in Oceanside, CA to discuss what we could do as an Equity Committee to help the Encinitas LGBTQ+ residents and visitors.

The North County LGBTQ Resource Center (<https://www.ncresourcecenter.org>) is a 501(c)3 organization that serves the lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and questioning (LGBTQ) community of North County San Diego. Their service area includes the communities of Encinitas, Carlsbad, Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos, Escondido, Rancho Bernardo, Fallbrook, Camp Pendleton, and other outlying areas.

Services include support groups for youth, seniors, military service members, HIV/AIDS testing and prevention, counseling, civil rights advocacy, classes, food rescue, city staff, police & San Diego County Sheriff training.

The North County LGBTQ organizes *Pride by the Ocean* in June during Pride Month and holds the North County Gala as a fundraising event in October. Prior to COVID, the organization held support groups in the Encinitas Library.

The North County LGBTQ has a very good collaborative relationship with the much larger San Diego LGBT Community Center (<https://thecentersd.org>) located in Hillcrest.

Recommendations:

From my meeting with Mr. Max Disposti, I would like to recommend the following action items:

- **Designate a city staff member or a staff member from different departments to be a liaison with the North County LGBTQ Center.** When an LGBTQ+ equity or housing/job discrimination issue is brought to the city's attention, the city will have an established relationship with an organization with resources to help.
- **Have a dedicated LGBTQ+ Resources page on the City of Encinitas web page.** An example would be a page from the City of Oceanside: <https://www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/gov/lgbt.asp> Our city's web site currently has a "LGBT Resources" section under the "Community Resources" page with 4 hyperlinks (one oddly goes to the White House main web page and one link fails to go anywhere) (<https://encinitasca.gov/Residents/Community-Resources>). I recommend a dedicated LGBTQ+ Resources page with more hyperlinks to local resources to help residents and visitors access important information. Also, I recommend including upcoming LGBTQ+ events that could be added to the web page such as North County Pride, San Diego Pride, Dining Out for Life and the North County Gala, etc.
- **Submit an application to the Human Rights Campaign Municipality Equality Index (MEI) (<https://www.hrc.org/resources/municipal-equality-index>) with the intention of earning a perfect score of 100 points.** More importantly, the application process can be a road map to LGBTQ+ equality in our community by identifying issues that need to be addressed. The North County LGBTQ Executive Director graciously offered to help us with our application. With his help with the application process and the Oceanside city officials' commitment to LGBTQ+ issues, Oceanside has a perfect score of 100 points (<https://www.hrc.org/resources/municipalities/oceanside>). Escondido has a score of 60 points (<https://www.hrc.org/resources/municipalities/escondido>). Oceanside has found a great deal of positive exposure by getting listed on the index. They have been contacted by parents of LGBTQ children who use the index to see where it would be safe to vacation with their families.
- **Promote LGBTQ+ community events through city web page listings and city email blasts.** City of Encinitas has provided support to the North County Gala and to the Pride by the Beach events in the past. In addition to continuing this support, I also recommend that the City offer to send email blasts and/or provide web page listings to support Pride by the Ocean, Dining Out for Life, etc. like they do for other community events that celebrate targeted demographics (i.e. Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)).

I would be happy to assist with any of the above recommendations.

Thank you for your time to consider these recommendations.