

**ETHICS COMPLAINT CITY OF
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND**

TO: City Clerk

SUBMITTED BY: Name: Salvatore DeRosalia

**Address: 9463 NE Business Park Lane
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110**

Telephone: (206) 240-8857

Ethics Complaints concern the actions of individuals in relation to the City of Bainbridge Island Ethics Code.

1. Does the situation for which you are making a complaint involve: (please circle one)

a. An Elected Official

JOE DEETS - Bainbridge Island Council Member, North Ward

2. Please describe the facts that constitute the violation(s) of the Code of Ethics. (If necessary, please attach additional pages for description)

On January XX, 2019, Council Member Joe Deets received a phone call from Erin Phillips. Mrs. Phillips asked to meet with Council Member Joe Deets to discuss me, Sal DeRosalia and my supposed behavior inside of a private group, the Race Equity Network (REN). "XX" Indicates unknown date.

At the time of her request for a meeting with Council Member Deets, Mrs. Phillips was a candidate to be on the newly formed Race Equity Task Force and Joe Deets was an appointed Council Member Liaison to the group as well as one of three Council Members that would be interviewing myself and Erin to be on the Race Equity Task Force.

In addition, Mrs. Phillips had just resigned from the Race Equity Network (REN) organization she helped found along with myself and Karen Vargas. 10 Days after her resignation, Erin Phillips sent a rogue mass email out to everyone

whom had ever signed up for information about REN. The contents of this email discuss what Mrs. Phillips talked to Council Member Deets about. I have included a copy of that email.

Council Member Joe Deets agreed to meet with Erin Phillips in person.

On January XX, 2019, Council Member Joe Deets met with Erin Phillips at an undisclosed location. In that meeting, Council Member Deets reported that Mrs. Phillips told him, "...that three women at REN felt either uncomfortable or unsafe being around you - and that all three left REN as a direct result of your behavior towards them." "XX" Indicates unknown date.

Council Member Joe Deets chose not inform anyone of his meeting with Erin Phillips.

On Friday, January 25, 2019, I discovered the meeting had occurred through a third party. I emailed Council Member Deets along with Mayor, Kol Medina and City Manager, Morgan Smith to voice my concerns.

Council Member Joe Deets chose not inform co-Council Liaisons, Matt Tirman and Rasham Nassar of the full details of his conversations with Erin Phillips.

In not recusing himself fully, Council Member Joe Deets affected the outcome of the process and choosing of the Race Equity Task Force. This can be explained in simple math as well as withholding information. The math part is a fact and can be proved. The withholding information is subjective.

Council Member Joe Deets has still not recused himself from his position as Council Liaison on the Race Equity Task Force.

In the first Race Equity Task Force meeting held on March 7, 2019, Council member Joe Deets did not site any conflicts of interest during the call for conflicts of interest. Council Member Deets only stated he had a conflict of interest after Ethics Board member Scott Wilder walked into the room to give his presentation on COBI Ethics Program. This was about an hour into the meeting.

In an email response to me concerning this matter, Council Member Joe Deets stated this about his colleagues Matt Tirman, Rasham Nassar and Kol Medina, “I have spoken with them at length about this and based on the facts of the matter all of them have strongly advocated that I stay on.”

This is not a true statement. Mayor Kol Medina explained to me that he spoke with Council Member Joe Deets to make sure that was corrected. I have not received a correction from Council Member Deets.

Upon requesting a meeting to discuss this issue as well as several other issues pertaining to Council Member Joe Deets, I was granted an audience with Council Member Joe Deets and Mayor Kol Medina.

In this meeting, Council Member Deets was very evasive about the context of his meeting with Erin Phillips. Council Member Deets said he did not remember dates and times of the conversations or phone calls he had with Mrs. Phillips but he did state he would get those to me. (To date, I have not been provided with those records. “XX” Indicates unknown date.)

Council Member Joe Deets said at the end of our meeting, “...and I hope you account for what you did to those women.” Mayor Kol Medina and a guest of mine were both present for this comment. My guest is more than willing to provide a written and/or verbal statement.

In short, Council Member Joe Deets agreed to take a meeting he should not have. It had nothing to do with City business and he knew that before he went. He admitted as much in the meeting with Kol Medina and I.

After he made that mistake, he made another by not reporting his inappropriate meeting.

He compounded all of this by being a person of influence in the process of picking the Race Equity Task Force committee.

When confronted with the evidence that he had an inappropriate meeting with Erin Phillips, he responded by taking no meaningful action. In fact, his actions

since have only exacerbated this issue and put a stain on the City of Bainbridge Island and the newly formed Race Equity Task Force.

