

# A vice mayor faces calls for resignation after proclaiming July ‘Straight Pride American Month’

Protesters came to Dixon Hall earlier this week to voice their opposition or support for the vice mayor. (Lydia Hernandez)

By [Erin B. Logan](#) July 13 [Email the author](#)



The vice mayor of Dixon, Calif., proclaimed July “Straight Pride American Month” in his weekly newspaper column, a choice that’s left his small city embroiled in conflict over free speech and civil liberties.

“I support the First Amendment,” Ted Hickman [wrote](#) in his “tongue-in-cheek” [column](#) for [Dixon’s Independent Voice](#), “... and support the rights of grown men to wear skin tight short-shorts and go-go boots and don tinker bell wings with wand and prance down the streets of San Francisco.”

Prompted by a local community college that dubbed June to be its LGBT pride month,

Hickman wrote that he was pro-family and not anti-anything, next to an image of a red no circle slashing through the pride flag.

“Now *hundreds of millions* of the rest of us can celebrate *our* month, peaking on July 4th as healthy, heterosexual, fairly monogamous, keep our kinky stuff to ourselves, Americans,” Hickman wrote. “We do it with *our parades* . . . We honor our country and our veterans who have made all of this possible (including for the tinker bells) and we can do it with actual real pride, not some put on show just to help our inferior complex ‘show we are different’ type of [stuff].” “We ARE different from them,” he wrote later.

Hickman acknowledged that he was unsure whether a vice mayor had the authority to make a proclamation, yet his column has drawn national attention to a city of 19,000 located 23 miles

outside Sacramento. The [mayor of California’s capital requested he resign](#), [about 200 people showed up](#) to Dixon’s most recent city council meeting, and an online petition pushing for his removal is approaching 30,000 signers.

Local pastor Jeff Myers was present Tuesday night at the council meeting and expressed concern about Hickman’s column.

“[His] words not only misrepresent the values of the vast majority of our city, they ascribe to us an ignorance and a closed-mindedness that most of us would fight to the death to avoid,” [Myers said](#), according to a Facebook post by his wife, Jamie. “This is not a free-speech issue.”

Dixon resident Julie Monson helped organize the “[Recall Ted Hickman](#)” Facebook group, and told The Washington Post she feared his sentiments might seep into public policy. “I want everybody in this town to feel safe,” she said.

Hickman, who wrote in his column that he was “expressing a private opinion,” declined to comment. He told [the Vacaville Reporter](#) that his views don’t affect his public service.

“Don’t like what I write? Don’t read it,” Hickman told the newspaper. “... I do represent [all Dixon residents] equally on government issues, not their personal habits.”

Local groups are demanding the city council censure him, which would be the highest reprimand possible.

Dixon Mayor Thom Bogue told The Post he did not appreciate Hickman’s comments but is concerned about calls for censorship.

“No matter what we do, for many, they will say it’s the wrong move,” Bogue said. “You can’t make everyone happy with your decision, so you hunker down, take all the facts into consideration and make the best decision that you can.”

The city council will host a closed meeting later this month to decide whether Hickman will face reprimands. Bogue said regardless of the results of the meeting, Hickman’s one-year term as vice mayor will end in January. Voters elect council members, but the council determines who serves as vice mayor. The few things the council could do this summer would be nominal, Bogue said.

Dave Scholl, editor in chief of Dixon’s Independent Voice, told The Post he is proud of publishing Hickman’s op-ed, calling it a matter of free speech. Scholl said he has received a lot of support as well as criticism — particularly from a lot of “out of towners” pressuring advertisers to boycott the newspaper.

“When people try to harm local businesses ... I’m going to fight back” by not censoring Hickman, he said.

Bogue said a number of “big” groups have threatened the city with litigation but declined to say which ones.

Mike Ceremello also supports Hickman, writing a Dixon Independent op-ed arguing the “liberal” reaction exemplified the “war on white men.”

“The fact of the matter is any action taken by this council, as a governmental agency, is a violation of Ted’s First Amendment right to free speech,” he said.

Local LGBTQ groups plan to host the city’s first pride parade later this month.