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**CITY OF LAUREL, ETHICS COMMISSION**

8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel Maryland 20707

<https://www.cityoflaurel.org/boards/commissions/laure-ethics-commission>

September 13, 2023



Martin Mitchell, Councilman  
8103 Sandy Spring Road  
Laurel, Maryland 20707

Dear Councilman Mitchell,

On August 10, 2023, the City of Laurel Ethics Commission (hereinafter the "Commission") was asked to review and provide guidance concerning the alleged actions taken by you during an eviction at 715 Main Street, Unit 4, Laurel, Maryland 20707.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Commission was provided with an email from Stephanie Ruff, Director of Property Management, Rental Maintenance Corporation, Real Estate Enterprises, detailing her interaction with you on the morning of August 1, 2023. Ms. Ruff alleges that you identified yourself as a Councilmember for the City of Laurel and asked her to extend an eviction that was scheduled with the Office of the Sheriff for Prince George's County. Moreover, Ms. Ruff detailed how you: 1) stated that you were personal friends with Sheriff Jackson and that you have already talked to him about this case; 2) that you "would hate to have to call the Health Department with the condition of the property;" and 3) "if the media comes out I would have to stand out here and explain what is going on." Lastly, after the eviction was resolved, you allegedly went door-to-door in the apartment complex asking the tenants if they had any problems with the landlord.

If these allegations are true, your actions could have violated several sections of the City of Laurel Ethics Ordinance (hereinafter the "Ethics Ordinance"). In particular, the actions described in Ms. Ruff's email arguably constitute a violation of Section 2-55 (e) (Use of Prestige of Office) and (k) (Abuse of Position) of the Ethics Ordinance. Furthermore, suggesting/threatening that you will call the Health Department and/or the media, unless Ms. Ruff agrees to your request to delay the eviction, even if not a technical violation of the Ethics Ordinance, said action is unbecoming of a Councilman in the City of Laurel.

In closing, the Commission is quite troubled by these allegations and wanted to provide you with an opportunity to provide your perspective of the action outlined in Ms. Ruff's email before considering what action to take next. Please provide a written response outlining your

<sup>1</sup> This request is not the first time that the Commission has had to review your action, for possible violation, of the City's Ethics Ordinance. These repeated inquiries into your actions are concerning to the Commission and hopefully this will be the last time the Commission is asked to determine the appropriateness of your action as an elected official in the City of Laurel.

version of the events surrounding the scheduled eviction at 715 Main Street, Unit 4, Laurel, Maryland 20707 on August 1, 2023, to the undersigned within ten (10) business days of receipt of this letter. Please include any documents or other evidence you would like the Commission to consider in rendering its decision as to what action, if any should be taken next.

Sincerely,



James Hester, Chairman

cc: Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator  
Joanne Barr, Deputy City Administrator  
Ana R. Navarro, MMC, Executive Assistant to the Mayor  
Sara A. Green, CMC, City Clerk  
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