

[Michael.nelson](#)

replied

September 6, 2021 at 1:29 pm

To: "PDC Support" <pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov>

External Email

My response to the complaint is below.

Thank you,

Mike Nelson

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The complaint that was submitted is unfounded in several respects, but namely because it lacks any evidence to show that I made any statements supporting or opposing a candidate for office. Most significantly, I did not identify or name any candidate or person, or mention any particular elected office. I also never expressed my opposition or support of a candidacy for election.

First, I never identified any specific candidate or campaign for office among the several candidates who were present at the meeting. Second, my disapproval was clearly directed at the statements that were made that were directed at elected officials and city staff, not whether to vote for them or oppose their candidacy. Comparing dedicated local government officials to Nazis as some socially acceptable practice is not something we should ever tolerate. We have seen what happens when we allow the demonization of our democratic institutions to go unchecked.

### **No Specific Candidate or Campaign Identified**

I did not identify any specific candidate, and the complainant conceded I did not identify any specific candidate for office during my mayor's comments at the City Council meeting on August 3. I did not identify or reference any candidate's name, the name of any campaign staff, or any other names related to a particular candidate's campaign. Indeed, the complainant freely admits I never said her candidate's name.

The complainant assumes that because her candidate attended the City Council meeting that it would be obvious to others that I was referring to her.

However, the candidate she references was not the only candidate in attendance that night. There were at least four other Edmonds City Council candidates running in three different races in attendance at the same Council meeting. It is unclear how the complainant can assume I was talking about her specific candidate since all parties agree I never identified or named any candidate during my comments.

### **Not Opposing/Supporting Any Candidate/Campaign**

My statement's purpose that evening was to address the lack of civil comments made during a previous City Council meeting regarding an online portal the city created to make it easier for residents or visitors to report a hate incident. The large crowd in attendance was voicing their

strong opposition to this portal. There is ample evidence from my comments at the meeting that my intent was to clearly address the lack of civility during a council meeting, not to oppose any candidate for elected office. For example, I stated, "Everyone needs to be civil whether they are doing political rhetoric or not and what was demonstrated last week was not political rhetoric, it was uncivil behavior that has no place in Council Chambers." I specifically called out a type of conduct that should not be acceptable or allowed at a council meeting.

I also stated, "If you choose to be kind to only people you agree with and not those you don't agree with, it kind of defeats the whole purpose. Selective civility is not civility." Again, I was addressing disrespectful conduct, not a person or campaign.

A further example of my intent to address the lack of civility was my statement, "And then to end last week's meeting with some council members seated at this very dais thanking these extremists for their comments. Did you actually thank them for comparing your colleagues and city staff to Nazis?" Here, I was clearly expressing my frustration at my fellow elected officials for condoning this uncivil behavior.

Moreover, when I was interrupted during the meeting by a council member about my statement, I clearly stated that my comments were about the anti-hate portal, not an election.

Finally, instead of addressing the lack of civility the same night it occurred, when ballots were being mailed out, I waited to make my comments/statement for a later Council meeting. I waited until after 8:00 p.m. on election night to avoid any appearance of impropriety and to ensure that there was no perception or claim that my comments were trying to influence the election. My comments were made to address the lack of civility in the previous council meeting, not to oppose or support a candidate for office, or comment on any of the candidates for our local election.

In summary, there has been no evidence presented that at any time during the council meeting in question did I recommend any candidate for office or oppose any candidate or campaign. There is no evidence that I encouraged others to support a candidate or campaign. The purpose of my mayor's comments was to request that others be more respectful to Council and city staff, and to stop the offensive name calling.