

ADVISORY COMMUNICATION



Date: February 7, 2023

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Human Rights & Relations Commission

Subject: Stopping the Use of the term “Cake Eater”

Action Requested: City Council engages with the Edina Sports Boosters, Edina Sports Associations and other relevant community organizations to raise awareness of the negative implications of using the term “cake-eater” and requests that they cease using the term. Promoting a term that celebrates wealth and privilege is problematic for a community that is striving to be welcoming and inclusive.

Background:

During the recent Edina Human Rights and Relations Commission’s “How to Stop the Hate” event, one of the program’s speakers, Yusef Davis, St. Paul Como Park Senior High School Restorative Practices Coordinator, implored the City of Edina to take action to stop the use of the term “cake-eater” in Edina community events.

Davis described his experience bringing a basketball team of economically disadvantaged nine-year old boys from the east side of St. Paul to the Edina Boys “Cake Eater Classic.”

The boys asked Davis to explain why Edina used the word “cake-eater.” Davis found it difficult to tell his team he believed the term celebrated the wealth and advantages of the Edina boys. He was disturbed by the experience and publicly asked “Mayor Jim” to take action to retire that old and offensive label if Edina was serious about working to stop hate and wanted to become a welcoming, inclusive community.

The Urban Dictionary, a popular online resource, explains that “[A] cake eater actually refers to Edina, MN, saying the people in it are so rich they can have their cake and eat it too. It could also refer to rich white suburban kids in general, too. And BTW- Mighty Ducks was filmed in Minnesota, so he's probably literally calling that kid a cake-eater from Edina.”¹

Similarly, another online resource for Minnesota hockey teams describes “The Cake Eaters’ unusual nickname has a good bit of history behind it. As one of the wealthier cities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, Edina’s citizens have garnered a reputation as being stuck-up and out-of-touch rich people. Because of this, Twin Cities area residents outside Edina have referred to its residents as “cake eaters” for several decades (referring to the quote “Let them eat cake”

¹ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=cake%20eater>



attributed to Queen Marie Antoinette in the days leading up to the French Revolution). Though originally a derogatory term, Edina's team has embraced it for their own name, knowing that's what the visiting fans would call them anyway.”²

Continuing to embrace the cake-eater as an Edina symbol perpetuates the off-putting image of Edina as a place where residents believe that being wealthy makes one better than others. It is concerning that the Edina Hockey Association and the Edina Boys Basketball Association continue to hold annual “Cake Eaters Classic” tournaments. The Edina Education Fund also holds an annual “Cake-Off” (Community Action for Kids Education) fundraising event. The Commission believes that it is important to re-brand these events to reflect a more inclusive, welcoming theme.

City Goals:

As emphasized in the Race and Equity Plan, the City of Edina is committed to being a welcoming and inclusive city.³

Edina’s Comprehensive Plan also highlights “[I]t is a guide for making the right choices to shape Edina’s collective potential future growth, to protect what Edina values, and to create an even more attractive, sustainable, and welcoming Edina.”⁴

Assessment:

To advance Edina’s stated goals of becoming welcoming and inclusive, it is necessary to retire the dated and uninviting “cake-eater” label.

Recommendation:

The City should pass the following resolution and take the following action:

Whereas the City of Edina is committed to being a welcoming and inclusive city; and

Whereas we welcome individuals to Edina regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, immigration status, gender identify, marital status, age, disability, economic status, sexual orientation, familial status or cultural background;

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the City of Edina requests that Edina community organizations cease using the term “cake-eater” to name or promote events.

² https://mahlhockey.fandom.com/wiki/Edina_Cake_Eaters#:~:text=%2C%206%2D4.-,Why%20%22Cake%20Eaters%22%3F,%2Dof%2Dtouch%20rich%20people

³ <https://www.edinamn.gov/1379/Race-Equity>

⁴ <https://www.edinamn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8100/000b-Executive-Summary-PDF>