

REBECCA DEAN PLLC

2212 QUEEN ANNE AVE. NORTH • # 158 • SEATTLE, WA • 98109
PHONE: (206) 465-3594 • EMAIL: rebeccadean@comcast.net

DATE: SEPTEMBER 3, 2024
TO: KELLY KONKRIGHT
FROM: REBECCA DEAN
RE: INVESTIGATION REPORT/COUNCILMEMBER JESSICA YAEGER COMPLAINT

I. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes my investigation into, and conclusions regarding, City of Spokane Valley (“the City”) Councilmember Jessica Yaeger’s June 11, 2024, complaint (as clarified on August 1, 2024) that Councilmember Albert Merkel has failed to comply with the City’s Governance Manual Section H, the Councilmember Social Media Policy (“the Policy”). Yaeger also asserts that Merkel has failed to comply with Ch. 40.14 RCW and Ch. 42.56 RCW. (Exh. 1.)

Specifically, Yaeger asserts that Merkel conducts City business on his personal Nextdoor account, which cannot be tracked on Page Freezer, the application the City uses to archive Councilmember social media posts and comments for public records retention.

I conclude that some of Merkel’s posts on his personal Nextdoor account are more likely than not public records; therefore, documents that are potentially public records are not correctly retained. I also conclude that (1) by refusing to search, segregate, and produce such posts at the City’s request; and by (2) submitting an affidavit that does not comply with his obligations under the Public Records Act, Merkel probably violated the Public Records Act and acted inconsistently with his duty as a Councilmember. I also conclude that Merkel’s personal Nextdoor posts that “relate to the conduct of city government” or “the performance of his office” violate the Policy.

II. DOCUMENTS

I reviewed screenshots from Merkel’s Nextdoor account that Yaeger provided for review (“the screenshots”). The screenshot file name indicates that the documents were captured between March 1, 2024, and July 18, 2024.¹ I also briefly reviewed a June 12, 2024, Spokane Spokesman Review article reporting on Yaeger’s complaint. In addition to the Governance Manual and my legal research, I reviewed the Association of Washington Cities “Guidelines for elected and appointed officials using social media” (December 19, 2017); the online Municipal Research and Services Center (“MRSC”) guidance for local governments on elected officials’ social media accounts and Public Records Act compliance; and, to a limited

¹ With some exceptions, the screenshots appear to have been captured within a few hours to a few days of the date field in the filename, although the precise date and time does not appear in the documents. I cannot, however, assess whether the screenshots have captured all Merkel’s postings, follower comments, or Merkel’s responses to follower comments during this time span. Moreover, many of the posts have been edited.

degree, the Washington State Archivist's Records Management Guidelines for Local Government Agencies of Washington State.

A. BACKGROUND

It appears based upon the screenshots that Merkel has regularly posted on Nextdoor about topics pertaining to the City and communicated with followers about City matters. The content of the screenshots is repetitive, and the topics fall into several categories: (1) Merkel's posted summaries of, and commentary about, City Council debates (including one public report about deliberations in executive session)² (*e.g.*, Exh. 2,³ Exh. 3); (2) Merkel's complaints about other Councilmembers, most often Mayor Pam Haley, Councilmember Rod Higgins, or Yaeger, their alleged "silencing" of Merkel in Council meetings, and other Councilmembers' alleged failure to engage with City residents (as compared with Merkel's assertions about his own level of engagement) (*e.g.*, Exh. 4 *passim*); (3) Merkel's complaints about, and commentary on, City investigations into Merkel's behavior and Merkel's formal complaint about Higgins's calling a point of order during a Council debate (*e.g.*, Exh. 4 p.6, Exh. 5); (4) Merkel's opinions about, positions on, and the merit of issues before the Council⁴ (*e.g.*, Exh. 2; Exh. 3 p.2-5; Exh. 4 p.2-9, 13-16; Exh. 5 p.7-14); (5) Merkel's promise to address some followers' questions about a specific City issue, sometimes accompanied by a request that the follower send an email to his City email address (*e.g.*, Exh. 6); and (6) Merkel's decision to run for Washington State Senate and serve simultaneously on the Council and in the Senate, and related campaign matters (*e.g.*, Exh. 3 p.5-7).

Merkel additionally: (1) surveyed Nextdoor followers about the Sprague Avenue development project; It is apparent from his posts that Merkel reported on his Sprague Avenue survey at a Council meeting or meetings (Exh. 7); (2) according to his posts, solicited follower comments about Merkel's budget proposal (Exh. 8); and (3) solicited follower comments about Merkel's proposal for addressing issues associated with persons experiencing homelessness (Exh. 9). It also appears that Merkel solicited follower comments about his budget proposal and plan for addressing issues associated with the homeless with the intent that the comments would inform his presentations to the Council.

Moreover, Merkel encourages his Nextdoor followers to attend Council meetings. He also encouraged, and, apparently, led, a public recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance five minutes before a Council Meeting as a protest of a Council decision not to recite the Pledge of Allegiance before study sessions. (*See, e.g.*, Exh. 4 p.3.)

² I note, however, that in more recent screenshots, one of Merkel's followers has been posting Council meeting summaries, apparently in lieu of Merkel's summaries.

³ Exhibit 2 is apparently a screenshot of Merkel's February 29, 2024 Nextdoor posting captured by Haley.

⁴ Common subjects of Merkel's postings and Merkel's responses to comments include, but are not limited to, (1) the Sprague Avenue construction project; (2) City police staffing and funding; (3) City policies and responses to persons experiencing homelessness; (4) the SCRAP program; (5) property development in the City and the Washington Growth Management Act; (6) the City's Governance Manual; and (7) City spending priorities, including Merkel's complaints about City staff salaries and assertions that the City intended to close its public pools.

B. ANALYSIS

1. Legal Context and Applicable Standards

Yaeger contends that Merkel has violated the Governance Manual Chapter 5, Council Conduct Standard and Enforcement. Chapter 5, §§ A, B, and C, read together, require Councilmembers to abide by the Council Conduct Standards, including the City's Councilmember Social Media Policy, which is attached as Appendix H to the Governance Manual, and "other applicable laws and/or regulations governing the conduct of Councilmembers in their capacity as elected officials."

As noted in the introduction, Yaeger alleges that Merkel has violated the City's Social Media Policy, and, as included in "other applicable laws and/or regulations," Ch. 40.14 RCW and Ch. 42.56 RCW.

As a preliminary matter, I note that Merkel has mistakenly asserted on Nextdoor that (1) the City has no authority to investigate alleged violations of the Public Records Act; and (2) Yaeger has no standing to make an email complaint under the Public Records Act (Exh. 10). My inference is that Merkel has confused (1) the City's power to enforce its Councilmember conduct standards (including violations of applicable statutes and regulations) and Yaeger's complaint, which is brought pursuant to the Governance Manual enforcement procedures; with (2) the statutory right of a person denied an opportunity to inspect or copy a public record to seek judicial review of the agency's action, RCW 42.56.550.

By way of context, the Public Records Act requires the City to make all "public records" available for public inspection and copying, unless the records fall within specific, enumerated exemptions. RCW 42.56.070(1). The Washington Supreme Court has held that a public official's posts on a personal social media platform can constitute "public records" subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act if the posts "relate to the conduct of government" and are "prepared within a public official's . . . official capacity." *West v. City of Puyallup*, 410 P.3d 1197 (2018) (City Council member's personal Facebook account posts were "merely informational" and were not public records because the Council member did not prepare them within the scope of her official capacity.)

City employees and elected officials have a duty to search their files, devices or accounts, and to obtain, segregate, and produce posts on personal devices and, by extension, social media accounts that constitute "public records." If the elected official claims that the information in personal accounts are not public records, then the official must submit a declaration or affidavit "stating facts sufficient to support that claim." *Puyallup; Nissen v. Pierce County*, 183 Wn.2d 863, 357 P.3d 45 (2015) (plaintiff alleged sufficient facts to show that County prosecutor's text messages on his personal phone were sent and received in the prosecutor's official capacity; therefore, prosecutor must obtain, segregate, and produce the records to the County). The affidavit or declaration must be made in good faith and contain reasonably detailed, nonconclusory facts that attest to the nature and extent of the official's search. *Nissen, citing Neighborhood Alliance of Spokane County v. County of Spokane*, 172 Wn.2d 7021, 261 P.3d 119 (2011).

Merkel has categorically, and incorrectly, claimed that the Public Records Act is not applicable to personal accounts, but only to official accounts for legislative bodies that are used to post items for the Council as a whole, or to documents that are customarily stored by government, such as emails. Merkel adds that, because he does not have legal power to speak for the Council as a whole, his postings cannot be public records. (*Id.* p. 6-9.) Merkel's assertions are inconsistent with the Court's decisions in *Puyallup* and *Nissen*.

