

Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Wes Jordan

RE: Violations of the Prairie Village Code of Ethics by the Mayor and Members of the City Council

I am writing to you to bring to your attention a pattern of ongoing willful misconduct by Eric Mikkelson, Cole Robinson, Inga Selders, Ian Graves, Bonnie Limbird and Ron Nelson. This conduct is increasing in its intensity and frequency and is serving to divide the city of Prairie Village, KS. For reasons set forth below, I believe this conduct is a violation of [Article 2, Section 1-212 of the Prairie Village Code of Ethics](#) ("Code").

Article 2, Section 1-212(c) of the Code reads:

*Policy. The proper operation of democratic government requires that public officials and employees be independent, impartial and responsible to the people; that government decisions and policy be made in the proper channels or governmental structures; that public office not be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government. In recognition of these goals, there is hereby established a code of ethics for all officials and employees.*

Below are specific examples where aforementioned individuals have violated the impartiality provisions of the Code:

Eric Mikkelson

1. Mikkelson has directed Prairie Village taxpayer money to a private corporation (United Community Services of Johnson County, Inc., or "UCS") in which he has a personal interest (he is a board member). Eric has promoted UCS' agenda, including "by-right" rezoning ordinances that infringe upon PV residents' rights, in his official capacity as mayor. Eric's personal interest in UCS's agenda is "incompatible with" and "impairs" his independence of judgment or action in performance of his official duties as mayor and constitutes misconduct in office. At the December 5, 2020, PV Council Meeting (Minutes p. 3), Eric did himself due to a conflict when considering UCS funding, but not when driving the UCS agenda.
2. At the [September 6, 2022 City Council Meeting](#) (topic begins around the 24 minute mark and continues for about 3 minutes) Eric failed to answer a question from a citizen to clarify whether duplexes were included in Eric's remarks. Eric challenges this person to identify himself by name, openly questions the courage of this citizen and then threatens to have the citizen removed. Of note, Eric never answered the citizen's question in that meeting. This type of bullying behavior does not inspire confidence in the integrity of the Prairie Village Government, as required by the Code. To my knowledge, Eric has yet to issue a public apology for his unprofessional outburst at the September 6, 2022 City Council meeting. This conduct is inconsistent with the requirement of 1-212(c) that requires public officials be responsible to the people and have confidence in the integrity of its government.



3. Prior to the public comment section of each City Council meeting Eric typically opens that portion of the meeting with opening remarks that typically include Eric requesting all speakers to refrain from any personal attacks on citizens, elected officials and instead engage in civil discussion and debate so we can come to the right answer. Ironically, Eric does not hold himself or the City Council to that same standard. See #2 above where Eric does not follow his own guidance.
  
4. Time after time at City Council Meetings (especially since September 2022) multiple Prairie Village Citizens have spoken and complained that emails to the City Council are not answered. [Chad Herring's profile](#) is linked as an example of how the City Council publishes email as a means of communication with residents. Eric has personally witnessed these comments from multiple Prairie Village citizens during the public comment section of each City Council meeting. The combination of publishing a Prairie Village email address where city council members may be reached combined with a consistent pattern of non-responsiveness is inconsistent with 1-212(c) that requires elected officials to operate the city government in a manner that inspires confidence in the integrity of the city government. Pursuant to 1-205(a) Eric has superintending control of all officers of the city and the authority to hold city council members accountable for responsiveness to its citizens.



5. On June 29, 2023 in an article entitled "[JoCo DA rejected attempts to recall Prairie Village mayor](#)" Eric released a statement describing the petition. In this petition, Eric includes the following . . .

*" . . . And these are not the only recent petitions proposed to radically disrupt our government, overturn fair elections and structurally collapse Prairie Village government into the hands of a few. . . "*

Mikkelson also tied the failed recall efforts to the other petitions being circulated by Stop Rezoning Prairie Village and said those latter efforts are also an attempt to "radically disrupt our government, overturn fair elections and structurally collapse Prairie Village government into the hands of a few."

