



"I want all Portlanders to know that now more than ever I am committed to bringing the police closer to the community as well as building deeper respect and understanding inside the organization."
—Portland Police Chief Mark Kroeker

those speeches were insulting, hateful, divisive and totally inappropriate for a law enforcement officer to make," the group wrote to him.

Katz said Kroeker has repudiated his feelings and at least some of the statements on the recordings.

Resignation called for

Tinker rushed to the podium during Katz's press conference when the mayor stepped out of the room after finishing her statement. She didn't want to miss her opportunity to address the city—every news outlet was there and willing to listen.

Tinker said she isn't so distressed about Kroeker's 10-year-old comments but is upset about his response to the situation. "A good man doesn't refuse to take responsibility about his words distributed throughout the world."

But Tinker and others are not just upset about Kroeker's comments concerning gays and women. He also spoke in support of corporal punishment with children, even describing in detail how he used to paddle teen-agers with boat oars at a summer camp.

Tinker said what Kroeker described in the tape titled "Family Discipline" would be considered illegal in the state of Oregon. "This cannot be explained by one's religion."

Kroeker admitted speaking about the issue

of paddling teens with boat oars but insisted that he must have misspoken during the speech and that he personally never has used that form of discipline on any child. "I do believe he strives to be a good man," Tinker conceded, "but a good man doesn't lie."

Although more than one group is asking for Kroeker to step down or to be fired, he has significant support in and outside the gay community. "You can't hold people accountable for what they said nine, 10, 15 years ago," one woman said during the November meeting of the Sexual Minorities Roundtable, a joint venture between the Portland Police Bureau and the sexual minorities community advocating for increased communication and safety.

After Katz's announcement, Kroeker said he was pleased to retain the support of his boss.

"I have spent many personal hours reflecting on the enormity of the current crisis," he wrote in a statement. "I want all Portlanders to know that now more than ever I am committed to bringing the police closer to the community as well as building deeper respect and understanding inside the organization."

Caught in the middle

The Sexual Minorities Roundtable grappled with its role in the controversy during a

packed meeting Nov. 14 at the Portland Police Bureau's downtown headquarters.

Christopher Webster, a member of the group for almost three years, said the gay and lesbian community deserves to meet face to face with Kroeker. He said he hoped the roundtable wouldn't take sides in the controversy but would be the neutral party that would encourage communication.

Another member, Elizabeth Allen, said she supported the two sides coming together for a communitywide training session about how to communicate. She wants both sides to be able to meet and act in a civil way.

Others who showed up spoke out about accountability and expressed their disturbance concerning Kroeker's comments. Some asked to have the situation on the next meeting's agenda so more discussion can take place.

Katz said Kroeker is committed to a "strong and sustained positive dialogue" with Portland's citizens, although she admitted he will have to rebuild trust with many of them. "He told me he would rather help undo the damage, help me promote tolerance and acceptance of all people, than just walk away."

Katz expects Kroeker will "redouble his efforts to promote respect and acceptance of all Portlanders." In addition, she said he will work with Cascade AIDS Project, the state's largest HIV/AIDS social service agency, to help educate Oregonians that AIDS is not a "gay disease."

"He agrees to take all this on with all his heart," Katz said. **JN**

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TOP TEN

Gay leaders outline concerns and complaints

The Police Chief Concerns Group, a consortium of gay and lesbian leaders, wrote a two-page letter to Mayor Vera Katz asking for Portland Police Chief Mark Kroeker's resignation or dismissal. These are excerpts of their 10 concerns:

1. Anti-gay bias: "Kroeker's comments about homosexuality and AIDS made in 1989 clearly reflect a profound bias."

2. Child abuse: "Kroeker's comments about disciplining children indicate that he tolerates—and even encourages—violence against children."

3. Submission of women: "His comments that women need to submit to the authority of their husbands...reflect a deep belief that women are not equal."

4. Views were express as public policy: "They were made at a public meeting of police officers, and he was speaking as an officer of the law."

5. No apology, no change: "Kroeker has issued no statement saying his original views...were wrong and that he regrets them."

6. Hate speech encourages hate crimes: "Kroeker's original comments constitute untruthful bias; these comments...encourage crimes of violence against lesbian, gay, bi and trans people."

7. Bias not disclosed in hiring interviews: "If he had been forthcoming with this information, we do not believe he would have been offered the job."

8. Denial of responsibility affects job performance: "They impact the public performance of his job as chief of police."

9. Use of force by police: "The new use of physical force is consistent with Kroeker's view that 'criminal justice should mirror family justice.'"

10. Portland feels unsafe: "Many lesbian, gay, bi and trans people no longer feel safe in Portland. They do not trust police officers to offer protection from anti-gay violence."

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