Violations of the Public Records Act may subject local municipalities to liability. To guide municipalities like the City in fulfilling their legal obligations, organizations such as the MRSC and the Association of Washington Cities have published recommendations for cities and public officials to help them navigate the ambiguities and complexities of the Public Records Act applicability to officials' personal social media accounts. *See, e.g., "Social Media Policy Questions for Local Governments to Answer"* (April 12, 2023); *"Elected Officials Guide – What's Personal and What's Public?"* (Jan. 9, 2020) (mrsc.org)

According to such guidelines, adopting a policy governing officials' compliance is a critical step. Merkel claims that the City's sole purpose in adopting the Policy was to silence him (*e.g.*, Exh. 3 p.2; Exh. 11). In my assessment, however, the City's adoption of the Policy is a prudent step applicable to all Councilmembers designed to promote the City's adherence to Washington law.

Moreover, the Policy closely adheres to recommendations by authoritative entities, such as MRSC. In that regard, for example, the Policy (1) attempts to provide clear guidance for the use of City accounts and for keeping clear distinctions between City and personal accounts; (2) addresses open public meeting implications, such as the risk of serial communications between Councilmembers presented by posting on or liking other Councilmember accounts; and (3) addresses Public Records Act implications of personal social media accounts by prohibiting Councilmembers from writing posts on personal or campaign accounts that "relate to the conduct of city government or the performance of [the Councilmember's] office"; and "discussing personal accounts in public meetings or documents."

Additionally, the Policy directly addresses the risk to the City created by failure to retain posts that may be found to be public records. *See* RCW 40.14.060(1)(c) ("Official public records shall not be destroyed . . . unless the originals . . . have been copied or reproduced" using an approved, accurate, and durable process.) Because some social media platforms, such as Nextdoor, may edit comments and postings that do not meet platform guidelines, this is a substantial risk. In that regard, the Policy asks Councilmembers to create and maintain a Councilmember-specific social media account on an approved platform that can be associated with the City's archiving platform to ensure that all content is archived for public records retention.

2. Merkel's Social Media Posts & the Public Records Act

I conclude that some of Merkel's posts on his personal Nextdoor account are more likely than not public records. I also conclude that (1) by refusing to search, segregate, and produce such posts at the City's request; and (2) by submitting an affidavit that does not

comply with his obligations under the Public Records Act, Merkel probably violated the Public Records Act and acted inconsistently with his duty as a Councilmember.

a) Merkel's Posts

As the Court explained in *Puyallup*, a public record is a (1) writing, regardless of physical form or characteristics; (2) containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function; and (3) that is prepared, owned, used, or retained by the governmental agency.

Puyallup requires a close factual analysis to assess if the posts on personal social media accounts are “public records.” Applying the first two factors to Merkel's posts:

- Merkel's posts are “writings” within the meaning of the Public Records Act, which includes any means of recording any form of communication, including electronic means, and postings on social media accounts.
- Merkel's posts contain information “relating to the conduct of government” or the “performance of any governmental function.” Merkel's posts are rife with direct references to City actions, processes, and functions. These include, but are not limited to: proposals made to, and under consideration by the City Council; City Council deliberations and debates; the conduct of City Council meetings; the outcome of City Council meetings; the conduct and outcome of City investigations into Merkel's behavior; Merkel's formal complaint about Higgins's calls for points of order during Council meetings; the City budget; City staff salaries; the City's Governance Manual; and the process and conduct of City committee meetings.

Puyallup dictates that the City can be deemed to have “prepared” Merkel's social media posts if Merkel was acting within his official capacity as a City Council member. This assessment turns on whether (1) Merkel's position required the posts; the answer is “no”; (2) the City directed the posts; the answer is also “no”; or (3) the posts “furthered” the City's interests; here, the answer is complicated.

The case law does not provide a clear or easily applied answer. In *Puyallup*, the Court concluded that certain posts did not constitute conducting public business because the City Council member (1) posted about issues that did not require a City Council decision; and (2) consisted of general information about Council agendas, City activities, and City business, but did not contain specific details about the Councilperson's work as a City Councilmember, or regarding Council discussions, decisions, or other actions.

Likewise, in *West v. Clark County* (No. 52843-6-II, Wa.Ct.App. Jan. 20, 2021) (unpublished), the Washington Court of Appeals held that a Councilmember's statements (that the court analogized to a “megaphone”) on social media of personal opinions on various issues regarding Clark County's governance, and solicitations of discussion and commentary from followers, did not constitute conducting public business because the posts did not contain specific details of the Clark County Council's discussions, decisions, or other actions.

The inference that I draw from these cases, therefore, is that a Councilmember may be acting within the scope of their official capacity and their posts therefore deemed to be public records if their social media posts *do* contain specific details of the Councilmember's work, or provide information about Council discussions, decisions, and actions. This is a logical inference because communicating with constituents about City business and specific Council action is an essential Councilmember function, as is gathering feedback and ideas from residents and businesses, and sharing such information with staff, Councilmembers, or at Council meetings. *See Governance Manual* pp. 5-6.

Merkel's social media posts are exponentially more expansive and inclusive than the *Puyallup* Councilmember's Facebook posts. In contrast, many of Merkel's posts, like those of the *Clark County* Councilmember, can be characterized as a "megaphone" broadcasting Merkel's opinions about City issues. I note, moreover, that many of Merkel's posts combine opinions with specific details of, and information about, City Council discussions, debates, decisions, and actions, and it is not possible to disentangle them.

Nevertheless, applying the case law to the posts I reviewed, I conclude that the following categories of Merkel's posts are more likely than not public records:

- Merkel's posted summaries of, and commentary about, City Council debates (including one public report about deliberations in executive session) (*e.g.*, Exhs. 2, 3, 4).
- Merkel's complaints about other Councilmembers, most often Haley, Higgins, or Yaeger; their alleged "silencing" of Merkel in Council meetings; and other Councilmembers' alleged failure to engage with City residents (as compared with Merkel's assertions about his own level of engagement) (*e.g.*, Exh. 4 *passim*).
- Merkel's complaints about, and commentary on, City investigations into Merkel's behavior and Merkel's formal complaint about Higgins's calling a point of order during a Council debate (*e.g.*, Exh. 4 p.6, Exh. 5).
- Merkel's posts about the City budget and proposals he has, or intends to, present to Council, such as his proposal to address homelessness and police funding (*e.g.*, Exhs. 8, 9).
- Merkel's promises to address followers' questions about a specific City issue (*e.g.*, Exh. 6).
- Merkel's surveys of followers where Merkel either has, or apparently intends to, carry the survey results and associated comments into Council meetings and debates (*e.g.*, Exh. 7).

The following categories are, more likely than not, not public records:

- Merkel's opinions about, and positions on, issues before the Council and the City, where not combined with specific details of, and information about, City Council discussions, debates, decisions, and actions (*e.g.*, Exh. 12).

- Merkel's decision to run for Washington State Senate and intent to serve simultaneously on the Council and in the Senate, and any other campaign matters (*e.g.*, Exh. 3 p.5-7).
- Merkel's posts encouraging follower attendance at Council meetings or citizen participation in the political process, (*e.g.*, Exh. 13) including Merkel's opinions about recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance or prayer in Council meetings.

b) Merkel's Compliance with *Nissen*

As I understand it, Merkel has refused City's request(s) for access to his Nextdoor account to search for and retrieve posts that may be responsive to public records requests. Additionally, Merkel has submitted (and posted) at least one affidavit that purports to satisfy his obligation under *Nissen*. The City's standard language on the posted affidavit states: "I have personally reviewed all content on all of my personal Nextdoor social media accounts to determine if I had any responsive posts and/or messages between me and others regarding city and/or council business⁵ from January 1, 2024, through March 21, 2024." Merkel crossed out the words, "regarding city and/or council business" and interlineated the words "that are Public Records" and dated and initialed the interlineation. (Exh. 14.)

Merkel's refusal to segregate and provide social media posts constituting public records (or providing access to the City so the City can retrieve the posts) violates his obligation under the Public Records Act, and therefore violates the Governance Manual's Council Conduct Standards. Additionally, Merkel's affidavit does not comply with *Nissen*'s requirement that Merkel provide a reasonably detailed, nonconclusory affidavit stating facts sufficient to support his claim that his Nextdoor posts are not public records. Instead, he offers a conclusory legal opinion rather than the required facts, which is inconsistent with his duty as a Councilmember.

3. Merkel's Compliance with the City's Councilmember Social Media Policy

I conclude that Merkel's personal Nextdoor posts violate the Policy. Specifically, many of Merkel's posts "relate to the conduct of city government" and "the performance of his office." Merkel has also used his personal Nextdoor account to conduct city business; for example, by offering to assist followers with City matters, such as contacting the prosecutor's office to follow up on a concern about a crime. Additionally, Merkel has discussed his personal accounts in public meetings; for example, Merkel's Nextdoor survey of followers about the Sprague Avenue project.⁶

⁵ The City's standard language adheres to the Court's analysis in *Phyllup*.