These same talking points can also be attributed to Cole Robinson, Inga Selders and Ian Graves as outlined below. This organized approach is a clear signal from the Eric and City Council members to advocate for the failure of the petitions and influence how citizens think about the petitions. This conduct is in violation of 1-212(c) of the code which requires public officials to operate the Prairie Village Government in a manner that is independent, impartial, responsible to the people and in a manner that inspires confidence in the integrity of the government.

#### Cole Robinson

1. On Cole Robson's personal Facebook Page he identifies himself as:
  - ✓ Executive Director at Johnson County Democratic Party (January 2023 – Present)
  - ✓ Prairie Village City Council, Ward One (April 15, 2021 – Present)

Pursuant to 1-212(e)(4) and/or 1-212€(1) City Council persons are prohibited from (i) engaging in or accepting private employment or render services for private interests when such employment or service would tend to impair his or her independence of judgment or action in the performance of his or her official duties or (ii) have a financial or personal interest which would tend to impair his judgement in the performance of his or her official duties. .

2. On June 1, 2023 Cole Robinson's Facebook page entitled [Cole for Prairie Village](#) reflects comments about initiatives to propose amendments to the structure of Prairie Village City Council and Mayor. Examples of Cole's comments:

*... I will continue to speak out about these petitions and their blatant illegality ...*

*... This is much more than a disagreement about housing policy. It's an attempt to overtake an entire governing body and system. Instead of winning democratic elections, the leaders of this group are attempting to radically change our entire government... .*

**Prairie Village, we can do a lot better. This is much more than a disagreement about housing policy. It's an attempt to overtake an entire governing body and system. Instead of winning democratic elections, the leaders of this group are attempting to radically change our entire government.**

Cole knows, or should know, that the process to get the initiatives/petition to voter sign-up was a lawful process led by citizens of Prairie Village, KS. Describing a lawful, civil processes by voters is wholly inconsistent with Eric's guidance at multiple City Council meetings that civil discussion and debate is a process of democracy that often yields the right outcome.

Regardless of whether Cole agrees with this proposal, Cole has violated the requirements of 1-212(c) by inserting his views that reflect the potential for personal gain (or stated in the inverse, the potential for a personal loss) and breached his duty to remain impartial so that all Prairie Village citizens would have confidence in the integrity of its government.

Cole's willful participation in organized approach to advocate for the failure of the petitions and influence how citizens think about the petitions is in violation of 1-212(c) of the code. 1-212(c) requires public officials to operate the Prairie Village Government in a manner that is independent, impartial, responsible to the people and in a manner that inspires confidence in the integrity of the government.

