

File a Formal Complaint - Pam Carter

Pmcarter reported 19 days ago (Wed, 2 Aug at 11:44 PM) via Portal **Meta**

The website of Laura Ann Garris, a candidate for Tukwila City Council Position 7 contains several violations of PDC rules. The website can be found at www.electlauraann.org See the attached file for details.

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1 – Photo of officer in uniform and a city vehicle

Clicking on “Endorsements” on the ribbon at the top of the website takes one to a page with a large photo of the candidate standing with a Tukwila Police Officer next to a Tukwila Police car in front of the sally port at Tukwila City Hall.

<http://www.electlauraann.org/endorsements.htm> Although the officer is not identified by name, the Tukwila Police patch on his shoulder is very clear. He is in full uniform, including his weapon. The Tukwila Police vehicle is clearly marked with the number 175 and a facsimile of the Tukwila Police badge. The candidate and officer are standing in front of some of the marking, but it clearly shows “Tukwila” and then “lice.” It is reasonable to infer this is a Tukwila Police vehicle.

Additionally, the location of the photo at the top of the Endorsements page, with the large text below “Community Endorsements for Laura Ann Garris for Tukwila City Council” leave the impression that the Tukwila Police and/or the officer are endorsing the candidate.

On the Issues & Positions page at <http://www.electlauraann.org/issues-and-positions.htm> there is an additional photo of a Tukwila Police Officer shaking the candidate’s hand with the caption “Working together for a safer Tukwila” Once again, the officer is in uniform; Tukwila Police patch is clearly shown as is his weapon.

According to the PDC’s revised election campaign guidelines (PDC Interpretation 04-02) a City police officer is prohibited from wearing his City uniform (including but not limited to: firearms; badges; nametags; holsters; handcuffs; jackets; belts; vests; shoes; agency patches, logos, insignias, emblems; and radio) to assist a campaign. This photo does not make it clear that the Tukwila Police Dept. is not endorsing or supporting the candidate.

RCW 42.17A.555 clearly states that city vehicles may not be used to assist a campaign.

2 – Photos taken at City Hall, showing City Seal

Two webpages show photos clearly taken at Tukwila City Hall on City-owned property. On the page titled “About the Candidate” shows the candidate standing next to a large sign with the City Seal and the text “Tukwila City Hall 6200” See

<http://www.electlauraann.org/about-the-candidate.htm> The second photo was taken at a spot very near the first photo and clearly shows a sign with the text “Puget Sound Starts at Tukwila City Hall!” See <http://www.electlauraann.org/issues-and-positions.htm>

Both of these violate the prohibition against the use of public property to assist a campaign (RCW 42.17A.555).

3 – Defamation of a candidate

The Issues & Positions page <http://www.electlauraann.org/issues-and-positions.htm> contains defamatory language about her opponent. Under the heading “Ethics “ :

“In 2014, Tukwila Mayor Jim Haggerton signed an ordinance that created a local Ethics Board. However, even when confronted with evidence of ethical impropriety by a member of the Council, the board chose to ignore it. Since people have asked me for more information on this issue, I have attached the following link:

[Tukwila Ethics Board hides Forterra grant funding violations](#)

It's hard to have faith in local government when the integrity of its elected members appear compromised. Not only does this kind of behavior raise concerns about a candidate's qualifications for City Council, but it calls into question whether they're serving the public interest, or their own.

I think that using a City Council seat for personal gain is wrong, and it's one of the main reasons I decided to run. When a politician looks out for their own interests first, there is no way that they're working for you.”

Clicking on the hot link takes one to <https://www.wethegoverned.com/tukwila-ethics-board-hides-forterra-grant-funding-violations/> where the first sentence of the text is: “The City of Tukwila recently convened their Ethics Board to review an ethics complaint filed against Tukwila City Councilman De’Sean Quinn.”

The candidate’s only opponent for Position 7 is De’Sean Quinn. Although she does not mention him by name, it is clear she is commenting on Mr. Quinn. A quick click on the hot link confirms this as he is called out by name in the first sentence, and his photo is also shown. The candidate chooses to characterize Tukwila’s Ethics Board as ignoring evidence. In reality, the Board’s finding was, “The complaint filed by Mr. Morgan is deemed insufficient pursuant to TMC 2.97.050(C)(2)” and was signed by Ethics Board Chair Aaron Draganov.

<https://www.wethegoverned.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/LTR-Morgan-RE-Ethics-Complaint.pdf>

The PDC has already reviewed claims against Mr. Quinn. Nowhere in the PDC’s letter re claims 16801 and 17965 does it say anything that could be interpreted as Mr. Quinn using his Council seat for personal gain.

RCW 42.17A.335 clearly prohibits libel or defamation in political advertising or electioneering communication. The legislature has made it clear that defamatory statements which misinform voters interfere with our democratic process and lower the quality of campaign discourse and debate.

The hot link to “Tukwila Ethics Board hides Forterra grant funding violations” includes links to both the Tukwila Ethic Board finding and the PDC findings. The candidate has clearly chosen to maliciously defame her opponent when the facts were readily available to her.