⁶ I note that it appears from Merkel's complaints to his followers (*e.g.*, Exh. 10 p.9) that Haley and Yaeger posted on Merkel's personal Nextdoor account (*e.g.*, Exh. 15) and engaged with discussion with him there. Merkel claims such posts violate the Policy. The Policy does ask Councilmembers not to discuss City business on *official accounts*. The Policy does not, however, similarly prohibit Councilmembers from posting on another Councilmember's personal social media accounts. Nevertheless, in my assessment, some of Yaeger and Haley's posts apparently concern the conduct of City business. At minimum, engaging with Merkel on these subjects on social media was unwise.

Additionally, because Nextdoor has edited many of Merkel's and his followers' Nextdoor posts, including posts that related to the conduct of City government, Merkel has put the City at risk of claims that it violated RCW 40.14.060(1)(c) by failing to retain documents that may well be public records.

Merkel has refused to take advantage of the Policy's provision for Official Councilmember-Specific Social Media Accounts. Nevertheless, contrary to Merkel's assertions, neither the Policy nor the City's general Social Media Policy, §4, *Administrative Policy & Procedure 300.020 Communications Policy* (which the Policy incorporates by reference) regulates the content of an Official Councilmember-Specific Social Media Account in any objectionable way. In my review of the screenshots of Merkel's personal account, the only (visible) content that potentially violates the City's general prohibitions of inappropriate content are (1) personal insults lobbed by Merkel and some of his followers, including both pro- and anti-Merkel comments; and (2) Merkel's posts about political campaigns. Because political campaigns properly belong on personal social media accounts, it is difficult to see how Merkel would be harmed by establishing an official account.

Additionally, establishing an official account would resolve the difficulties presented by Merkel's posts that pertain to the conduct of City business or the performance of his office, and are arguably public records, and deletions of some posts or comments that the City may be required to retain.

RD

Exhibits

Exhibit 1

From: Jessica Yaeger <jyaeger@spokanevalleywa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 2:19 PM
To: John Hohman <jhohman@spokanevalleywa.gov>; Erik Lamb <elamb@spokanevalleywa.gov>; Kelly Konkright <kKonkright@spokanevalleywa.gov>
Subject: Re: Nextdoor.

Hello again gentlemen,

Just so that I am crystal clear as to my intentions and expectations regarding my formal complaint against Mr. Merkel, I am referencing RCW 40.14 and RCW 42.56 with relation to the public records.

Thank you.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Jessica Yaeger
Sent: Tuesday, June 11, 2024 3:01:53 PM
To: John Hohman <jhohman@spokanevalleywa.gov>; Erik Lamb <elamb@spokanevalleywa.gov>; Kelly Konkright <kKonkright@spokanevalleywa.gov>
Subject: Nextdoor.

On December 19th, 2023 Council adopted the Governance Manual. This is the manual that Council Member Merkel and I took our oath under. The oath that states, "I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and of the state of Washington, the applicable laws of the United States and of the State of Washington and all other duly enacted laws, rules and policies of the City of Spokane Valley".

To date, Council Member Merkel has yet to comply with Appendix H of the Governance Manual regarding his Nextdoor account. He does not have a city council account for city business that can be tracked with Page Freezer, so he conducts city business on his personal account. He references the poles and comments here on the Dias, he brings to this body what he learns from that account to continue to conduct city business here.

One of the goals of this policy is to ensure compliance with the OMPA, and to ensure TRANSPARENCY in our government. Mr. Merkel even has a private group that you have to ask to join and who knows how much goes on behind the scenes or in any direct messaging.

I have over 350 screenshots of Council member Merkel conducting business on his account, some posts were there at one time, and now gone. Some people have informed me that they have commented only to be deleted and blocked from doing so. Council member Merkel touts transparency, and yet when given the chance to BE transparent and

uphold his oath, he is neither transparent nor upholding his oath to this office and seeks to abscond from his responsibility.

It is our duty to ensure that ALL citizens have access to his account where he conducts business so that the city remains compliant with the regulations put upon us and to ensure that not just a special group of people have access to his shenanigans.

It is my fear that Council member Merkel will also use his site should he ever actually get into compliance, to campaign for either of his already registered upcoming campaigns. I fear this as his continued behavior indicate a lack of respect for adherence to rules, policies and procedures.

It is my opinion in an effort to protect the city from litigation, that the city manager accept this as my formal complaint, so that he may move forward as our Governance Manual suggests, the citizens and the sanctity of the City of Spokane Valley depend on following policy and adherence to rules by all members.

Thank you.

 Pam Haley Mayo...

Thursday, February 29

7:20

 **Albert Merkel** 

self-dedicated to such projects when they could be more effectively used in bolstering our police force.

The discussion on the Storm Drain Cleaning Services Contract was concerning. I raised questions about the monitoring and evaluation measures within the contract, only to be met with vague responses and an unexpected accusation of grandstanding, which halted further discussion. This lack of clarity and transparency is precisely why I voted against this item. All city contracts should have clear, measurable monitoring and evaluation criteria, regardless of the duration of the relationship with the contractor.

Furthermore, I urged the council to prioritize the Scraps contract review, the cancellation of the Sprague lane reduction project, and to include a regular comment section for Police Chief Ellis in council meetings. Unfortunately, these requests were not supported.

In the executive session, the council moved to purchase property for low-income housing, funded by a Covid grant. However, the meeting took an unexpected turn with a last-minute resolution concerning border issues and opioid law enforcement, which was not on the agenda. This lack of procedural transparency is a step back for the council.

As your City Councilman, I am committed to ensuring transparency, effective planning, and public safety in our city governance. It is disheartening to witness the council's regression on these fronts and the resistance to constructive discourse. Rest assured, I will continue to ask the hard questions and hold the council accountable, as our community deserves a government that operates with clarity and in the public's best interest.

Best Regards,
Al Merkel
[5093156416](tel:5093156416)



Home



Discover



Post

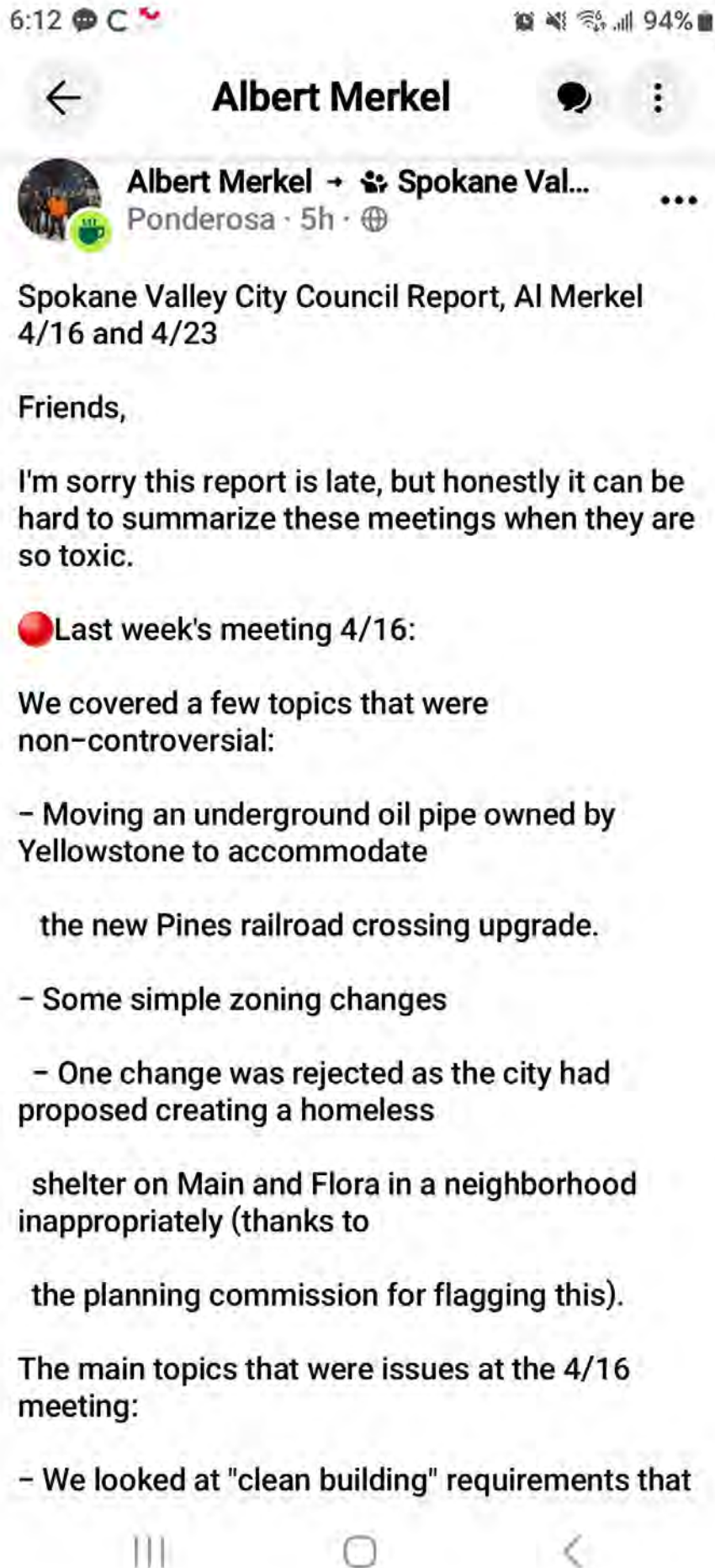


For Sale



Notifications







Albert Merkel



The main topics that were issues at the 4/16 meeting:

- We looked at "clean building" requirements that the state is imposing on all buildings in excess of 50k square feet. The city has known about these requirements since 2019 but up until this point has still not budgeted for fixing them. It's a strange lack of planning. I brought up that many businesses in our area would also be subject to this rule and asked for a presentation from commerce on how to comply so we can help educate local businesses.

