

EX ALDERMAN NEWSLETTER 42

January 11, 2012

By John Hoffmann

BORAD of ALDERMEN MEETING FIREWORKS: On the agenda it looked like it would be a short meeting, maybe 25 minutes long. It was anything but that. There were three items on the agenda and a couple of appointments, but the deer people filled three-quarters of the Board of Aldermen Chamber and things got interesting, but not necessarily about deer. By the end of the evening you wonder if a long time alderman was about to resign.

MISSING: Alderpersons Tim Welby and Lynn Wright were missing from the first meeting of the year.

FONS VS BENIGAS: In the work session the topic of the reappointment of Alderman Al Gerber's wife Hera Gerber to the Conservation Commission which Gerber chairs was brought up. Alderman Jon Benigas at the last meeting brought up the fact that he felt there was a conflict of interest for an alderman's spouse to serve on the same commission as the alderman.

In the work session Alderman Steve Fons sarcastically asked Benigas what he means by saying having an alderman chair a commission that his spouse is on could create "unnecessary problems."

Benigas snapped back, "What don't you understand about that that? You cannot predict what kind of conflicts could come up."

Fons retorted, "I don't think you have to look very far to see this is political."

At one point Mayor Dalton had to rap the table several times to stop Fons and Benigas from speaking at the same time.

This little exchange was just the start of an entertaining evening.

THE INCIDENTS: Apparently on December 27 Alderman Fred Meyland-Smith had arrived at a deer bait site waiting for a truck to arrive to pick up just shot deer. Meyland-Smith has his car pulled across the entrance to the property.

Up drives Al Gerber, the defender of deer. Al wants to drive down and count the deer and watch them be loaded on the contractor's truck. Apparently Meyland-Smith refused to move his car telling Gerber he was not allowing him to drive onto the site. They then exchanged words and Meyland-Smith told Gerber he could "kiss his ass!" Meyland-Smith refused to move his car. But the truck to pick up the deer bodies arrived and Meyland-Smith pulled away to let the truck pass only to have Gerber follow the truck onto the property.

THE CITIZEN ENCOUNTER: The other incident that was brought up was when Meyland-Smith went to the door of a resident to inquire why she had one of the pro-deer signs in her yards. Apparently the conversation did not go well.

THE ATTACK: First up in the public comment section of the meeting was Dennis Fitzgerald, a retired Air Force pilot who lives on Mason Valley Court, in an area with more than an abundance of deer. Fitzgerald normally talks about how much he loves having the deer in his yard and that is why he moved to T&C. However at this meeting he was not speaking of deer. Instead he was talking about Meyland-Smith.

He began how he served on the Board of Adjustment years ago but quit due to the loud, argumentative style of local politics that included personal attacks. He added that the recent behavior of Meyland-Smith brought us back to those times years ago. He then listed four examples of Meyland-Smith's bad behavior.

The first incident Fitzgerald listed occurred at the last Board of Aldermen meeting, as we reported in our December 13, 2011 newsletter. Meyland-Smith addressed former Alderwoman and deer lover Barbara Ann Hughes about her Sunshine Law requests for information about the deer control program.

"It is in my judgment this is frivolous, serving little or no purpose...creates demands on this city causing no purpose and taxes city staff and legal counsel. It is to disrupt the deer management program. These requests are disruptive and grandstanding on your part and are uncalled for,"

I was kind of surprised when Meyland-Smith let loose with the statement. After all citizens do have the right to file public record requests without being denounced at a meeting.

The second item was Meyland-Smith's encounter with Gerber, blocking his way and telling him to "kiss his ass."

The third item was how he went to a home of a citizen and argued with her over her first amendment right to put up a sign.

The fourth item was Meyland-Smith's opposition to Hera Gerber's reappointment to the Conservation Commission.

"You appear to be mean spirited and should resign from the Board of Aldermen immediately," said Fitzgerald.

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND...THE CODE OF CONDUCT: Next to speak for former Alderwoman Barbara Ann Hughes. She attacked Meyland-Smith bullying her at the last meeting. She then made reference to Mayor Jon Dalton attack on her back in March of 2009 over the cancellation of the candidate debates when I was running against Dalton.

Here is what I wrote about the incident in my then Alderman Newsletter:

However Mrs. Hughes had a second remark. That is when things got interesting.

