

<b>Respondent Names</b>	Michael J. Nelson
<b>Complainant Name</b>	Cynthia M. Sjoblom
<b>Complaint Description</b>	<p><a href="#">Cynthia</a> reported via the portal (<i>Mon, 16 Aug 2021 at 1:36 PM</i>)</p> <p><b>"Use of public office or agency facilities in campaign-prohibition-exceptions. RCW 42.17A.555</b></p> <p><b>Violation by Michael Lee Nelson, while acting in his official capacity as Mayor using facilities during a council meeting dated August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, while admonishing a candidate, her campaign manager, and any constituent supporters present all during an election cycle.</b></p> <p>"No elective official nor any employee of his or her office nor any person appointed to or employed by any public office or agency may use or authorize the use of any of the facilities of a public office or agency, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of any person to any office or for the promotion of or opposition to any ballot proposition.</p> <p>On August 3rd, 2021, Mayor Michael Lee Nelson violated the above stated law by speaking intentionally (prepared notes), in opposition of a candidate (who attended a previous July 27th council meeting) and the mayor did so <i>during an election cycle</i> while acting in capacity as the "Mayor" while using <i>council chambers</i> (facilities) to do so.</p> <p>Michael Nelson came to the August 3rd, 2021, council meeting with prepared statements to intentionally make a statement of opposition against a candidate during an election cycle who was present at the July 27th council meeting.</p> <p>Although the candidate was not mentioned by name, The candidates name was quickly published by "<b>My Edmonds News</b>" the following day on August 4th, 2021, in an article titled, "<b>Mayor dismisses hate portal criticism; slams 'partisan campaign people'</b>". <u><i>The article cited</i></u>, "As part of the mayor's comments, Nelson also criticized the gathering of about 75 people at last week's council meeting, where they offered public comment about a range of issues, from speeding on locals streets to protection of single-family zoning. Nelson described many of those attending as "partisan campaign people" there to 'bully, harass specific elected officials and our city staff by a local city council candidate's campaign.'" While Nelson didn't name the candidate, Position 2 council <i>Janelle Cass was in attendance</i>, as were a group of her supporters and her campaign manager."</p> <p>To my knowledge My Edmonds News nor the mayor had statistics on "supporters" in the room. I know many that were in the room did not attend as "supporters" but rather people who came to express neighborhood concerns as well as the unconstitutional, illegal portal.</p>

The mayor stated he wanted to wait until "after the polls closed", stating there is "relevancy to that". Then he stated the chambers were "packed" and was partly an "organized effort" a "partisan effort to bully, harass specific elected officials and our city staff by a local city council candidate's campaign." The mayor goes onto describe names they were called when in fact, video footage of the meeting on July 27th bares out constituents were referencing the mayors "hate portal" as the mayor calls it. (The mayor's false statements are in violation of a separate Washington State law and shall be handled separately) in due time.

The mayor goes on to state they were "threatened and demonized". He stated, "these candidate supporters called us fascists, Nazi's, communists" (again, 7/27/21 footage bares out his comments are false and taken out of context). Additionally, Mr. Nelson stated that the "the campaign manager shouted from that very podium there and pointed that he was coming after our council members". The campaign manager stated some council seats were coming open and we're coming for you. So, Mayor Nelson took statements out of context once again. Mayor Nelson goes on further to disparage the candidate by stating, "There was no condemnation or apology from the candidate for this extremist conduct. What was more troubling was the silence of current and former elected officials, many, many members of our community who supported this candidate." He further elaborates that, "clearly their lack of public condemnation clearly demonstrated this type of conduct is met with their approval."

The Mayor began making several arbitrary statements that included, "candidate supporters in the room", or "an organized effort" and that "city staff and council were harassed..... by a local city council candidate's campaign".

The mayor's statements are not based in fact. The mayor has no knowledge of what was organized, what groups were in the room and who belonged to what group or if people came in to speak as individuals not representing any group or a candidate's campaign. Assumptions were made by the mayor and the video from July 27th, 2021, bares out that the names the mayor was referencing were in relation to the "hate portal" and constituents requesting it be brought down since it's a violation of our constitutional rights. The mayor claims the "candidate's supporters" called them these names, which is false data.

The mayor goes onto say, "they were seen drinking beforehand". The mayor has used a broad brush to paint a "candidate's supporters" as bad people. Not only is this a violation of the aforementioned statute, but it also violates the Code of Conduct 10.1 that never seems to be enforced in my city.

The mayor has given false information about Edmonds Constituents and the candidate and her campaign manager.