-Next, we discussed the Governance manual. As I have mentioned here before when I addressed the first time these changes came up, the governance manual changes are mostly all directed directly at me. This was clear in what actually happened at the meeting.

Upon review, I saw that one of the main changes that we directly received consensus on at the first governance manual meeting was reflected incorrectly in the updated manual. Under a section, we had agreed to place the specific language "per Roberts Rules" in the manual. In fact, staff had instead included the language that "there would be an appeal right". This is very different. I asked about this change and immediately everyone on council and the city manager told me I was wrong in my recollection, and in fact, staff had "watched the video". CM Rod Higgins then called a point of order saying "argumentative" and our role was simply to vote to either pass the whole manual or not, and my





Albert Merkel



👤 I guess I would like to ask your thoughts on this, should I be able to ask questions?👤

-I proposed increasing penalties on drug charges in Spokane Valley. It was clear that city staff was against doing this, but given the requests of our police officers to give them tools to fight this epidemic, I pushed forward. For once the council actually agreed with me, voting to pursue increasing the penalties within the city. Great news for public safety!

-We covered that Spokane Valley Police is fully accredited with WASPC and is currently upgrading helicopters to meet current and future needs.

-We also covered the great programs the city is conducting in the parks this summer.

-The city covered its contracting process, which I found full of cost-wasting steps when compared to other government contracting processes, and the city presented on the park janitorial contract that actually has finally included a lot of the performance monitoring measures I have been asking for.

-We also covered garbage services in the city, during which I mentioned the many complaints that I have received about WM missing pickups and nickel and diming people on open lids.

-During the advance agenda, CM Yaeger proposed adding language to our federal lobbying agenda to stop "foreign entities" from buying





Albert Merkel



-During the advance agenda, CM Yaeger proposed adding language to our federal lobbying agenda to stop "foreign entities" from buying homes in Spokane Valley (I voted against this, as I don't think using our tax money to lobby for this is an effective use of funds).

Public comment was interesting, Mr. Mike Dolan brought up that we don't do the pledge of allegiance before every meeting. I hadn't even realized this, and of course, brought this up in the advance agenda. I was surprisingly voted down!

See More Here:

https://nextdoor.com/news_feed/?post=332154575&comment=1138408582

-After this, we looked at a letter of support for the Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium. I brought up the same point I have brought up from the beginning about these letters. We need a process to make sure they are in keeping with city values and objectives, never was that clearer than last night. I asked what SLIHC was going to do with the money and the staff member replied they hadn't seen the scope. Why are we supporting something we haven't even seen the scope for? What if they use the money for something that will bring ridicule to our city? I was the only council member to vote against this.

I finally made a speech calling out how ridiculous these points of order have gotten and how they have undermined my ability to represent all of you in matters of serious financial transparency. This



**Albert Merkel**

I finally made a speech calling out how ridiculous these points of order have gotten and how they have undermined my ability to represent all of you in matters of serious financial transparency. This council has become a mockery of government almost as bad as the stories you hear about third-world countries. It's sad we have come to this.

I also called out that despite what DM Hattenburg had reported, Casa De Oro Mexican restaurant had not been informed that STA plans to purchase the land their restaurant is on from under them, demolish their family-owned restaurant, and replace it with another empty bus stop parking lot. Who is representing Spokane Valley Businesses against Big Government? Clearly not our elected leaders who sit on the board of STA.

I will stand up for Spokane Valley Businesses, as I did for residents who were against Sprague, and people who wanted more public safety.

As we've journeyed together through the challenges and triumphs of Spokane Valley, your unwavering support has been my driving force. Today, I'm asking you to channel that same passion and commitment into helping me bring our shared values and determined spirit to the Senate. Our community deserves a voice that not only speaks but acts with conviction. Someone who will stand firm against bureaucracy, support sensible governance, and fiercely advocate for the prosperity and safety of our homes and businesses.



**Albert Merkel**

As we've journeyed together through the challenges and triumphs of Spokane Valley, your unwavering support has been my driving force. Today, I'm asking you to channel that same passion and commitment into helping me bring our shared values and determined spirit to the Senate. Our community deserves a voice that not only speaks but acts with conviction. Someone who will stand firm against bureaucracy, support sensible governance, and fiercely advocate for the prosperity and safety of our homes and businesses.

<https://nextdoor.com/p/y7JPPZDYrML6?view=detail>

This campaign is about more than one person; it's about all of us. It's about ensuring Spokane Valley is represented by someone who understands the issues on the ground, who listens to your concerns, and who will fight tirelessly to uphold our values. Together, we can protect what makes our community great and ensure a bright future for every resident of the 4th District.

Please Donate at www.alforval.com

Your donation today is not just a contribution; it's an investment in your community, in your values, and in a Senate that works for you. Let's stand united for Spokane Valley and make our voices heard loud and clear in Olympia. Join me, donate to our campaign, and together, let's lead the change we wish to see.

Thanks All!



6:14

94%

**Albert Merkel**

Please Donate at www.aliorval.com

Your donation today is not just a contribution; it's an investment in your community, in your values, and in a Senate that works for you. Let's stand united for Spokane Valley and make our voices heard loud and clear in Olympia. Join me, donate to our campaign, and together, let's lead the change we wish to see.

Thanks All!

Al Merkel

Spokane Valley City Council and Candidate for Washington State Senate

Disclaimer: Nothing in this post is meant to reflect the opinion of the city or the city council as a whole.



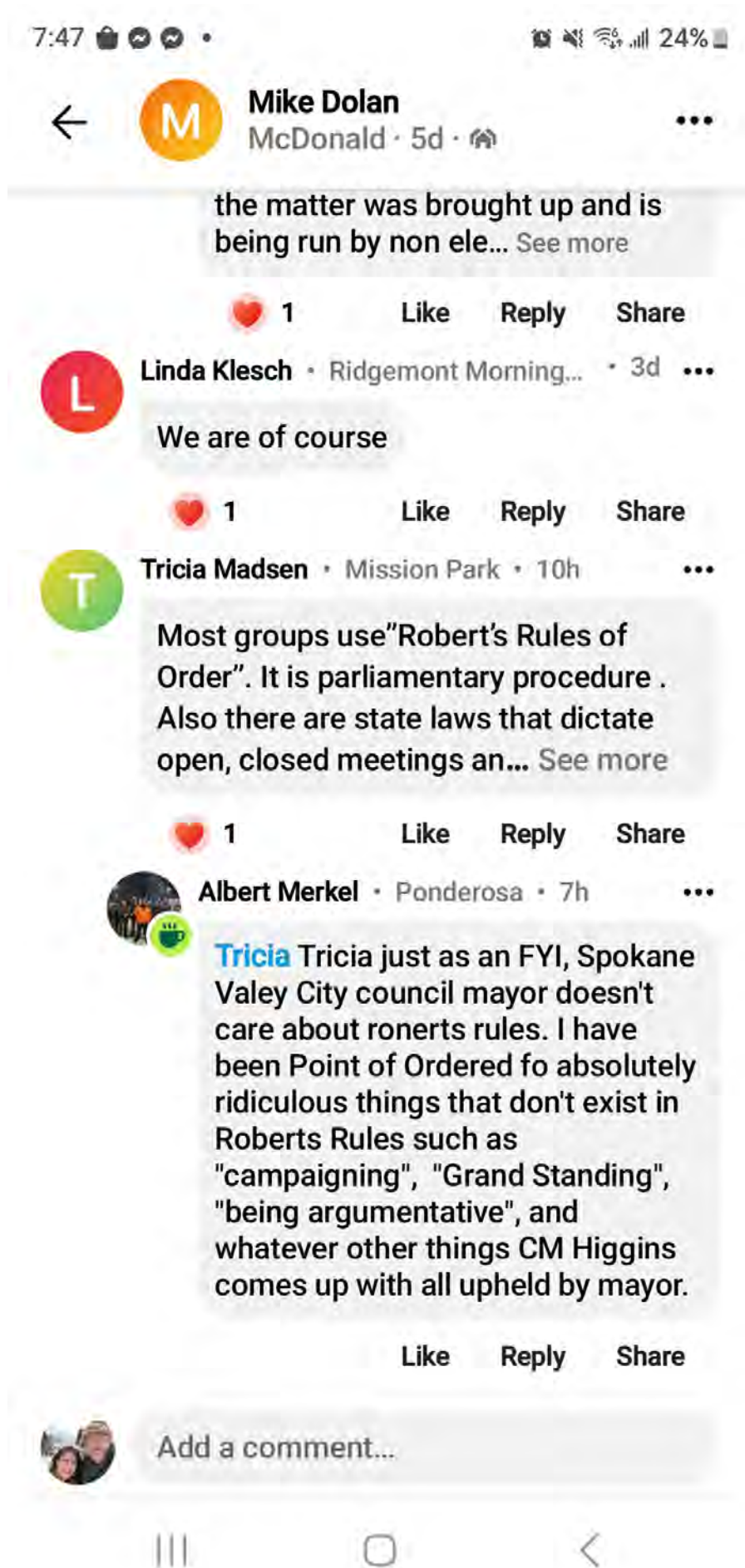
Join Nextdoor, an app for neighborhoods where you can get local tips, buy and sell...
Nextdoor is the neighborhood hub for tr...