Mrs. Hughes was concerned there were no candidate debates scheduled. She told the board and the public present, she had called the League of Women Voters. There was a debate scheduled but, it was cancelled because of a conflict with the mayor's schedule.

Before she inhaled after uttering the phrase "cancelled because of a conflict with the mayor's schedule," Mayor Dalton was descending from the ceiling back to his chair. He let Mrs. Hughes have it.

Mayor Dalton, who is running as the "Dignified candidate," was anything but dignified. He began to bark as if cross-examining, Mrs. Hughes. He demanded to know who had told her the debates were cancelled because of his schedule. He then loudly informed Mrs. Hughes that he had not spoken with anyone from the League of Women Voters for over a year and a half. He again, demanded her to tell him the name of who she had spoken to, at the League of Women voters. Mrs. Hughes stammered, someone who answered the phone provided the information and she didn't get her name. Mayor Dalton continued the attack. Accusing Mrs. Hughes of coming to a public meeting and making accusations about something he had done without even providing the name of the person who gave her the information. It was great theater.

How good was Mrs. Hughes information? I was pretty sure she was not likely to make all this up. Two days later, I spoke to "Julie" at the League of Women Voters and asked her about the debates. She said there had been a debate scheduled with the League of Women Voters on March 9, which was later changed to March 11 to be held at CBC High School. When asked who had arranged for the League to moderate the debate and who had cancelled the debate, Julie asked me to hold on while she got "the file." She returned and said Lila Shepley of the Town and Country-Frontenac Chamber of Commerce had made the requests and had made the cancellation.

So thanks to Mrs. Hughes we all learned there was a debate scheduled, but it was apparently only known by a select few.

Dalton later apologized to Hughes in private but not in public. I think the lack of a public apology has been a thorn in Hughes side for some time.

But then Hughes brought up Meyland-Smith's "Alderman Code of Conduct." This was in 2009 when he wrote and tried to get passed into law a Code of Conduct where aldermen could not criticize each other. But since it was unconstitutional Fred had to settle on just having other alderman informally signing it. The "Code of Conduct" was an attempt by Meyland-Smith to get me to stop writing my then Alderman's Newsletter. Here is Fred's Code of Conduct:

Town And Country

Aldermen Code of Behavior

As aldermen we recognize that we are in service to our community. Our goal is to make Town and Country an even better place to live and work. Our behavior towards one another, our residents, the City's businesses and the Municipal staff should always be exemplary, marked by mutual respect, fairness and objectivity.

We should communicate openly and factually. We should listen to one another, work to understand and build consensus. However, we also recognize that we have the right to express views, state positions and dissent. Each of us has the right to stand for what we believe in.

We commit, however, that our interaction and the expression of our views will not call into question other member's integrity or intelligence. We will not engage in personal attack, use derogatory or insulting language about the individual. If we have a disagreement with one another, we will address it directly and personally with that individual. We have the right to make public our position on matters impacting our

VIOLATION, VIOLATION, VIOLATION: It appears as if Meyland-Smith's berating of Hughes, blocking Gerber's car, refusing to move and then telling him to "kiss my ass" if he didn't like it and going to a resident's home to complain about her yard sign...all seem to violate Meyland-Smith's own Code of Conduct.

NEXT UP IN THE BATTER'S BOX IS ERIC ALAN GERBER: Gerber filled out a request to speak form and turned it in. Dalton read the next speaker and was surprised that it was Gerber. Dalton asked Gerber if he wanted to speak. Gerber said he did. Dalton then told him he didn't have to file out a form.

Gerber then read from a prepared script attacking the action of Meyland-Smith and listing all the things he is accused of doing recently. He ended his remarks reading the code of conduct and said, "The alderman who wrote these words was the one who did this.

SO MUCH FOR THAT PLEAD OF ALLEGIANCE BEFORE MEETINGS OR OATH OF OFFICE: I wrote how Fred Meyland-Smith was trying to trample the constitution when he introduced his Aldermen Code of Conduct. Our mayor/lawyer/cigarette lobbyist Jon Dalton didn't think so and wanted his name to be added to the list of elected officials signing the code. The city attorney Steve Garrett actually told everyone the code was completely unconstitutional. It never became an ordinance. It was merely a voluntarily act.

