

September 17, 2022

Open Letter to the Residents of Antioch --

It is with a heavy heart I share this letter with you all. On Wednesday, September 14th, I learned of the sexual harassment settlement granted to two former co-workers of Lamar Thorpe, Mayor of the City of Antioch.

I recognize that my well-known connection with Lamar Thorpe can be interpreted as a tacit endorsement of his behaviors. I never could've imagined someone I highly respect as a colleague would do such a thing; but it did happen. A person I have loyally stood by for years has used his power and influence over women to take advantage of them, and for this, I am truly sorry.

To the women; I am sorry. I see you, I hear you, and I believe you.

Earlier this year I began breaking ties with Lamar because of his increasingly erratic and hurtful behavior. Our professional relationship reached a breaking point when I learned that Lamar used unauthorized footage from a local videographer without paying. All this while working as the campaign manager for Rolando Bonilla, who also serves as the City's Public Information Officer. Rather than take accountability and pay the \$15k for his mistake, Lamar berated me and gave me several ultimatums urging me to drop this "issue." Lamar and I haven't talked since. A few weeks later he began efforts to undermine the City Clerk's Office. Without my knowledge, Lamar attempted to transfer control of my City Clerk duties to the City Manager, Con Johnson. This was clearly in retaliation to my genuine concerns over his treatment of others.

At great emotional dispense, I tried to help Lamar, but he refused to take accountability for the pain he was causing, and has continued to cause, to people. At that point I found it most appropriate to privately unalign myself with him without sharing the details of our professional relationship (or lack thereof) with anyone else. I think though that now, more than ever, it's important that the citizens who elected us to our positions are made aware of the current circumstances.

I am here to serve this City and everyone in it, and I take that responsibility seriously. Many people who have been harmed by Lamar have been scared into silence for fear of being lumped into a group of hateful bigots who use race and other tactics to divide our community. I'd like to offer a hand of reassurance to those I know are feeling this way - you can feel safe coming forward with me. I believe you. I will not allow you and your experience to be minimized or written off as an attempt to tarnish his reputation for nefarious reasons when true harm has been done. If there is a way I can be helpful, I am here to do that.

Going forward, I hope that the people like me - closely affiliated with and surrounding our Mayor - will follow my lead in coming forward with their refusal to continue condoning or defending this behavior. I hope we all can reassure those remaining in the shadows that we do not support or stand behind abuse of women no matter what office the perpetrator holds. Please join me in delivering that message to our Antioch community.

Sincerely signed,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ellie Householder". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Ellie Householder