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On the record

Every month, the Kitchener Citizen publishes "Notes from City Hall" which Kitchener City Councillors can use to communicate with residents.

In addition to highlighting upcoming community events, I often use this as an opportunity to present my position or invite discussion about issues that pertain to citizens.

Here is one that I think bears repeating.

At the November 22nd council meeting I will be bringing a motion forward calling on the City of Kitchener to formally denounce conversion therapy practices.

This is a very antiquated practice that attempts to change an individual's sexual orientation from homosexual or bisexual to heterosexual.

This practice is done through psychological, physical and/or spiritual interventions. According to Wikipedia "there is no reliable evidence that sexual orientation can be changed, and medical institutions warn that conversion therapy practices are ineffective and potentially harmful".

Conversion therapy has existed for more than a century and I find it hard to believe that it is still being practiced. The World Health Organization released a statement in 2012 saying that this type of therapy poses a "severe threat to the health and human rights of the affected persons".

In Ontario the practice is considered illegal on minors, but it is still being practiced on adults.

All levels of government have a role to play in eliminating this practice and educating people about the harmful consequences it has.

Vancouver, British Columbia and St. Albert, Alberta have a complete ban on conversion therapy. Let's add Kitchener to that list.