#### Inga Selders

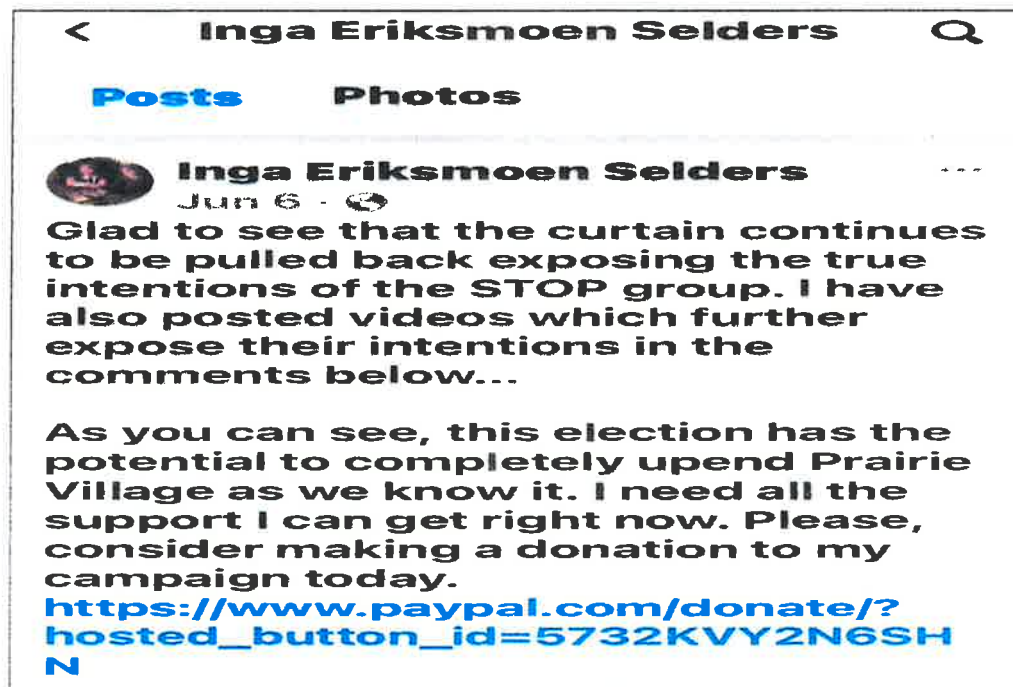
1. On Inga Selders personal Facebook page, Inga identifies herself as:
  - ✓ City Council Member at City of Prairie Village Government
  - ✓ Inga's personal Facebook page contains many posts about Prairie Village city government and politics. Accordingly, it is reasonable to conclude that Inga is guiding Prairie Village citizens to this page to learn about what is going on in Prairie Village.
  - ✓ Videotaped a PV business, ridiculed the building and the people who worked there, posted it on her Facebook page, and solicited money for her campaign, threatening that her videotape was to be continued

On this same Facebook page Inga posts articles with the following comments . . .

- ✓ (June 1 2023) Inga posts on her Facebook Page that candidates who recently filed to run for Prairie Village City Council are "right-wing extremists" See attached screenshot.



- ✓ (June 6, 2023) Inga posts on her Facebook Page that the recently filed petitions/initiatives has the potential to completely upend Prairie Village as we know it. Then proceeds to request campaign donations. See attached screenshot.



Inga knows, or should know, that the process to get the initiatives/petition to the voter sign-up phase was a lawful process led by citizens of Prairie Village, KS. Describing a lawful, civil processes by voters is wholly inconsistent with Eric's guidance at multiple City Council meetings that civil discussion and debate is a process of democracy that often yields the right outcome.

Regardless of whether Inga agrees with this proposal, Inga has violated the requirements of 1-212(c) by inserting her views that reflect the potential for personal gain (or stated in the inverse, the potential for a personal loss) and breached the duty to remain impartial so that all Prairie Village citizens would have confidence in the integrity of its government.

Inga's willful participation in organized approach to advocate for the failure of the petitions and influence how citizens think about the petitions is in violation of 1-212(c) of the code. 1-212(c) requires public officials to operate the Prairie Village Government in a manner that is independent, impartial, responsible to the people and in a manner that inspires confidence in the integrity of the government.

### Ian Graves

1. On Ian Graves FaceBook page "Re-Elect Ian Graves, Prairie Village Ward 6 City Council Ian posts the following  
*... "a radical group has decided that the residents here enjoy too much representation and are attempting to halve the size of the council via a confusing petition initiative. The best way to push back is at the ballot box: voting down any regressive ballot measure and voting for candidates that move PV forward.*



This is the clearest example yet of the organized approach by Eric, Cole, Inga and Ian to violate the independency provision of 1-212(c) and advocate for an outcome that benefits Ian.

### Likely Violation of Kansas Open Meetings Act

The timing of the social media posts, and similar public language from Eric, Cole, Inga and Ian (June 1 – June 6, 2023) strongly suggest that there was a violation of the Kansas Statute 75-4317 which requires that all meetings of entities subject to the Kansas Open Meeting Act be held in open session.