To address one additional point, During the meeting a council member (Olsen I believe) had tried to address the point of not speaking about campaigns during an election cycle and she was quickly dismissed. The council woman called a "point of order" after the mayor moved

onto the issue of the portal. Mr. Nelson quickly stated, "I'm the mayors' comments and I have the comments to speak to what I'm going to speak to." The Council woman stated, "I don't think we're allowed to talk about election during a campaign season even though the primary election is over it's still a campaign season". Mr. Nelson quickly dismissed the comment by stating, "I'm not talking about elections, I'm talking about reporting...hate portal".

There was clear abdication on the mayor's part to take no responsibility for his actions and wrongdoing, not to council, not to the public watching on zoom and those who watch the council meeting at later times which many that I know do.

To address "**what impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?**" The comments of the mayor on August 3rd are an absolute violation, not just of the statute but of the public trust. If we have government officials who exercise such blatant disregard for our laws, all while disparaging a candidate during an election period, we have lost respect and trust for our "representatives". The influence of the mayor's comments could have far reaching consequences as well as direct influence over those that follow articles and comments given by the mayor. The reputation not just of the candidate but the constituents themselves referring to us as "candidate supporters" was called into question by the mayor's remarks.

All supporters of this candidate were completely disenfranchised by the mayor's comments, especially when those remarks became public via the new article cited above. This ultimately means he has violated his oath of office to represent all the people.

This violation should carry with it the highest penalties allowed by law. Not to provide such penalties would be an outrage to the constituency and would leave the public with the idea that they have been disenfranchised. Lastly, depending on the penalties to the mayor, you will either give him a "slap on the wrist" of which no real change will occur, or you will send a strong message that laws are there for a reason and need to be followed by our government officials and the message that our officials are not above the law. The public will be watching this decision closely. Some council members L. Johnson, A. Monillas, S. Hope, L. Distelhorst, are not expected to bring sanctions against the mayor for his actions since he garners their votes potentially exclusively, and against the will of the people repeatedly on issues the constituents of Edmonds care about.

Sincerely,

Cynthia M. Sjoblom

---

[Cynthia](#) replied (Mon, 16 Aug 2021 at 4:21 PM)

To: "PDC Support" [cdc@cdc.wa.gov](mailto:cdc@cdc.wa.gov)

External Email

Can you please update at the bottom of the main body of the text and description.

Replace S. Hope with S. Paine (very last paragraph on both sections) and I have you a printable version it should be changed on as well or whatever you use as the "official" complaint as necessary.

Thank you,  
And please let me now if this is clear.

Cynthia Sjoblom

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

**What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?**

"Use of public office or agency facilities in campaign-prohibition-exceptions. RCW 42.17A.555

Violation by Michael Lee Nelson, while acting in his official capacity as Mayor using facilities during a council meeting dated August 3rd, 2021, while admonishing a candidate, her campaign manager, and any constituent supporters present all during an election cycle.

"No elective official nor any employee of his or her office nor any person appointed to or employed by any public office or agency may use or authorize the use of any of the facilities of a public office or agency, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of any person to any office or for the promotion of or opposition to any ballot proposition.

On August 3rd, 2021, Mayor Michael Lee Nelson violated the above stated law by speaking intentionally (prepared notes), in opposition of a candidate (who attended a previous July 27th council meeting) and the mayor did so during an election cycle while acting in capacity as the "Mayor" while using council chambers (facilities) to do so.

Michael Nelson came to the August 3rd, 2021, council meeting with prepared statements to intentionally make a statement of opposition against a candidate during an election cycle who was present at the July 27th council meeting.

Although the candidate was not mentioned by name, The candidates name was quickly published by "My Edmonds News" the following day on August 4th, 2021, in an article titled, "Mayor dismisses hate portal criticism; slams 'partisan campaign people'. The article cited, "As part of the mayor's comments, Nelson also criticized the gathering of about 75 people at last week's council meeting, where they offered public comment about a range of issues, from speeding on locals streets to protection of single-family zoning. Nelson described many of those attending as "partisan campaign people" there to 'bully, harass specific elected officials and our city staff by a local city council candidate's campaign.' " While Nelson didn't name the candidate, Position 2 council Janelle Cass was in attendance, as were a group of her supporters and her campaign manager."

To my knowledge My Edmonds News nor the mayor had statistics on "supporters" in the room. I know many that were in the room did not attend as "supporters" but rather people who came to express neighborhood concerns as well as the unconstitutional illegal portal.

The mayor stated he wanted to wait until "after the polls closed", stating there is "relevancy to that". Then he stated the chambers were "packed" and was partly an "organized effort" a "partisan effort to bully, harass specific elected officials and our city staff by a local city council candidate's campaign." The mayor goes onto describe names they were called when in fact, video footage of the meeting on July 27th bares out constituents were referencing the mayors "hate portal" as the mayor calls it. (The mayor's false statements are in violation of a separate Washington State law and shall be handled separately) in due time.