Be the first to react



Share





3:53

66%



Albert Merkel



Albert Merkel

Ponderosa · 17h · 🌐



!! PONDEROSA!! ROD HIGGINS ACCUSED ME OF
TAKING A BRIBE FROM "[YOU] PEOPLE" !?

SPOKANE VALLEY City council report April 30,
2024

BOTTOM LINE: I asked that council look into
pausing development in ponderosa until a 3rd exit
is created, Councilman Higgins accused me of
taking a bribe from "those people" because I
advocated for this.

So there you have it, if I try to introduce things
that matter to Spokane Valley I must be taking
bribes... for the record I did not receive any
money or even campaign donations from any
organization in Ponderosa to advocate for this,
it's just the right thing to do for community safety.

Of course Rod Higgins and Pam Haley who are
both board members of Project ID in fact did take
donations while voting to fund Project ID with
your tax dollars, so there's that...

<https://laserfiche.spokanevalley.org/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=469621&dbid=0&repo=SpokaneValley>

<https://projectidspokane.org/our-story/board-of-directors/>

tonight's meeting was a bit ridiculous. it has



**Albert Merkel**

tonight's meeting was a bit ridiculous. it has gotten to the point that the majority doesn't want to hear anything from Spokane Valley residents anymore, even insulting regular residents directly from the dais.

CM Higgins literally said that commenters are wasting his time!!

the point of orders have also gotten out of control. I can barely ask a question without getting point of ordered by CM Higgins. the point of orders usually are some accusations of "campaigning". The only "campaign" I am on during council meetings is the campaign to represent what this community wants!!!

during the meeting, we did the pledge of allegiance as protest. the Council Members (except Padden) did not even stand or stop speaking in respect of the community who were doing the pledge. Thanks to those who

came to support this!

CM Padden then made a bizarre speech saying that maybe there are reasons why council members don't want to do the pledge. I say the public has a right to know what those reasons are, and we have a right to vote us out if they don't like those reasons... (honestly I can't think of any good reasons for electeds to not do the pledge).

Public comments: Comments were made about Sprague Road Diet being a waste, not liking setting the standard for council member





Albert Merkel



Public comments: Comments were made about Sprague Road Diet being a waste, not liking setting the standard for council member violations to be criminal so that they could be easier to be found guilty, and the pledge of allegiance. as I said above, CM Higgins attacked a commenter from the dais.

New Action Items:

-Council approved moving forward with contract for cross country course. we will see this back when the contract is final.

-Council approved moving forward with Balfour Park grants. I was point of ordered for asking staff how much it costs in staff time to apply.

-Council approved bowdish contract. I asked that past performance be a criteria for selecting contractors

-joined with opioid settlement agreement even though we are getting far to little funding for our population. I will be advocating about this at the state level.

-Non Action Items:

-we spoke about the public defender case load and new changes that the state is advocating for. I asked for information showing performance of PDs office now.

-We spoke about another marketing contract for the tourism promotion board while I support the



3:54  66% **Albert Merkel**

-We spoke about another marketing contract for the tourism promotion board. while I support the hoteliers deciding how to use this money, I asked the we have tighter control on performance measuring to make sure this money is actually useful.

Advance Agenda. as I brought up above, I asked that we consider pausing development in ponderosa until a third exit could be made.

I tried to speak during my council comment about how out of hand this council has gotten but the mayor cut me off and ended the meeting.



This is all very sad. there is no respect for our city anymore coming from this council.

please let me know what you would like to be done about it.

Al Merkel
Spokane Valley City Council

disclaimer: clearly nothing here represents the position of the city or the council, who in my opinion clearly doesn't have anyone's interests in mind in this city anymore. 🤔

**Sign In**

9:25 ^

97%



Albert Merkel



Albert Merkel → Spokane Val...

Ponderosa · 10h ·



Press Conference Tomorrow on Investigation into
Al Merkel

****2 PM In Front of Spokane Valley City Hall****

&

Yesterday's Meeting

Hi folks I know many of you are interested in the
results of this "investigation" against me.

Tomorrow I will be holding a press conference at
2PM and taking questions from press and public
on the issue. If you are interested and want to ask
about it or here the news first hand, feel free to
come by!

Last Night's Meeting:

THEY IGNORED ALL COMMON SENSE AND
PASSED THE SPRAGUE PROJECT 🙄🙄🙄

Through my questions I disproved every aspect
of the project:

1. will the project lower speeds? no, in fact it will
lead to more speeding

2. will the crosswalk be safe? no it is more





Albert Merkel



Through my questions I disproved every aspect of the project:

1. will the project lower speeds? no, in fact it will lead to more speeding
2. will the crosswalk be safe? no it is more dangerous than not having a crosswalk at all and obviously much more expensive to try to mitigate this
3. will this help the aquifer? NO THE CITY HAS NO DATA AT ALL THAT IT WILL
4. are there regulations that mandate this? NO!!! in fact any such regulations won't be passed until July of this year, which means that we have been paying taxes for regulations that don't exist for 3 YEARS!!

In other words, there are just no reasons to do this, and 70% of the valley is against it so at least 70,000 reasons not to do it.

as usual CM Higgins interrupted me and raised a false point of order during my dissent speech against this project. he said I was "Campaigning" and as usual my opponent, the "about service" Mayor Haley ruled against me.

This time I had a small surprise, I used the wasteful procedure they put in the governance



**Albert Merkel**

This time I had a small surprise, I used the wasteful procedure they put in the governance manual against them and filed an official complaint for denying my right to speak dissent against a motion as described in the governance manual, so we will see how they like being investigated. Of course they actually did what I accused them of and it was recorded on camera during the meeting and witnessed by lots of Spokane Valley residents.

This was also a 'study session' which means no pledge, so as usual I led the chamber in the pledge of allegiance before the meeting. this time some members of the public shamed all the present council members into standing for the pledge.

CM Padden brought up trimming the trees for the businesses on Sprague, which was a bit funny because she just voted against it 2 weeks ago when I motioned for it on the advance agenda.

she did join me in voting against going for a grant that would cost us 500,000 when we still haven't funded police officers. You can tell that Servant Mayor Haley is thinking about her campaign because she also joined me on stopping this project. Raise a cup for surprises!

the rest was some slamm planning actions and reports for those interested in budgets take a



9:26     97% **Albert Merkel**

she did join me in voting against going for a grant that would cost us 500,000 when we still haven't funded police officers. You can tell that Servant Mayor Haley is thinking about her campaign because she also joined me on stopping this project. Raise a cup for surprises!

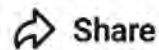
the rest was some slamm planning actions and reports. for those interested in budgets take a look at the budget amendment adding 9 million to this year's budget 🙄.

Thanks everyone, sorry I couldn't get Sprague stopped and more of your tax money went into a hole. I hope everyone remembers these 'Servants' who "Care about local input" during elections.

thanks everyone,

Al Merkel

Disclaimer: nothing in this post represents the incomprehensible views of the city or the council as a whole.

**Albert Merkel**Ponderosa · Edited 4d ago · **LAST CHANCE TO STOP SPRAGUE ROAD**

9:27

97%



Albert Merkel → Spok...

Ponderosa · 10h ·



Albert Merkel Author · Ponderosa · 10h



Oh forgot to mention, CM Higgins and Haley made statements about project ID, and it was actually worse than I originally posted:

They recognized the conflict of interest at the meeting in 2021, so they "resigned" from the board to give them the money, then got back on the board after the award was made....

hmmm so if there's ever a conflict we just say I resign today, but tomorrow is a different thing.... 🤔

if that sounds fishy to you it sounds fishy to me.

they did say that it's all ok because project ID never used the money... well I don't know if that is the case but even so, that means that those funds could have been used by another NGO to do some good community work but instead were trapped because of strange political machinations of the 'servants'.... I don't think that's better.

Keep in mind that I don't know anything



9:27

97%



Albert Merkel → Spok...

Ponderosa · 10h ·

projectID never used the money... well I don't know if that is the case but even so, that means that those funds could have been used by another NGO to do some good community work but instead were trapped because of strange political machinations of the 'servants'.... I don't think that's better.

