

Seeking A Public Peaceful Resolution to the Altercation on May 13, 2024

Oliver Davis <odavis@southbendin.gov>

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To:DL-City Council <DL-CityCouncil@southbendin.gov>

Cc:DL-Clerk's Office <DL-ClerksOffice@southbendin.gov>;James Mueller <jmueller@southbendin.gov>;Bianca Tinedo

<bpalmer@southbendin.gov>;DL-Mayor's Office <DL-MayorsOffice@southbendin.gov>

City Clerk, South Bend, IN

Dear South Bend Common Council Members,

Greetings. Since May 2024, we have continually been reminded of the agony and pain that some residents of the South Bend Community are dealing with since the altercation which took place on May 13, 2024, between Councilwoman Sheila Niezgodski and Mr. Logan Foster. As we witnessed this heated, shocking and painful situation, it was my hope that there would be a peaceful and honest resolution to this matter. However, in my opinion, this matter continues to boil, and the scars have not been healed.

It is my understanding that the South Bend Common Council Rules Committee met on this issue earlier this year and dishearteningly found it to be a none issue. I firmly disagree with their findings, which were not shared publicly. Since this altercation took place publicly, I am advocating for a public resolution to take place in an effort to seek a public resolution.

In my nearly 13 years on this Council, I clearly have faced residents who have not agreed with my decisions. They have come to the Privilege of the Floor to express their concerns about my decisions; they have called my phone number to voice their concerns, they have met with me face to face and they have sent me letters via email and text messages. Also, they have used social media to share their displeasure about my views. Please know that it is my firm view that as a Man, if I had approached Woman resident as was done on May 13, 2024, I would have certainly been censured, charges brought against me which pertain to intimidation and asked to resign from my position. I at least would have been reprimanded by the Council Leadership for attacking a member of the public in the Council Chambers immediately after the meeting due to comments which were shared about me during the Council meeting that had just been adjourned.

Thus, from the May 13, 2024 South Bend Common Council meeting until this present day, this matter has continued to be publicly ignored by our Council leadership and Council Attorney, which has been very disappointing to me. As an elected public official, I have to take the good with the bad. Take the praise, with the condemnation. To add to that understanding, when an elected public official is married to another elected public official, like in the case of the Honorable Bill and the Honorable Hillary Clinton, the public praise and the public condemnation are magnified by their residents.

Thus, there are many perks for being an elected public official and many challenges as well. However, we must as the Members of the South Bend Common Council promote a safe haven for our residents when they speak in the public portion of our committee meetings, council meetings, and during the Privilege of the Floor section of the meeting.

Failure from our Council Leadership to not address the issue of May 13, 2024, only keeps the flame of public distrust burning, which is causing all of us to be burnt by this fire, whether we caused it or not.

Thus, I am respectfully asking for our South Bend Common Council Leadership and all of the members of the South Bend Common Council members to promptly work to publicly (not in a private Rules Committee since the action did not occur privately) to address this matter and to offer words of condemnation of the parties involved and to seek proper resolution. By doing such action, it is hoped that we can learn from this painful public experience and move forward in peace.

Looking for a Public Peaceful Resolution to this Matter,

Dr. Oliver Davis, Councilman At-Large (D)
574-876-6938 - Cellphone