I was the only one who refused to sign the code.

Before every meeting the aldermen recite the Plead of Allegiance and when they are sworn in they swear to support the Constitution. While I agree with Fred's position on Deer Control...these people are right when they claim he is a bully.

THE RETURN OF BARABARA ANN: Barbara Ann Hughes was stopped during her first remarks when she ran well past the 3-minute time limit. She had filled out one speaker slip, but wanted to speak on three different topics. When she was stopped she said she would talk about the other topics. Mayor Dalton said she would not, that her time was up. Of course Dalton spent three-minutes saying how important it is to be sure everyone has a chance to speak...blah, blah, blah.

Then Dalton called on the city's official gadfly Mariette Palmer, who had filed out a form to speak. Mrs. Palmer immediately said she would give her time to Barbara Ann Hughes. Dalton said that would not be permitted. Then Dalton apparently realized what he had done. He had crossed the lady with the large email list of the liberals who vote in city elections. He immediately backtracked.

"If this is that big of a deal we had better let Mrs. Hughes speak."

Barbara Ann's final remarks took all of 15 seconds...she wanted Hera Gerber reappointed to the Conservation Commission and for Fred to resign.

AND ON TO THE DEER:



DEER PEOPLE: The parade of the deer lovers marched to the podium.

The Phone Call: The Deer Sign Chick, Traci Cardenas was next up. She took with her a voice recorder and played a phone message apparently left for Hera Gerber from a woman upset over seeing a deer being shot. The caller claimed the deer was not deer, while it was dragged up a hill. She said she thought maybe it was a poacher.

Well, what the hell is she doing calling and leaving a message for Hera Gerber if she thought it was a poacher. I think perhaps the POLICE may have been the people to call.

Cardenas then started reading a long letter from the United States Humane Society (not to be confused with the good people at the Missouri Humane Society) about how Town

and Country did not do enough research before shooting deer. Cardenas ran out of time before finishing reading the letter so the next person who lived on the Principia campus stepped up and finished reading it.

THE MYSTERY MAN: A person who despite Mayor Dalton's inquiries would only identify himself a "J." Miller and refused to say what the "J" stood for, spoke next. "Miller" claimed he represented several Town and Country residents but would not say who. Likewise he refused to say where he lived. Dalton announced "J. Miller" just put down a P.O. Box on his speaker form.

Mystery Man complained about the city's deer control contractor White Buffalo's track record. He gave mostly examples of court rulings that stopped lethal management control in New York and Ohio, but did not show how any actions of White Buffalo caused those rulings, which could have been procedural in nature...but this has been the tactic of the Deer Lovers for three years now...half truths or zero truth.

OOPS: I am thinking if Fred Meyland-Smith had to do it all over again, perhaps he would not have stopped at the house on Clayton Road to talk to the lady about her sign. She was next up and spent her 30-minutes going after Meyland-Smith suggesting he resign immediately.

BUCK EGGBRECHT: Mr.Eggebrecht, of Clayton Road spoke about how the city increased the number of buck being shot from 45 to 75 without a public vote. He was hot and said the mayor and aldermen were hiding things from the public.

After he spoke Dalton said he should blame the Missouri Department of Conservation for increasing the number and not the city.

After the meeting Capt. Gary Hoelzer, who oversees the deer management program for the city, said the reason for the increase in Bucks being shot was that the aggressive bucks were keeping does away from bait feed areas that are also the shooting sites.

My take is that a buck jumping in front of my car is just as dangerous as a doe and if we are shooting deer for safety reasons you cannot ignore bucks.

KUMBAYAH: Also Marjorie Hamlin and Margaret Parker spoke saying they didn't understand why you had to kill things. Mrs. Parker stated the deer are not suicidal, she has never hit one and they usually look both ways before crossing the street.

BENIGAS COMES OUT OF THE KITCHEN PANTRY: At the end of the meeting Alderman Jon Benigas spoke that he is tired of people saying how the aldermen don't

love people. Benigas said he has not heard any vegetarians or vegans identify themselves at these meetings. He said he loves animals and does not eat meat.

He continued that he will not soon forget the photos of the deer that jumped into a stopped Mini-Van on Clayton Road just east of Henry Road. They deer landed on an empty child's seat in the backseat. (When those photos where shown at a Aldermanic meeting back in 2007, some commented how that was not in Town and County. The street was not in Town and Country but the woods the deer came out of is in Town and Country.)