Keep in mind that I don't know anything about projectID they could do good work but they dont seem to be making good choices in who they are associating with in my opinion... (edited)

+1 😊 2

Like Share



Anna B. · Progress and Adams · 7h ·

Albert Sounds like another productive evening down at city hall. I hope someone takes video of the press conference & posts it for those of us that can't attend. This "projectid" makes me a little nervous, going to have to look into that one.

❤️ 1

Like Share



Midge Stumm · Evergreen - A... · 1h ·

Televised?

Like Share



7:27  

   26% 



Albert Merkel



Albert Merkel

Ponderosa · 2d · 



Celebrating Our Heroes: First Responders
and
Casa de Oro potentially saved?

Weekly Report Al Merkel, May 13-17

Spokane Valley Neighbors,

I'd like to start by thanking all of our first responders. This week the Spokane Valley Chamber held an event to present Public Safety Awards to first responders from the Valley area. It was a great event, where we also discussed the scourge of Fentanyl in our community. While all first responders are amazing I would like to recognize the special acts of heroism from the awardees from the fourth:

Spokane Valley Police:
Pat Bloomer

Spokane County Sheriff (and pictures here):
Robert Satake

Liberty Lake Police:
John Bujosa

Spokane Valley Fire:
Shawn Pichette

Spokane County Fire District 8:
Blaine Holman



7:27      26% **Albert Merkel**

Spokane County Fire District 8:
Blaine Holman

As a community it is important to show appreciation for these service workers who risk their lives to keep us safe.

For all of the parents in the community, I would like to ask that you take a few minutes to recognize the work of first responders with your kids this week.

Council meeting:

First some potential good news, Casa de Oro may be saved! Since I brought the issue of STA ruthlessly planning to demolish a 30 year old family owned business, I have been working to ensure that we reverse that decision... it looks like that work MAY have paid off.

At the meeting, Deputy Mayor Tim Hattenburg (and STA Board member) stated a commitment that he will instruct STA staff to redesign the rapid transit bus stop to accommodate Casa de Oro and let them stay in business. After speaking to the business owner, we decided to present a letter to the STA board thanking them for listening to public input and saving a local business (letter included above), which I did in public comments at the board meeting on Thursday.

I would like to thank Deputy Mayor Hattenburg for listening to me and his other constituents about not destroying a local icon to create an empty



**Albert Merkel**

I would like to thank Deputy Mayor Hattenburg for listening to me and his other constituents about not destroying a local icon to create an empty parking lot!

All that being said, nothing is settled until the ink dries on a new plan, so we need to carefully watch this issue to make sure that Deputy Hattenburg lives up to his commitment.

As for the rest of the meeting:

1. I voted to support the submission of a grant application that staff stated would not have a local match. I will not be supporting new local expenses until funding is secured for police.

2. we had an overview of the legislative session results. not much good happened.

3. we spoke about the annual Transportation Plan update. This is the process where we plan transport needs for the next 6 years. Please check out the process here:

https://spokanevalley.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1391&meta_id=89516

4. We had a budget overview presentation.

5. Advance Agenda:

I proposed that we invite a company that provides opiate transport for a discussion with council. which was approved.

-Councilmember Yeager proposed looking at sign ordinances. It was approved. I voted yes.



7:28     25% 

Albert Merkel



-Councilmember Yeager proposed looking at sign ordinances. It was approved. I voted yes because it never hurts to hear presentations about things, and if she wants to hear one it's fine with me.

- I proposed inviting an opiate transportation company to give us a presentation on what it would cost for Spokane Valley to run nonemergent transport for opiate cases. This is one of three proposals I believe would be effective uses for our opiate funds. the idea is that if someone calls 911 for an intoxication related issue (you see someone passed out intoxicated on the sidewalk for instance) currently either a police officer or an ambulance/ fire team would be sent. this is expensive and wasteful as legally the ambulances can only take you to an emergency department for treatment, police officer would just be tied up until the situation is resolved. this transport concept would fund a specialized team to take that person to treatment/detox skipping an expensive ER visit. This concept is already operating successfully within the city of Spokane and produces a lot of savings for the whole health system.

Mayor Haley actually said shouldn't we decide what to do with the money before asking the companies to come and present on what to do with the money 🤔. NO we should hear the presentations then, decide, then have an open RFP.

anyway we got consensus for this report



7:28

25%



Albert Merkel



anyway we got consensus for this report.

-CM Wick asked to reconsider the proposal for a grant on extending the apple way trail that we voted down last week. I voted it down last week because of the local cost, as I said above I won't vote for funding anything with a local match until we have police funded. However, I voted yes to reconsideration because it is what CM Wick wanted, and CM Yaeger skipped that meeting so it doesn't hurt to reconsider. I will vote against it again when it comes up.

during council comments, I reiterated my comments from the press conference last week.

I voted against going to executive session as it was not on the agenda and I am trying to stick with only things on the agenda unless we do a motion to modify in the beginning because it's the most transparent way to do meetings, but the rest voted to do it so we did.

this another week ended,

Thanks again everyone,

Al Merkel

disclaimer: nothing in this post is designed to reflect the city's or council as a whole's position.



**Albert Merkel**

This situation emerged this Tuesday. I received an email from the City Manager requesting a meeting to discuss "complaints" received by the city and to inform me about an impending investigation by a neutral outside investigator. I agreed to this meeting, emphasizing my concern for a safe working environment and requesting detailed information about the complaints, as well as the relevant policies.

However, just before the meeting, the City Manager emailed me, refusing to provide specifics and suggesting I limit my presence at City Hall to Tuesday evenings for Council meetings. This abrupt change in stance, coupled with his refusal to involve me in selecting the neutral investigator, raises serious concerns about the fairness and impartiality of this process. I thought that there might be a confidentiality issue at this point so I didn't raise it to you all (the public), though I was puzzled that the city manager had already informed the other council members as confirmed by CM Ben Wick.

The following day, the City Manager wrongly assumed that I had agreed to his terms of not visiting City Hall. I immediately clarified that there was no such agreement and requested details on the authority and rationale behind this directive, as well as alternative arrangements for me to continue serving our community effectively.

Yesterday, the City Manager threatened to escalate this matter to the City Council if I didn't comply with his demands. It was clear at this point that there was no confidentiality issue



**Albert Merkel**

Yesterday, the City Manager threatened to escalate this matter to the City Council if I didn't comply with his demands. It was clear at this point that there was no confidentiality issue involved here, as the Manager was ready to release the information to the public (as a threat!). It's clear to me that this is an attempt to silence me and, by extension, disenfranchise you, the citizens of our city. I refuse to be intimidated and have therefore decided to make this issue public.

I want to highlight that, as of now, I have no information about these allegations (not names, or behaviors, or dates). Moreover, according to the City's harassment policy, I should have been informed directly by any staff member had there been any inappropriate behavior on my part. This has not happened. Additionally, attempts are being made to conflate this situation with a lawsuit against a company I was previously associated with, a matter entirely unrelated to my role in the city council.

My commitment to challenging and improving our city's operations – addressing public safety, development planning, budgeting, and scrutinizing questionable projects – has not wavered. These attacks, I believe, are aimed at distracting from these critical issues.

I urge you to attend the next City Council meeting this Tuesday. We must stand together in demanding transparency and accountability from our city officials. Let's find out the truth and ensure that the real issues facing our city are not



5:40

41%

**Albert Merkel**

I urge you to attend the next City Council meeting this Tuesday. We must stand together in demanding transparency and accountability from our city officials. Let's find out the truth and ensure that the real issues facing our city are not sidelined by these unwarranted attacks.

This is all devastating to my wife and family, and people who know me well. I entered into city politics with stated goals to represent you all and fix the issues that you hired me to fix. Instead of being met with polite discourse, I have been met with contempt, disrespect, and attacks on my person and life. Rather than simply debate my positions, my opponents have chosen instead to try to ruin me. My poor wife is worried that even when I am exonerated the mere existence of these (perhaps unfounded) allegations will hurt my reputation and future career endeavors. Nonetheless, I will keep fighting on because this is bigger than me, this is about the place that we all live in, the community that my daughter is growing up in, and our future. If we keep staying this course, Spokane Valley will cease to be our city, I need your help to take it back.

I am happy to take your questions here.

Best Regards

Al Merkel

Spokane Valley City Councilman

Emails and policies:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1pB2VUz5RH8pm-qi5Djq1_NckpvNKH8T4?usp=sharing



5:41

41%

**Albert Merkel**

ensure that the real issues facing our city are not sidelined by these unwarranted attacks.

This is all devastating to my wife and family, and people who know me well. I entered into city politics with stated goals to represent you all and fix the issues that you hired me to fix. Instead of being met with polite discourse, I have been met with contempt, disrespect, and attacks on my person and life. Rather than simply debate my positions, my opponents have chosen instead to try to ruin me. My poor wife is worried that even when I am exonerated the mere existence of these (perhaps unfounded) allegations will hurt my reputation and future career endeavors. Nonetheless, I will keep fighting on because this is bigger than me, this is about the place that we all live in, the community that my daughter is growing up in, and our future. If we keep staying this course, Spokane Valley will cease to be our city, I need your help to take it back.

