



Ward I Neighborhood Planning Assembly
March 14, 2013

BURLINGTON CLERK
TREASURER'S OFFICE

2013 MAR 19 P 3: 06

RECEIVED

Joan Shannon, City Council President
41 Central Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401

Re: Communications from Ward 3 City Councilors to Ward 1 School Commissioner

Dear Council President,

It has come to our attention that two City Councilors contacted the recently re-elected Ward 1 School Commissioner and asked him to step down. We discussed this situation at the March 13th Ward 1 NPA and unanimously voted to voice our concerns in a letter to the City Council President. We are distressed over the lack of respect for the democratic process and the inappropriate use of influence exerted by two of our elected officials. It is our intention in writing this letter to ensure that action is taken to educate the city councilors on the inappropriate nature of their communications, to ensure that current and future city councilors know that this type of behavior is inappropriate, and to ask that any policy or procedures or codes of conduct be updated to deter this behavior from occurring in the future.

It is our understanding that after the voters went to the polls and the results were announced but before the recount, Ward 3 City Councilor, Vince Brennan, sent an email on March 6th to one of the candidates for school commissioner, Keith Pillsbury. In his email, Councilor Brennan asked Keith Pillsbury to step down, and from what we know, this email threatened public pressure if the school commissioner did not comply. He seemed to be exerting undue influence based on his role as a city councilor. It is our understanding that Ward 3 City Councilor, Rachel Siegel, also sent an email asking the school commissioner to resign.

We have no knowledge that the candidate they were supporting, Kyle Dodson, initiated or knew anything about these communications before they were sent. The re-elected school Commissioner, Keith Pillsbury, did not initiate and knew nothing of the discussion at our NPA and vote of the NPA participants and he was not present at the March 13th NPA. We are writing this letter based on our collective sense of wrongdoing, a desire to protect the democratic process, and our desire to ensure that our elected officials act professionally and appropriately in their roles.

While the tone of this letter is measured, the discussion engaged in at our NPA expressed our deep concern over the situation. The communications of the city councilors were described in terms ranging from "inappropriate" to "reprehensible."

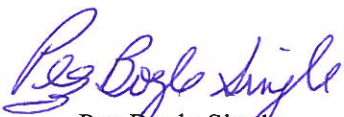
As is customary for our NPA when a follow-up is appropriate, we will be inviting you, as City Council President, to a future NPA in order to update us on this situation. We ask that if any of our facts are incorrect, you correct us. We are also asking that you describe the follow-up actions taken by you or the appropriate persons to ensure that these behaviors do not occur in the future.

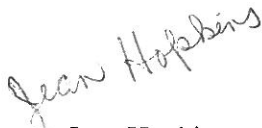
Thank you for your time and consideration.

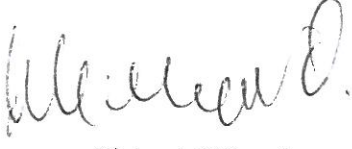
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Sincerely,

Ward 1 NPA Steering Committee on behalf of the Ward 1 NPA


Peg Boyle Single


Jean Hopkins


Richard Hillyard


Jim Langan

Cc: Miro Weinberger, Burlington Mayor, City Hall
Sharon Bushor, Ward 1 City Councilor, 52 East Avenue
Kevin Worden, Ward 1 City Councilor, 23 Brookes Avenue
Vince Brennan, Ward 3 City Councilor, 175 Park Street
Rachel Siegel, Ward 3 City Councilor, 21 Pitkin Street
Kyle Dodson, Candidate for Ward 1 School Commissioner, 502 North Street
Keith Pillsbury, Ward 1 School Commissioner, 25 University Terrace

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