### Bonnie Limbird

1. Bonnie Limbird was a Board Member of United Community Services of Johnson County, Inc., or (“UCS”) when she accepted her appointment to the Prairie Village Ad Hoc Housing Committee. [In June 2022](#) Bonnie acting in the dual capacity of UCS Board Member and Ad-Hoc Housing Committee member Bonnie recommended the City Council direct Prairie Village staff to begin working on implementation of housing strategies that included the Johnson County Housing Toolkit and UCS Housing For All Toolkit. Effectively Bonnie recommends her own UCS work to the Ad Hoc Committee then to herself on the City Council. As we know the City Council approved this recommendation unanimously. Effectively Bonnie voted for her own work.

Mayer Mikkelsen announced the creation of an ad hoc Housing Committee in late summer of 2021. The Committee was tasked with making recommendations to the Governing Body on strategies to move the needle on preserving access to attainable housing in Prairie Village. The Committee used [Village Vision 2.0](#), the [Johnson County Housing Study](#) and the [Housing for All Toolkit](#) to inform and shape their recommendations specific to Prairie Village. In June 2022, the Committee presented its findings to the City Council. The committee was then disbanded. [Visit pykanssas.com/housingpolicy to learn more about the Committee's recommendations.](https://www.pykanssas.com/housingpolicy)

The Committee included the following voting members:

Ian Graves - Co-Chair - Councilmember  
Jon Birkel - Co-Chair - Planning Commissioner  
Ron Nelson - Councilmember  
Bonnie Limbird - Councilmember  
Todd Harris - Diversity Committee Representative  
Matt Gillant - Community Member  
Colin Groves - Community Member  
Mary Rinnann - Community Member

Staff Liaison (non-voting): Nickie Lee, Deputy City Administrator, [nlee@pykanssas.com](mailto:nlee@pykanssas.com)

[February 2023 Second Amended Housing Committee Recommendations](#)

[October 2022 Amended Housing Committee Recommendations](#)

[June 21st, 2022 Final Recommendations for City Council](#)

Much like Eric Mikkelsen, Bonnie’s personal interest in UCS’s agenda is “incompatible with” and “impairs” her independence of judgment or action in performance of her official duties as City Council member and constitutes misconduct in office. This conduct is in violation of 10201(c) of the Code.

### Ron Nelson

1. In general, it appears that Ron Nelson enjoys engaging in on-line behavior that could be described as testy, irritable, short and critical. . . especially to those who share different opinions than Ron . . . much of that behavior falls short of a Code of Ethics violation. I do note one significant example, on [Ron Nelson's Twitter Page](#) wherein he identifies himself as a Prairie Village City Council Person Ron tweets the following [“If you think America should elect con-artists, petty criminals, felons, and liars to public office, vote Republican.”](#)

Regardless of Ron's opinion, Ron violated the requirements of 1-212(c) by inserting his views on Republican political candidates. This behavior breached his duty to remain impartial so that all Prairie Village citizens would have confidence in the integrity of its government.



Ron Nelson @Ro... · 10/25/22

If you think America should elect con-artists, petty criminals, felons, and liars to public office, vote Republican.

### Conclusion

Given that Eric and several members of the City Council are alleged to have violated to Code of Ethics, I believe that Eric must be recused from reviewing this complaint pursuant to 1-212(e)(1) which prevents any city official or employee from the discharge of his duties that would tend to impair his independence or judgement or action in the performance of his official duties.

I believe that a finding that the aforementioned actions are in violation of the Code are worthy of the following disciplinary action:

- ✓ Public censure as allowed for in 1-212(j) for all.
- ✓ In order to prevent continued violations of the Code by Bonnie Limbird and Eric Mikkelson, they must recuse themselves from (i) any matter involving the current housing re-zoning matters currently under discussion by city officials and (ii) any public comments related to petitions lawfully filed by Prairie Village citizens.
- ✓ Ongoing violations of the Code by Cole, Inga, Ian and Ron (if it were to occur) that breach the impartiality standards should be considered for more severe disciplinary action as allowed for in the Code.
- ✓ In order to prevent Cole Robinson from ongoing Code violations Pursuant to 1-212(e)(4), Cole would likely need to resign from the City Council or his position with the Democratic Party in Johnson County.

913-5266367

Michael Sullinger

Wishfully

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