I am happy to take your questions here.

Best Regards

Al Merkel

Spokane Valley City Councilman

Emails and policies:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1pB2VUz5RH8pm-qi5Djq1_NckpvNKH8T4?usp=sharing

Disclaimer: nothing in this post is intended to represent Spokane valley city or the city council as a whole.



7:37

94%



Albert Merkel



Albert Merkel

Ponderosa · 10h ·



Al Merkel's Spokane Valley Councilman Report for the meeting on March 5, 2024.

Last night, in another brash demonstration of bias at the dais, the council directly attacked me for the information I provide to you all on Nextdoor.

The meeting began with the City Manager reading a statement that largely conformed to what he described in the email I attached to my last post, which detailed the "allegations" against me. Nothing new so far on this, still waiting for more details from the city, but in the mean time this is still causing me difficulty in my ability to represent you all.

After this statement, CM Yaeger claiming that a typo I made in my last report – which was already corrected before the meeting and did not reveal anything about the executive session – somehow violated policy, is the latest attack that has been sent my way. I'm really grateful for the community members who came to the council meeting and witnessed direct and blatant contempt from the other council members. The 5-member politburo had apparently already decided to make this move, unaware that I had already addressed the issue. Then, when confronted by that fact, they went through with the witch hunt anyway. Only Council Member Ben Wick stood up with me against this inappropriate action. In fact I would argue that CM Yaeger actually revealed what



**Albert Merkel**

After this statement, CM Yaeger claiming that a typo I made in my last report — which was already corrected before the meeting and did not reveal anything about the executive session — somehow violated policy, is the latest attack that has been sent my way. I'm really grateful for the community members who came to the council meeting and witnessed direct and blatant contempt from the other council members. The 5-member politburo had apparently already decided to make this move, unaware that I had already addressed the issue. Then, when confronted by that fact, they went through with the witch hunt anyway. Only Council Member Ben Wick stood up with me against this inappropriate action. In fact I would argue that CM Yaeger actually revealed what happened in exec. session on the dias through her statements and questions in a very direct way. To emphasize, here is a link to our governance manual:

<https://www.spokanevalleywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/921>

Nowhere in this manual does it give the council the right to "reprimand" any member. Not only that, but Councilman Yaeger and Mayor Haley (again with clear disdain) referred to nonexistent language within this manual. CM Yaeger stated that I cannot write about council meetings on Nextdoor (blatantly incorrect, and exactly what they said they were not trying to do in the first as they all stared in our second council meeting and I reported here), and Mayor Haley claimed that I cannot talk about council members outside of meetings. Of course, neither of these clauses





Albert Merkel



[<https://www.spokanevalleywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/921>]

Nowhere in this manual does it give the council the right to "reprimand" any member. Not only that, but Councilman Yaeger and Mayor Haley (again with clear disdain) referred to nonexistent language within this manual. CM Yaeger stated that I cannot write about council meetings on Nextdoor (blatantly incorrect, and exactly what they said they were not trying to do in the first as they all stared in our second council meeting and I reported here), and Mayor Haley claimed that I cannot talk about council members outside of meetings. Of course, neither of these clauses exists. Mayor Haley further demonstrated her lack of mastery over Robert's Rules by making several mistakes that both CM Wick and I commented on, such as not ruling on my point of order about CM Yaeger using disparaging language (page 16 of the above manual).

After this colossal waste of time, we moved into city business. City business was very short this week; we approved a disposition of surplus city property (a piece of property, some vehicles, and a backhoe; contact the city if interested in the auctions), reviewed an application for federal grants (that I continued to ask for financial transparency on the costs for production), and had an overview of the granting program, during which I again asked for a report of staff time to be included in grant requests (actually should be included in all items brought before council). We also looked at some potential projects for Balfour Park that will require grants.





Albert Merkel



After this colossal waste of time, we moved into city business. City business was very short this week; we approved a disposition of surplus city property (a piece of property, some vehicles, and a backhoe; contact the city if interested in the auctions), reviewed an application for federal grants (that I continued to ask for financial transparency on the costs for production), and had an overview of the granting program, during which I again asked for a report of staff time to be included in grant requests (actually should be included in all items brought before council). We also looked at some potential projects for Balfour Park that will require grants.

We are looking at building a playground and a splash pad at Balfour Park for approximately 4 million dollars, 1.5 million of which is coming from city funds. The city last reached out to citizens about this project in 2021, so given our policing priorities and lack of funds, I would like to know whether you all feel this is a priority or whether we should use the funds somewhere else right now.

See the presentation below (also includes a picture of Sprague being reduced to 3 lanes):

https://spokanevalley.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1368&meta_id=87616

Please comment on this post with your thoughts on the Balfour Project, specifically whether you think now is the best time to use these funds.

Also, I apologize if I have a typo in these notes



6:35

96%



Albert Merkel



Albert Merkel → 🌐 Spokane Val...



Ponderosa · 10h · 🌐

Al Merkel's Spokane Valley City Council Report
April 2, 2024.

Hi folks sorry this one took a little while, it was a long one.

1. I am glad The Spokesman covered the latest chapter in the city's "investigation" into "allegations" against me. As reported in the article, I tried to bring a Spokane Valley resident as a witness, which turns out was actually very necessary. What the article didn't mention is that even though the investigator told us she was recording and the recording would be available, when I asked for it, she said, "there is no recording." Well, witnesses are a lot harder to erase than videos. They also did not mention that while she professed it was a "private" interview, she actually had another person there.

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2024/apr/03/investigation-into-spokane-valley-city-councilman-/>

2. SCRAPS: After receiving numerous emails about 2 dogs who were scheduled to be euthanized, I asked SCRAPS leadership for information as to why these animals were scheduled for termination. The director provided me the full chart notes for both, and what I found surprised me. Despite SCRAPS reporting that one animal killed a cat, it was clear in the report that this was not substantiated by evidence. iust



6:34

96%



Albert Merkel



<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2024/apr/03/investigation-into-spokane-valley-city-councilman-/>

2. SCRAPS: After receiving numerous emails about 2 dogs who were scheduled to be euthanized, I asked SCRAPS leadership for information as to why these animals were scheduled for termination. The director provided me the full chart notes for both, and what I found surprised me. Despite SCRAPS reporting that one animal killed a cat, it was clear in the report that this was not substantiated by evidence, just something reported by the person who found the dog as a suspicion. What I saw in the revirds were two animals who had some issues that seemed to be developed mostly from long incarcerations within a shelter. My understanding is that there were rescues ready to take these animals. What I don't understand is why it was more cost-effective to pay for euthanasia and cremation than to simply disclose the issues and allow the rescues to adopt the animals. That just seems like the cost-effective approach. Here is the link to review the emails I received from SCRAPS leadership:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1E6jqJ-JeV1sspYdpmfpgCyWETxasktok>

3. City Council Meeting – Mayor Pam Haley's Statement: Last night, the Mayor attempted to sell the idea that this project is the silver bullet solution for the aquifer, despite the fact that the other 10 miles of Sprague will remain as they are.





Albert Merkel



<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1E6jqJ-JeV1sspYdpmfpgCyWEtxasktok>

3. City Council Meeting – Mayor Pam Haley's Statement: Last night, the Mayor attempted to sell the idea that this project is the silver bullet solution for the aquifer, despite the fact that the other 10 miles of Sprague will remain as they are. There is still no justification in terms of numbers for how this will have an impact. What the city officials keep telling me is that it is "a good start." I ask, a good start to what? They insisted there are no plans to reduce the rest of Sprague, but if that's the case, what is this a start to? I think we all see through this. This is ultimately just money spent to do something that isn't needed right now and wastes previous resources that we should be using for police. I used my point of privilege for dissenting opinions to counter the Mayor's speech and remind everyone again that not only did more than 100 residents directly write in about this waste of resources and time, 11 out of the 18 businesses in that area are also against this project, AND THE CITY'S OWN SURVEY SHOWED BOTH THAT AVERAGE SPEEDS INCREASE AND MORE THAN 65% OF VALLEY RESIDENTS ARE AGAINST THIS PROJECT!

4. Contract for 16th Ave Repair with Bumpouts for Street Crossings: While my questions revealed that the bumpouts are not strictly necessary as per current standards, since the road is currently in grade C condition and needs to be resurfaced, the bumpouts are only a small marginal cost. This should be compared to Sprague, which currently is in grade A condition making the whole project





Albert Merkel



4. Contract for 16th Ave Repair with Bumpouts for Street Crossings: While my questions revealed that the bumpouts are not strictly necessary as per current standards, since the road is currently in grade C condition and needs to be resurfaced, the bumpouts are only a small marginal cost. This should be compared to Sprague, which currently is in grade A condition, making the whole project unnecessary.

