

Anti-abortion flag won't fly this year: mayor

BY ARTHUR WHITE-CRUMMEY - May 5, 2017



The anti-abortion flag that flew in front of City Hall last year. Herald File Photo

Never again will a cartoon fetus fly above Memorial Square, says Mayor Greg Dionne.

Dionne said he has deferred Prince Albert Right to Life Association's application to fly an anti-abortion flag on the city's courtesy flagpole. But he said he'd be open to a different flag that doesn't portray a cartoon image of a fully developed fetus.

"It hasn't been denied. It's been put on hold," Dionne said. "Once they come up with a new flag, that flag will fly."

The mayor said there's no chance that a new design will be approved in time for this year's flag raising, which was scheduled for May 8. But he said he'll see what they come up with for next year's event.

He viewed the deferral as a “compromise.”

“It’s my job as mayor to bring the community together, and not to get into disputes that put a bad light on our city,” he said. “That’s why I made this decision.”

Dionne said he supports free speech rights for all groups, and would be willing to approve a pro-choice flag on the flagpole.

The flag first stoked controversy last year, when it triggered protests and a petition calling for its removal. This year, pro-choice activists took pre-emptive action, and called on city council to block it.

In her presentation to council, Lana Wilson said that “discriminatory symbols” do not belong in front of City Hall.

Council’s executive committee referred the decision to administration.

For more on this story, see the May 6 print or e-edition of the Daily Herald.

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