

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On Friday, January 8, 2010, a complaint was filed with the chair of the Ethics Committee of the Indianapolis City-County Council against David Horth, chairman of the Indianapolis Animal Care & Control (IACC) board. The complaint was filed by Greg Brush and Warren Patitz, representatives of two local animal welfare organizations. Mayor Greg Ballard was also copied on the complaint and a request made that Mayor Ballard dismiss Horth from his position on the IACC board.

Shortly after Chairman Horth's decision and announcement to stop government cable 16 coverage of IACC board meetings and subsequent overruling by Mayor Greg Ballard, an e-mail document was obtained with further evidence that Mr. Horth offered to be absent to cause the cancellation of the September 9, 2009 IACC board meeting. The e-mail, obtained through the Indiana Access to Public Records Act, disclosed communication between Mr. Horth and Erin Pratt. Ms. Pratt is the assistant to then interim Public Safety Director Mark Renner and is also the appointed secretary to the IACC board. In the e-mail, Mr. Horth indicated that he was able to come to the September meeting, but he would stay home sick if there weren't "specific issues" to discuss. Shortly after that e-mail was sent, Ms. Pratt announced that the meeting was cancelled.

The September 2009 IACC board meeting would have been the last public meeting to discuss critically important issues regarding the agency's operations under IACC administrator Doug Rae. Mr. Rae had been placed on probation by interim director Renner at the beginning of August and the probationary period ended at the beginning of October when Rae was subsequently fired. Critics of the firing contend that Mr. Rae had complied with the terms of his probation, there had been significant improvement in many areas of IACC operations and these improvements were going to be made public at the September board meeting.

David Horth was appointed to the IACC board by Mayor Ballard in 2008. The city ordinance requires a representative from the Humane Society of Indianapolis (HSI) hold a seat on the IACC board. Until recently, Horth served as the chairman of the board for HSI, and still serves on their board. In late July, 2009, HSI hosted a closed-door meeting between a small number of animal welfare groups, select city-county councilors and interim public safety director Renner to discuss dissatisfaction by those animal groups with Mr. Rae's performance as IACC administrator. Notably not invited to the meeting was Rae himself. In an article appearing in a September issue of NUVO, HSI was the only group to go on record as being openly critical of Rae.

While the specific reason for Horth wanting the September 9, 2009 board meeting canceled is currently unknown, the e-mail clearly indicates that Mr. Horth was acting in a way intended to prohibit the opportunity for open discussion and suppress a legally-mandated forum for the public to be involved in understanding and voicing their opinions on the operation of a division of their city's government. Taken into context with Mr. Horth's recent attempt to keep IACC board meetings from being covered by government cable 16, a pattern emerges suggesting that Mr. Horth wants to keep the public's knowledge of and involvement in the operation of the city's embattled animal shelter under his control.

Attachments: Ethics complaint

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