Benigas said that deer may not consciously commit suicide but they run into stopped cars, jump on top of vehicles and have the ability to seriously injure people. He continued that it was important to address an over population of deer.

FRED MEYLAND-SMITH REQUESTED A CLOSED SESSION: At the end of the meeting Meyland-Smith requested to go into a closed session to discuss a personnel matter. We could only guess the personnel manner involved Fred. Actually by the end of the meeting Fred looked like A DEER IN THE HEADLIGHTS.

All six aldermen voted in favor of going into closed session, but before they could meet Meyland-Smith withdrew the request.

Was Fred thinking of resigning? I don't know...but it would get old after a while having people demand your resignation...of course I cannot blame the people for making the demand.

IRONIC: It was exactly one-year ago when Meyland-Smith was in the role of the victim after then Alderman David Karney used a phony name (J. Storehouse) and a secret email account to send an email to Meyland-Smith suggesting he should be killed instead of deer. An investigation traced the threat to Karney's computer.

Did anyone really think Karney, a former mayor, would kill Meyland-Smith? I don't think so, but Fred played the role of the victim to the hilt.

Now Fred is the aggressor. He told a KMOX reporter after the meeting that he only meant to block Gerber's car until the site was safe and the shooting was over. He apologized for his language.

A SUGGESTION: Perhaps all elected officials should stay the hell out of the way of the contractor. The police have been assigned the job of oversight...let them do their job and ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS keep away from the shooting and bait sites.

THE VIGIL: Wow, on December 28 a group of people led by our own local slander and all round loon Mariette Palmer, Traci Cardenas and Rosilee Trotta stood out on Clayton Road at Mason holding candles protesting the fact that the city contractor, White Buffalo, was actively shooting deer and then donating the meat to food pantries that feed the poor.

When the group of dedicated but nutty protesters appeared on local TV it was like I was an alderman again. I came home from work and I had messages on my answer machine.

“You hold vigils for domestic violence, dead soldiers, child abuse, cancer, but not deer. What is wrong with these people?”

The Post Dispatch had two articles about the vigil. The online comments were pretty amusing. Here is the link to the comments for one of the articles:

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/residents-opposed-to-deer-culling-to-hold-vigil-in-town/article_08744bfa-317e-11e1-ad8c-0019bb30f31a.html?mode=comments&page=2

I suggested in a column I wrote for the Chesterfield Patch that perhaps these protesters should go to were the dead deer end up...the food pantries, where they can block the way of poor people trying to get food. Better yet they should take their protests to the street corners in Franklin County where some of the highest kill rates occur every deer season. I think it would be good for these folks to wave their signs at people driving pickup trucks with gun racks instead of rich folks in BMWs.

KEEP UP TO DATE: If you are interested in how many deer are being killed, you can go to the city’s website and click on the deer management link, where you can get daily reports showing the number of deer killed and where by ward.

From December 26 Through Monday January 9, 2012 **169 deer have been killed** and taken to be butchered with the meat going to food pantries for the poor.

SMART MOVE: The city has been very smart during this third deer harvest in the last three years. The contractor has the signed permission slips with private property owners to shoot deer instead of the city. This way the locations are not available to protesters by filing Sunshine Law records request. I am sure there will be a final report that will give a more detail description of the area where the deer were shot other than just by ward.

DIERDORF MOVING? I don't know, perhaps a real estate agent can explain this to me. The CBS football broadcaster, former Football Cardinal standout, Monday Night Football broadcaster, and radio host, and part owner of a local radio station Dan Dierdorf has lived for years on Buckland Hall off of Mason Road. This year his house went on the market for \$2.2 million. It was taken off the market and listed as SOLD in October for \$210,000 to the LLC. Meanwhile Dierdorf bought a house on Dubon Lane off Topping Rd for \$1.05 million.

Hear are the links

http://www.zillow.com/homedetails/13302-Buckland-Hall-Rd-Saint-Louis-MO-63131/2789103_zpid/

http://stlouis.blockshopper.com/news/story/1600152893-CBS_Sports_analyst_scores_Town_Country_3BD

CARTOONS:







