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Date: Fri, 19 Aug 2011 11:10:56 -0700 (PDT)
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Subject: A Private Park Ridge taxpayer's demand for apology from Park Ridge Mayor

Disclaimer: The following remarks are from the viewpoint of a private, tax paying Citizen of Park Ridge, Illinois, and do not reflect the opinion of any organization.

Mayor Schmidt,

I am writing to you as a private, Park Ridge, Illinois resident citizen and taxpayer. The fact that I maintain that status is sufficient to command from you a respectful treatment of me in all manner of communication (verbal and nonverbal) when you are commenting in your official capacity.

I demand an apology from you for the egregious mischaracterization you put forth in your public remarks at a City Council meeting on August 15, 2011 about the response on behalf of the Taste of Park Ridge Committee that I supplied to the City Manager in reply to an invitation to attend.

According to video and audio City media posted on the City website and according to an article in the Park Ridge Journal newspaper you are quoted as saying "The Chairman of the Taste committee said he's busy this Monday and every other Monday until the end of the world," and "Everybody else on the committee is also busy for every Monday for eternity."

Here is what I wrote to the City Manager:

"I received your communication indicating an invitation to a City Council meeting on August 15, 2011. I will be unable to attend. I have multiple work related projects that require me to travel out of town and thus will conflict with your mentioned date. As I consult my schedule, I notice future conflicts with council meeting dates and my work related projects. Additionally, I will be undergoing surgical procedures and recovery periods in the very near future which will again conflict with council meeting dates.

Other members of our organization are similarly unavailable due to business and personal activities that conflict with Council meeting dates.

In a previous communication I asked that all questions the Council members have be submitted to me in writing so I may appropriately research for the correct information. I am reiterating that request. Thank you for your attention to this request."

As I compare my statement with your comments, I find no mention in my statement of "eternity or end of the world." Rather, what I and any reasonable person would observe is a courteous and respectful response that indicated an inability to meet the conditions of your invitation and further offered information alerting the Council to know that Monday evenings for committee members will not be an evening that lends itself to them attending in the very near future. It further asks for a reiterated request to be made to Council members that have interest in the issue to supply written questions so they may be responded to by the committee. Council members, indeed, received information in written form from Taste of Park Ridge in response to questions asked by Alderman Knight. A respectful response from you should have been to ask the City Manager to inquire as to when might be a possible time for a discussion in order to allow Taste Committee members the ability to arrange for such a discussion. That would have been a course of action if your intent was truly to have a discussion, but you opted to disrespect members of the community in order to create a false perception.

As an elected official, you owe me, the taxpaying citizen, respect. Regardless of your personal political opinion upon an issue in which I may have involvement, you owe me respect. I demand this not only for me but for all other citizens categorically, and for the other members of the Taste Committee specifically. Additionally, I demand respect from you on behalf of all other volunteers in Park Ridge who strive to build a community that edifies one another. When you disrespect me in public fashion as you have done, you disrespect every citizen in Park Ridge.

I provided you with a bona fide declination of an invitation to city council and you sarcastically mocked and disparaged me and fellow committee members who reside and/or own businesses and in some fashion pay taxes in this city. For your information, our committee members have experienced within the past three weeks family members and spouses who have been and currently are hospitalized, the death of family members, and news of upcoming medical procedures. We have dealt with the personal and family issues of recovering after the flooding and electrical outages. Currently and in the very near future, we have business obligations that take us out of town or preclude us from attending the Monday Council meeting. These are not situations to be mocked and have sarcastic remarks made in a public manner.

Your disparaging and deceptive remarks are harmful. Therefore, I demand you immediately take the following actions to correct the damage you have done. I expect you to issue a Public apology in your official capacity as Mayor of Park Ridge to the following Taste of Park Ridge Committee members: Albert Galus, David Iglow, Dean Patras, John Warnimont, Sandy Svizzero, Jackie Mathews, Mel Thillens, and Barbara Tyskiski and to all citizens of Park Ridge categorically to whom you owe respect regardless of your viewpoint on an issue.. I expect you to promulgate that apology in the following fashion: on the City Website front page, in the Taxpayer supported October Park Ridge Spokesman newsletter, via a press release to all local print and electronic media organizations, and to speak to the camera at the next Committee of the Whole meeting of August 22, 2011 prior to your transfer of chairmanship and address the citizens of Park Ridge with your apology.

Albert Galus