Below is Council Member Deets written response:

Councilmember Deets' Response:

The conversation that I had with Erin Phillips is a sensitive matter, for it directly involves your behavior at the Race Equity Network (REN). She asked me to meet with her, where she told me that three women at REN felt either uncomfortable or unsafe being around you - and that all three left REN as a direct result of your behavior towards them. This was shocking to me, and while of course I have nothing to do with what happens at REN, I do have a responsibility for considering those who are applying to serve on the City's Race Equity Taskforce (RET). Getting along with others is a crucial attribute for a Committee Member, and what I learned made me concerned about your suitability. However, in order to remove any perception of bias in the process I decided to recuse myself from the decision of whether you or Erin should be on RET. I thus took no part in your or her interviews or the subsequent internal discussion. That work and ultimate decision was carried out by Councilmembers Tirman and Nassar.

Lastly, I did take part in the process in respect to the other candidates, and I trust that you share with me the excitement that seven outstanding citizens were chosen to serve on RET."

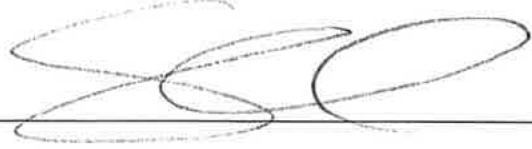
3. Section(s) and subsection(s) of the Code of Ethics that are alleged to have been or would be violated **[optional]**: _____

4. I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct:

Date: March 26, 2019

Place: City of Bainbridge Island | 280 Madison Avenue N.

Signature _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end, written over a horizontal line.



Decision

Erin Phillips

Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 1:54 AM

Dear REN,

It is with a heavy heart that I write this email, especially after throwing such a successful event last night, but as the founder, I feel an obligation to be open and transparent about an important decision I have made.

Recently, a female REN member communicated to me that Sal had made her colleague feel 'unsafe' during a REN meeting at IslandWood. The woman who told me this said that she felt the same way. Because of conflicts that I, plus another woman had had with Sal, I relayed that I had concerns that there was a pattern of behavior during a subsequent meeting with Sal, Karen and me.

That woman was planning on reaching out to Karen about the matter as well. We discussed that Karen could facilitate a direct conversation with the women who had expressed their discomfort with Sal and Sal himself. Sal, Karen and I also agreed to keep the present conversation confidential.

The next day, I received an email from the woman, saying that Sal had contacted IslandWood to 'inform' them about what the women had said about him. The woman expressed to me that she had stayed up all night, worried that she would be reprimanded or even worse, as she is her family's only breadwinner. She had to meet with her CEO the next day to explain.

In light of what happened, I felt that Sal should step away from his leadership role. The incident involved two REN members, as well as a REN partner so I did not feel it would be viewed in isolation. I feel that our job as REN ambassadors is to de-escalate conflict and not retaliate when we feel wronged but rather, seek clarification and begin the healing process. I felt that this incident was incompatible with what we are trying to achieve as an organization. Sal said that he would not step down and Karen proposed to table the matter of asking Sal to step down until after the event, to which I reluctantly agreed. I feel that through inaction, however, REN displayed a sense of indifference towards what happened with these two women.

As a result, I have decided to step away from the REN leadership team for the time being. I will remain a REN member and will continue to do the work, no matter where I sit in the organization as I continue to believe in the work that we are doing. There is so much momentum. In fact, I continue to love and admire Sal for many reasons. This may sound insincere but I believe that both can be true. I just believe that he is not the appropriate person to be a figure head of the organization until some reconciliation takes place.

I do, however, think we need to have a group conversation about process in general, as several members have raised concerns connected to process, decision-making, etc.

I am also available to meet in person if anyone would like to talk about this in person.

Again, I am sorry that this is a distraction from the work but I felt it was my obligation to be as transparent as possible about the matter.

Sincerely,

Erin Phillips



Sal DeRosalia [REDACTED]

Joe Deets Inquiry

Sal DeRosalia [REDACTED]

Fri, Jan 25, 2019 at 9:12 AM

To: jdeets@bainbridgewa.gov, kmedina@bainbridgewa.gov, msmith@bainbridgewa.gov

Everyone,

I just came from a meeting where I was told that Erin Phillips and Joe Deets had a discussion about me and potential Race Equity Task Force positions. I was told that Joe informed Erin he would not allow or advocate for me to be on the Task Force.

I hope this isn't true as it would seem pretty unethical.

I would like to discuss this and Joe's prior treatment of me in meetings as soon as possible.

I have already talked to Joe about his previous slights towards me and my wanting to address them. This new information has brought it to the top of my priority list.

Please let me know how we should proceed.

Thank you,
Sal DeRosalia