

Introduction

I want to thank Cm. Rollo for drawing my attention to the codified duties of the traffic commission. Engage in education, prepare reports, receive complaints, recommend improvements? That is uncanny! It is as if the authors of the ordinance had met me and decided to write a paragraph about my activities.

I don't just receive traffic complaints, I go looking for them. I will see a muddy footprint or a tree broken off at bumper height and infer a traffic complaint. I don't just prepare reports, I conduct studies too. I don't just make recommendations, I follow through with multi-faceted campaigns to try to ensure the effectiveness of the recommendation.

A small but influential political club has opposed successful safety programs. They are mad at me because I do not defer to their judgement. My duty is to hear their complaints, and use my own judgement to make recommendations.

Below, I respond to Cm. Rollo's motion in the same order as the motion.

The tweets

For the most part, my tweets are simply more profane versions of statements I already made explicitly at the public microphone at council. I expected Cm. Rollo to successfully block my re-appointment on the basis of those comments. The fact that he decided to pursue this motion instead is an unwelcome farce.

Yes, I ridiculed Ms. Moore for saying ridiculous things, including unfounded personal attacks against me. I did not threaten anyone, and she understood that.

Yes, Ms. Galvan also initiated a confrontation with me. Frank conversations between different kinds of activists is a strength of Twitter and should not be chilled.

I spoke sloppily when I said "elm heights" in these tweets. I meant a specific club. I apologize for incorrectly stating that politicians might brown-nose the approximately 75% of Elm Heights residents who are renters. Many of my closest friends are from Elm Heights.

Accusing politicians of brown-nosing is an attack on politicians, not on neighbors. Politicians are trying to distort a neighborhood association into an arm of an election campaign, to the detriment of the neighborhood. Residents did not decide to be made into a spectacle of unfair privilege. That harmful decision was made by councilmembers.

One example of something that had to be taken from this club is the ability to restrict traffic calming to residents who are being actively courted by a politician. Ordinance 20-17 took that away from them, and ordinance 22-35 would give it back to them.

Alleged bias

Cm. Rollo's motion says I am unable to "impartially discharge the duties in BMC 2.12.070," but within that ordinance, impartiality is not one of the duties. In fact, the ordinance anticipates that members will be partial to their own "councilmanic district." Nonetheless, I fulfill this requirement for impartiality that Cm. Rollo invented.

I have received complaints from Elm Heights residents at Common Council, Bike and Ped Safety Commission, Traffic Commission, and greenway meetings. Here is a list of my recommendations that I make in response to those complaints. **I request that Cm. Rollo indicate which of these substantive recommendations reflects my bias instead of my sincere beliefs about traffic safety.** If my bias is not present in my recommendations, then where does it live?

1. *Maxwell Ln near Sheridan Dr is too dangerous.* — **Yes!** Fix the design of this street. Do not repeat bad designs in the future. Stop signs are ineffective. Do not subject staff to harmful political processes. Do not unfairly prioritize this intersection.
2. *Maxwell Ln between Henderson and Woodlawn is too dangerous.* — **Yes!** Fully fund the resident-led traffic calming program. Do not re-politicize that program. Do not replace traffic calming at Woodlawn with a stop sign half a mile east of there.
3. *Traffic is too dangerous on Atwater Ave.* — **Yes!** Re-design Atwater/3rd. Demand emergency interventions in the city's high injury network. Defunding the greenways program will not fix Atwater.
4. *There are missing sidewalks.* — **Yes!** Spend **\$30,000,000** on high-priority sidewalks. Dismantling the greenways program to fund sidewalks will not provide a connected network.
5. *Sidewalks are poorly maintained.* — **Yes!** Public Works should allocate **\$1,000,000** annually to sidewalk maintenance. Do not dismantle the greenways program to maintain sidewalks.
6. *Greenways are ugly.* — **Not a traffic complaint.**
7. *Greenways will ruin the neighborhood.* — **Untrue.**
8. *Greenways are too expensive.* — **Untrue.**
9. *Greenways are unnecessary.* — **Untrue.**
10. *Staff planned and implemented greenways without public input.* — **Untrue, and not a traffic complaint.**
11. *The Hawthorne Greenway design neglects 1st St.* — **Yes!** Thank staff for already correcting this oversight.

12. *Traffic calming is harmful or bigoted.* — **Untrue.**
13. *There are too many scooters on the sidewalk.* — **Yes!** Enforce fines. Hold the Legal Department to account for their scandalous, unprofessional, and unethical behavior in this matter.

Alleged chilling

Some members of this club claim to be too intimidated to attend the Traffic Commission. They are expressing their displeasure at the existence of forums where their voices aren't privileged over all others. They are blameless in this matter: councilmembers have willfully nurtured an expectation that they will be shown unusual deference by every city body. I remind you, they do not receive the deference they desire at the Bike and Ped Safety Commission either, and Cm. Rollo has accordingly decided to bypass **all** commissions.

Cm. Rollo didn't just bypass commissions in bringing his ordinance 22-35, the ordinance itself would strip BPSC of its duties in the future. This motion against me is happening in the context of a politician systematically attacking many of the mechanisms by which the city is able to act on input from less-privileged neighborhoods.

The real thing that discourages public participation is the widespread belief that change is impossible. Empowering reactionaries to destroy programs that had been built on 20 years of multi-faceted public input does grievous harm.

If the council endorses Cm. Rollo's motion, then it will add accepting personal attacks to the formal duties of commissioners. That would discourage participation in committees.

Alleged employment

I emailed and phoned the city's HR department, and they have not replied. I did briefly speak to someone, who was unwilling to let me have a copy of the employee personnel manual because they did not believe I was an employee. I am not even permitted to see the cited document!

It is harmful when councilmembers opine on the administrative HR question of whether real employees should reasonably expect to be dismissed for responding to personal attacks on Twitter.

Does this motion really allege that my conduct represents workplace harassment? Is Twitter my workplace? This is reckless and unserious.

Closing

I do not enjoy serving on the Traffic Commission. It takes a lot of my time to keep up to date, to conduct inspections and studies, and to prepare presentations. It is

a constant challenge for me to determine what is productive. I find it emotionally draining to simultaneously voice my sincere respect for staff members and our urgent need for reform. I am frustrated by my own failures and missed opportunities.

Nonetheless, I have accomplished some small amount. While failing to get Engineering to report on traffic fatalities before Common Council, I succeeded at getting those reports delivered to the Traffic Commission. While failing to reduce speed limits systematically throughout the city, I convinced Engineering staff to reduce speed limits on Rogers St. and Indiana Ave. While failing to get Engineering to take pedestrian transportation seriously, I succeeded in getting Parks to install a (*sigh*, substandard) detour for 3 months of an 8 month closure.

Political concerns and bureaucratic inertia make it very difficult to accomplish change. But we desperately need change. The council must be a key part of progress. I am heartbroken to prove my worth by dressing up my own failures as if they were successes. But I will go one step further: these are your failures, councilmembers. Our city's continuing inability to respond substantively to traffic violence is blood on your hands. You can push me away but you cannot wash away that blood.

If Cm. Rollo offers no substantive criticism of my conduct as a Traffic Commissioner then his criticism is insubstantive.