

Dear Readers of my City Council Recaps,

For those that have not heard, I have been accused of causing the departure of City Manager, Shohreh Dupuis. Her departure is welcome news. Still, we should wish her well as she starts the next chapter of her life.

Background

In March 2023 I received a letter from an outside attorney hired by the City stating that I had violated a city policy. When I asked what policy, I never heard back. In late July, 2023 I received notice from an attorney investigating this asking for an interview. This investigation was launched by Aggie Nesh, HR Director due to a “**verbal only**” complaint by the City Manager alleging I had harassed her, bullied her, and created a toxic work environment. By the time I had an attorney and scheduled my interview we discovered that the City Manager had signed here severance agreement the previous week.

My Response:

At no time during my tenure as your City Councilman have I ever done anything that a reasonable person would construe as bullying or harassing the City Manager.

It is common knowledge that I have not been a fan of our recently departed City Manager. Her management style and financial decisions were seriously flawed, and the issues created by her behavior would have caused her to be separated for cause from any public corporation. City governments are not corporations, so it comes down to what 3 City Council members say. In public Council members praised the CM’s work, but three did have serious issues with the CM’s performance. For those who would like more evidence of her management and behavioral shortcomings, I would be pleased to provide that information.

Why Council Took This Action

Why did four members of the City Council decide that there was sufficient evidence that the CM could prevail if she sued the City, targeting me? It is a question that has multiple answers.

1. The Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem have been very strong supporters of the City Manager since selecting her as CM in 2021. By acknowledging they had misjudged her capabilities, they would be admitting that their own judgement was flawed and hiring her as a mistake. Instead, they protected her and excused or denied her many bad decisions. Only those with a strong sense of responsibility will admit to making a big mistake like this, as it has political consequences. I assume the other two members of the City Council compromised for the sake of expediency.
2. In June 2023 the MOM Investo organization threatened to sue the City for the actions or inactions the CM took during the events of May 2, 2023. In July the City was served with a court subpoena demanding all communications between city officials and Mo. The sole goal of the threatened lawsuit by MOM was to have the CM removed from her job. Removing the CM allowed the City to dodge a very significant lawsuit. (See note below)

3. As a critic of City leadership, I have been the target of various forms of retaliation by the CM, City Attorney, and by the Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem during my tenure. My criticism of the possible sale of the Library, the purchase of Ti Amo, the parking structure lease at the Presbyterian Church, did not sit well with those who backed these projects. There is much more and again if someone wants to learn more about other questionable decisions, please ask me. I can also elaborate on the various forms of retaliation I experienced.

Note: The evidence showed that the CM and other city officials had documents in early April 2023 and later that month, showing that the MOM group was the rightful owner/manager/operator of the two properties that were occupied by Mo and his associates on May 2nd. It was clear that crimes had been committed that could have been prevented had the invading parties been ordered to leave the premises early in the day. The CM and Police Chief were responsible for the lack of enforcement of the law.

Summary

The most expedient solution was to blame me for her departure. Please know that I have never seen a cogent summary of the “verbal only” complaint. My attorney dismissed what was sent to them as inconsequential. In addition, the City Council never provided me with an opportunity to defend myself. They could have asked me to attend a closed session and pose questions to me. Instead, all deliberations and actions were taken behind closed doors with no opportunity for me to respond.

Now, I am being attacked relentlessly in the press by propagandists who invent their own version of what happened.

Your Support

If you want to support me, come to the City Council meeting next Tuesday, September 26, at 5PM. If you can't be there in person, you can attend remotely via Zoom, or send your comments to City Council.

Sincerely,

George Weiss

949-295-032