



Central Northside Neighborhood Council

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Dear CNNC Members:

As you may have already heard, the Executive Committee (EC) of the Central Northside Neighborhood Council (CNNC) dismissed two staff employees late Wednesday afternoon, September 24th, Mr. Michael Barber and Mr. Aaron Churchill. In doing so, the EC asserted its power granted under the organization's Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual to dismiss employees. The EC also acted in its role as the agent of the full Board of Directors and in an effort to protect the organization.

Tonight at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board, members of the EC will discuss, among many other things, the process and the events that led up to the dismissal of the two employees. Members of the board of directors have already received information concerning this agenda item as well as a warning not to discuss the matter with the membership or public at large until the Board has had a chance to meet. We intend to issue a statement with further details for our membership in the next few days.

In the four days since these dismissals, some individuals, including some CNNC members, have demanded justification for the firing and some have demanded the reinstatement of these employees. These individuals do not have cause to make such a demand because they do not know the full circumstances leading up to the EC's decision. Decisions regarding dismissal are sensitive matters and therefore require discretion when sharing information about, say, employees' performance or objectionable actions. Arguing the reasons for this dismissal in a public forum will not serve Mr. Barber or Mr. Churchill well. We should never lose sight of the fact that we're dealing with the livelihoods of two individuals who have a right to quietly get on with their lives.

In light of the need for discretion and a display of respect for those dismissed, it saddens us that some individuals have reacted in a way that reflects badly on our organization. While we embrace disagreement and dissent as a part of the democratic process, we condemn hate speech or threats of violence. Some whose cause has not prevailed at the ballot box have lately taken to threats and intimidation. For example, shortly after the employees were dismissed last Wednesday afternoon, members of the EC and members working for them to secure the CNNC offices were verbally assaulted with anti-gay epithets, foul language and threats of violence. This continues a pattern of behavior that is quite something beyond dissent and we shall call it by its name: bullying.

To the many CNNC members who value the organization, be aware that this campaign of intimidation has now gone beyond the neighborhood as some of these individuals contact funders in an effort to destroy the CNNC and halt our projects on Federal and North and to thwart the Community Planning Process. Their acts are nothing short of wholesale sabotage of this organization. In short, unable to secure a majority by vote, they now hope to destroy the organization they pretend to love.

We will fight their efforts at every turn and we will protect this organization, as is our duty to the many persons who put their faith in us.

For those many members who are concerned about the future of our organization, rest assured that the fundamentals of the CNNC are in order and our many projects and initiatives remain underway, despite the shenanigans of a few. For those unfamiliar with our many recent successes, we take the opportunity to summarize here what the Board of Directors has accomplished since being seated in early June.

- Secured \$106,000 and went through a rigorous selection process to begin the Central Northside's first ever community-wide master plan.
- Negotiated control of the Garden Theater Block so the community can direct the redevelopment efforts of this long vacant and blighted corridor.
- Leveraged a \$10,000 CNNC investment into \$135,000 from PPND and URA for the Garden Theater Block redevelopment effort.
- Finalized financing for Federal Hill townhouse project, which had been delayed for some months.
- Convinced the City's Department of Public Works to maintain the traffic islands on Federal Street after they initially refused to do so.
- Lobbied successfully for the historic preservation of the Malta Temple building while attempting to create a win-win solution with the Salvation Army.
- Created a plan to enhance curb appeal of Garden Theater Block with improved lighting and an exciting public art project.

- Established a Community Safety committee to address residents' top concern, as evidenced by the CNNC's Community Needs Assessment.
- Established a Communications committee to deal with internal communications and public relations.
- Assisted in securing 4 commercial security cameras from Giant Eagle for our most troubled, crime-ridden areas
- Convinced ZipCar to move into the Central Northside instead of Mount Washington as they had planned.

As you read these accomplishments, please realize that we have only begun to help the Central Northside become an even better place to live. We will need your active support to counter this threat to the survival of our organization.

Most Sincerely,

Greg Spicer
CNNC Vice President
Chair, Communication Committee