

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

City Council

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November 4, 2021

Steve Schmidt
The Lincoln Project
600 Pennsylvania Ave SE #15180
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Mr. Schmidt:

On Friday, October 29, you tore open a still-healing wound in Charlottesville with your political prank of having tiki-torch-bearing protesters outside of a Glenn Youngkin gathering.

Tiki torches wielded by young men in white polo shirts and khakis mean one thing in Charlottesville – we are under attack. Friday, 8 blocks away, the federal trial growing out of the events of August 11-12, 2017, heard the first full day of testimony from the victims of that attack.

For many of our residents who confronted the Nazis and white supremacists on our streets on August 11 and 12, seeing your operatives in white polo shirts and khakis carrying (even unlit) tiki torches caused a PTSD flashback to those traumatic days. Many of our residents were badly hurt that weekend, and they still struggle with unpaid medical and living expenses. For many more who may not have witnessed the events of August 11 and 12 but who know how our friends were traumatized that weekend, your insensitivity caused great anger. And to have those images flashing again when the victims were testifying was particularly upsetting. Some thought that the 2017 attackers had returned because of the ongoing trial.

Your post-demonstration press release promised the potential for more such painful memories, when you said about Glenn Youngkin,

“If he will denounce Trump’s assertion that the Charlottesville rioters possessed ‘very fine’ qualities, we’ll withdraw the tiki torches. **Until then, we’ll be back.**”

You seem to regard “Charlottesville” as nothing more than a political meme, and parading mock white supremacists around our city as nothing more than political cosplay. You clearly do not understand the extent to which your “prank” inflicted real emotional pain on innocent people here in Charlottesville.

Real – useful – repudiation of Donald Trump would involve supporting the victims of the attackers whom you mimic, through support for groups such as the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation that have helped those still dealing with unpaid expenses caused by the terrorist attack of August 11 and 12. Real – useful – opposition would also mean using your resources and platform to support the work being done in the Charlottesville community to create authentic change and confront our local history.

Please do not bring your cosplaying operatives back to Charlottesville. We do not wish to be the backdrop for your next exercise in political theater.

Sena Magill, Vice Mayor
Heather Hill, City Councilor
Michael Payne, City Councilor
Lloyd Snook, City Councilor