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DougCo won't ban PrideFest after 'wardrobe malfunction'



Photo by Zeynep Sümer on Unsplash

 *By Mike McKibbin / NewsBreak Denver / Sept. 13, 2022*

[DOUGLAS COUNTY, COLO.] — A nonprofit group that sponsors an annual Douglas County LGBTQ+ PrideFest celebration can continue to hold future drag queen performances at the county fairgrounds.

The event organizers apologized and promised to follow more stringent operating standards.

The county commissioners met Tuesday in closed session to hear legal advice about an Aug. 27 incident at this year's PrideFest at the county fairgrounds. A drag queen performer accidentally displayed fake breasts at an event billed as family-friendly.

That prompted Commissioner George Teal to propose banning future PrideFest events at the fairgrounds. Fellow commissioners Abe Laydon and Lora Thomas opposed the move.

In an open session Tuesday, Laydon said sexually explicit song lyrics were also part of the event and that the event organizer, Castle Rock Pride, had formally apologized.

The group said two performers would not be allowed to attend future events, Laydon stated. He added organizers

also promised increased monitoring of each performer and would quickly stop any activity that appeared to violate county regulations or community standards.

County to review adult entertainment rules

The commissioners also agreed to review county ordinances and regulations concerning adult entertainment and sexually-oriented businesses.

"I've seen several drag queens on video, and it really can be an art," Thomas said. "Some parents told me they did want their children to see a drag queen. But they didn't want anything like what happened. Based on this group's willingness to work with the county, I think we can work with them."

Teal still leery

Teal said he appreciated Thomas and Laydon listening to his concerns and moving in a direction that serves a significant percentage of the county.

"I have to say that I don't think these are people we can trust," Teal added. "My colleagues feel they can, and I hope

I'm proven wrong. Over time, we'll see if they're worthy of that trust."

"I think it's important we continue to honor freedom of speech but still make sure we have events that everyone in our community can enjoy," Laydon said.

The incident caused thousands of [social media comments](#), he added. Some supported Teal, but others were opposed.

Thomas earlier warned a ban would result in discrimination lawsuits against the county.

Later Tuesday, the commissioners released a [statement](#) that read in part, "We directed staff to continue working with Castle Rock Pride to memorialize their commitment that any future events they hold at the Douglas County Fairgrounds will be family-friendly, consistent with their goal, and within the community guidelines they have proposed."