

*Lowell's First Look received the following statement from Lowell Pride regarding concerns raised during the June 5, 2023 Lowell City Council meeting.*

The Lowell Pride board did not produce, nor have we seen copies of the flyer being handed out. Unfortunately, just like people can show up with hurtful signs and graphic photos of painful things, people can pass out any flyer they wish. Neither represent what Lowell Pride is about.

The booth that was mentioned is a Grand Rapids business with a license to sell their products. There was nothing in the booth that was pornographic.

In regard to the phrases said by the drag queen, we are well aware that the protestors entering our area were there to stir up trouble and antagonize people, that was their mission. They came to inform people that they were going to hell and they were dirty and disgusting people. Despite the best efforts of the board and main stage crew to redirect attention, there was a moment of lapse in judgement due to emotion. We don't condone the words said we will be reviewing all internal policies and training to better manage this situation in the future. That said, many LGBTQIA+ people have religious trauma and sometimes a situation gets the best of people who then say things they shouldn't out of hurt.

Lowell Pride is always looking for ways to do better and be better. It was difficult having our day disrupted and our stage acts shouted over. Lowell Pride stands for respectful tolerance of others, including those who seek to create chaos. Our fight is to create safe space for those who are consistently marginalized and traumatized by the actions of a few bad actors. Unfortunately, we had this exact situation at our event as an example. Lowell Pride continues to take steps to improve, admit our shortcomings and continue our mission to support the LGBTQIA+ community.