The mayor goes on to state they were "threatened and demonized". He stated, "these candidate supporters called us fascists, Nazi's, communists" (again, 7/27/21 footage bares out his comments are false and taken out of context). Additionally, Mr. Nelson stated that the "the campaign manager shouted from that very podium there and pointed that he was coming after our council members". The campaign manager stated some council seats were coming open and we're coming for you. So, Mayor Nelson took statements out of context once again.

Mayor Nelson goes on further to disparage the candidate by stating, "There was no condemnation or apology from the candidate for this extremist conduct. What was more troubling was the silence of current and former elected officials, many, many members of our community who supported this candidate." He further elaborates that, "clearly their lack of public condemnation clearly demonstrated this type of conduct is met with their approval."

The Mayor began making several arbitrary statements that included, "candidate supporters in the room", or "an organized effort" and that "city staff and council were harassed..... by a local city council candidate's campaign".

The mayor's statements are not based in fact. The mayor has no knowledge of what was organized, what groups were in the room and who belonged to what group or if people came in to speak as individuals not representing any group or a candidate's campaign.

Assumptions were made by the mayor and the video from July 27th, 2021, bares out that the names the mayor was referencing were in relation to the "hate portal" and constituents requesting it be brought down since it's a violation of our constitutional rights. The mayor claims the "candidate's supporters" called them these names, which is false data.

The mayor goes onto say, "they were seen drinking beforehand". The mayor has used a broad brush to paint a "candidate's supporters" as bad people. Not only is this a violation of the aforementioned statute, but it also violates the Code of Conduct 10.1 that never seems to be enforced in my city.

The mayor has given false information about Edmonds Constituents and the candidate and her campaign manager.

To address one additional point, During the meeting a council member (Olsen I believe) had tried to address the point of this statute and was quickly dismissed. The council woman called a "point of order" after the mayor moved onto the issue of the portal. Mr. Nelson

quickly stated, "I'm the mayors' comments and I have the comments to speak to what I'm going to speak to." The Council woman stated, "I don't think we're allowed to talk about election during a campaign season even though the primary election is over it's still a campaign season". Mr. Nelson quickly dismissed the comment by stating, "I'm not talking about elections, I'm talking about reporting...hate portal".

There was clear abdication on the mayor's part to take no responsibility for his actions and wrongdoing, not to council, not to the public watching on zoom and those who watch the council meeting at later times.

To address "what impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?" The comments of the mayor on August 3rd are an absolute violation, not just of the statute but of the public trust. If we have government officials who exercise such blatant disregard for our laws, all while disparaging a candidate during an election period, we have lost respect and trust for our "representatives". The influence of the mayor's comments could have far reaching consequences as well as direct influence over those that follow articles and comments given by the mayor. The reputation not just of the candidate but the constituents themselves was called into question by the mayor's remarks.

All supporters of this candidate were completely disenfranchised by the mayor's comments. Which ultimately means he has violated his oath of office to represent all the people as well.

This violation should carry with it the highest penalties allowed by law. Not to provide such penalties would be an outrage to the constituency and would leave the public with the idea that they have been disenfranchised. Lastly, depending on the penalties to the mayor, you will either give him a "slap on the wrist" of which no real change will occur, or you will send a strong message that laws are there for a reason and need to be followed by our government officials and the message that our officials are not above the law. The public will be watching this decision closely.

Some council members L. Johnson, A. Monillas, S. Hope, L. Distelhorst, are not expected to bring sanctions against the mayor for his actions since he garners their votes potentially exclusively, against the will of the people repeatedly on issues the constituents of Edmonds care about.

Sincerely,  
Cynthia M. Sjoblom

**List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence may be found**

Visit the August 3rd council meeting online at "watch council meetings" on Edmonds city government webpage. Locate the comments contained within the last audio recording with the remaining 6:50 minutes of the mayors prepared statements.

"My Edmonds News" Dated August 4th, 2021 Titled "Mayor dismisses hate portal criticism; slams 'partisan campaign people'. Included as attachment

Reference the minutes of the meetings I was told for more exact verbatim text.

Included here is my accounting of the almost verbatim text (with the exception of any word not intelligible to me via computer). I have included this as an attachment.

I have also included as an attachment my description for you convenience and ability to print as necessary.

**List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them**

Susan Hughes -425-870-2020  
Kathy Brewer- 425-773-7387  
Trisha Evulet - 513-305-2462  
Cindy Sjoblom 206-747-1034

**Certification (Complainant)**

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.