

Christina Shelton

From: David Harsanyi <dharsanyi@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 10:38 AM
To: Doug Pons
Subject: 2nd Sundays Art and Music Festival

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Dear Mayor Pons,

Though I've spent 20 years writing about anti-Semitism, I was still completely taken aback by Shirley Vermillion's rejection of menorah lighting. It is utterly disgraceful. My wife and I moved to this community two years ago, and we still believe Williamsburg to be an outstanding place that takes its historical heritage seriously. But this incident is stain on that reputation. I'm no fan of crowds or tourists, to put it mildly, but even I enjoy attending 2nd Sunday. I would never go now. And I will urge everyone I know not to attend.

Vermillion says the "concern is of folks feeling like we are siding with a group over the other." This morall confused comment says a lot about her. Vermillion claims Christian requests were denied in the past. I doubt this is true -- Christmas imagery is plastered everywhere, as it should be. But if it is, that's also despicable. A person who excludes religious groups from holiday festivals should not be allowed to operate on public property.

It turns out that Vermillion also told Rabbi Heber that board members would be OK with proceeding with the lighting if the event was held "under a cease fire banner." That is outrageous, as well. What does this all look like if Vermillion held Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of Hamas? Imagine if Vermillion demanded Muslims hold up signs condemning al Qaeda? Vermillion is either an anti-Semite or an ignoramus -- though, there is a not small chance she is both.

I'm not sure if you've commented on this outrage or not. But are you doing something to rectify the situation?

Curious,
David

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