5. CTR Contract: We currently have a contract with Spokane County for the state-mandated commute trip reduction program. This program aims to work with employers of more than 100 workers to help find ways to reduce total trips by forming carpools, or using bus services, or biking, and providing incentives for employers and workers to meet goals. Given the issues we have had with the SCRAPS contract and issues we have had with this contract in the past as revealed by the contract analyst, I advised we add some language to have input into who the director is and to have feedback from the companies that this program works with. As usual, the council voted against these common-sense changes.

6. Contract for Negotiator Services Land Purchases Required to Widen South Barker Street: The city proposed hiring a consultant for \$650,000 to negotiate the city's purchase of portions of property needed from 52 properties to widen South Barker. The total estimated property cost is 4.5 million. That means we are paying about 15% to the negotiator, which seems very high considering most real estate companies charge 10% or less. What I highlighted that is





Albert Merkel



6. Contract for Negotiator Services Land Purchases Required to Widen South Barker Street: The city proposed hiring a consultant for \$650,000 to negotiate the city's purchase of portions of property needed from 52 properties to widen South Barker. The total estimated property cost is 4.5 million. That means we are paying about 15% to the negotiator, which seems very high considering most real estate companies charge 10% or less. What I highlighted that is even more problematic is that we are PAYING BY THE HOUR! This means that even if this company doesn't succeed in negotiating these contracts, they will still be paid. This is a problem. As a basic principle of contracting, we should always pay upon delivery of the thing we need. I proposed that this contract should be done as pay for the negotiated deals rather than per hour. I was voted down.

7. Housing and Homeless Services Grants: Next, we had a presentation from DM Hattenburg and CM Wick on applications for grants from the Housing and Homeless Services Board, of which they are both members. The point of the presentation was to ask the council what projects we wanted to recommend for the grants. For my part, I asked that CM Wick and Hattenburg instead focus on asking for monitoring and evaluation criteria for whichever projects they pick, so we have data on the success or failure of the projects and can do better evaluations next time.

8. Police Funding: We had a presentation on looking at voter-approved police funding options



6:37

96%

**Albert Merkel**

...on applications for grants from the Housing and Homeless Services Board, of which they are both members. The point of the presentation was to ask the council what projects we wanted to recommend for the grants. For my part, I asked that CM Wick and Hattenburg instead focus on asking for monitoring and evaluation criteria for whichever projects they pick, so we have data on the success or failure of the projects and can do better evaluations next time.

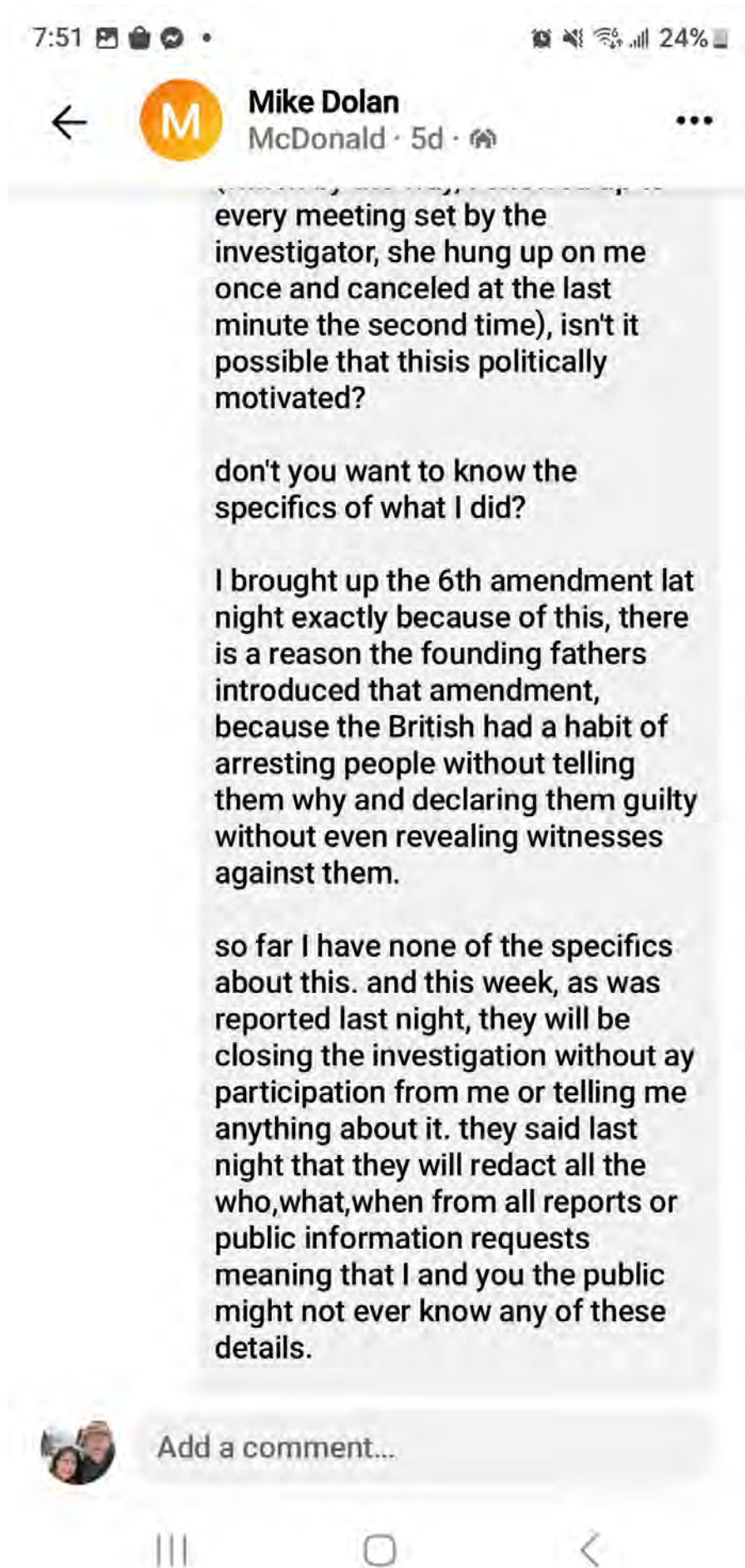
8. Police Funding: We had a presentation on looking at voter-approved police funding options. From the open house we had yesterday on the subject, and the open house I did in January, it is clear that looking at a voter-approved sales tax is the way to go. We will be further exploring this at the end of April.

**Investigation into Spokane Valley City Councilman Al Merkel hits snag**

The investigation into Spokane Valley cit...







7:52

24%

**Mike Dolan**

McDonald · 5d · 🏠



who, what, when from all reports or public information requests meaning that I and you the public might not ever know any of these details.

None of that bothers you at all?

the constitution exists because our founding fathers didn't trust government. public trials exist because of this. as the attorney emphasized last night "this isn't a trial". I'm trying to understand why you have so much faith in this process when it has been so closed off to the public. what makes you think that I will be cleared if I didn't do anything considering there will be no access to the evidence or records? (edited)



4

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel** · Ponderosa · 5d

Marvel by the way, don't take my word for it, ask the city or ask one of the other council members like CM Yeager. ask for the specifics of what I am charged with, this should all be public information. I am after all a public official



Add a comment...



8:55

100%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ag...



3

Like

Reply

Share

**Michelle Huskinson** · Mirabea... · 1d ...

Albert well that explains that. I applaud you for not taking and blocking these egregious comments.

I'm glad that a 3rd party found you not guilty. I wish they could have changed the "childish behavior", that these so called adults are doing to you.



2

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel** Author · Pond... · 1d ...

Michelle Thanks, I dont block comments, I respond. free speech is the answer to bad speech. of course the city takes the approach of trying to silence dissenting opinions, which is ultimately what this is all about.



1

Like

Reply

Share

**Michelle Huskinson** · Mirabea... · 17h ...

Albert I am aware but sometimes it's difficult seeing the attacks and blame.
I get exhausted by it all.



Add a comment...



8:55

100%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ag...



Like

Reply

Share

**Michelle Huskinson** · Mirabe... · 17h ...

Albert I am aware but sometimes it's difficult seeing the attacks and blame. I get exhausted by it all.



1

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel** Author · Pon... · 16h ...

Michelle that makes sense. I know this is all difficult now. this is a time of transition for our city. next year we will have a council election, and if I'm right we will see new council members in many of these roles, and good governance will resume along with responsiveness to the city residents. in other words things will calm down.

of course things could calm down now if my fellow council members simply stopped trying to attack and silence me and just had open debate. they could still do whatever they wanted since they have the majority, just let me say my piece, ask my questions, and represent the constituents. I would still let the community know when I felt they were wrong (as they can, but don't),



Add a comment...



8:56

100%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ag...



the constituents. I would still let the community know when I felt they were wrong (as they can, but don't), but it could be honest debate instead of attacks. It's pipe dream, but I wish...

the truth is they will likely keep attacking me and silencing me, because it's easier tha debate. they will silence everyone else too as demonstrated by CM Jessica Yeager, but that's all part of the majority's mantra: why debate when I can silence or attempt to humiliate?

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel**

Author

Pon...

16h

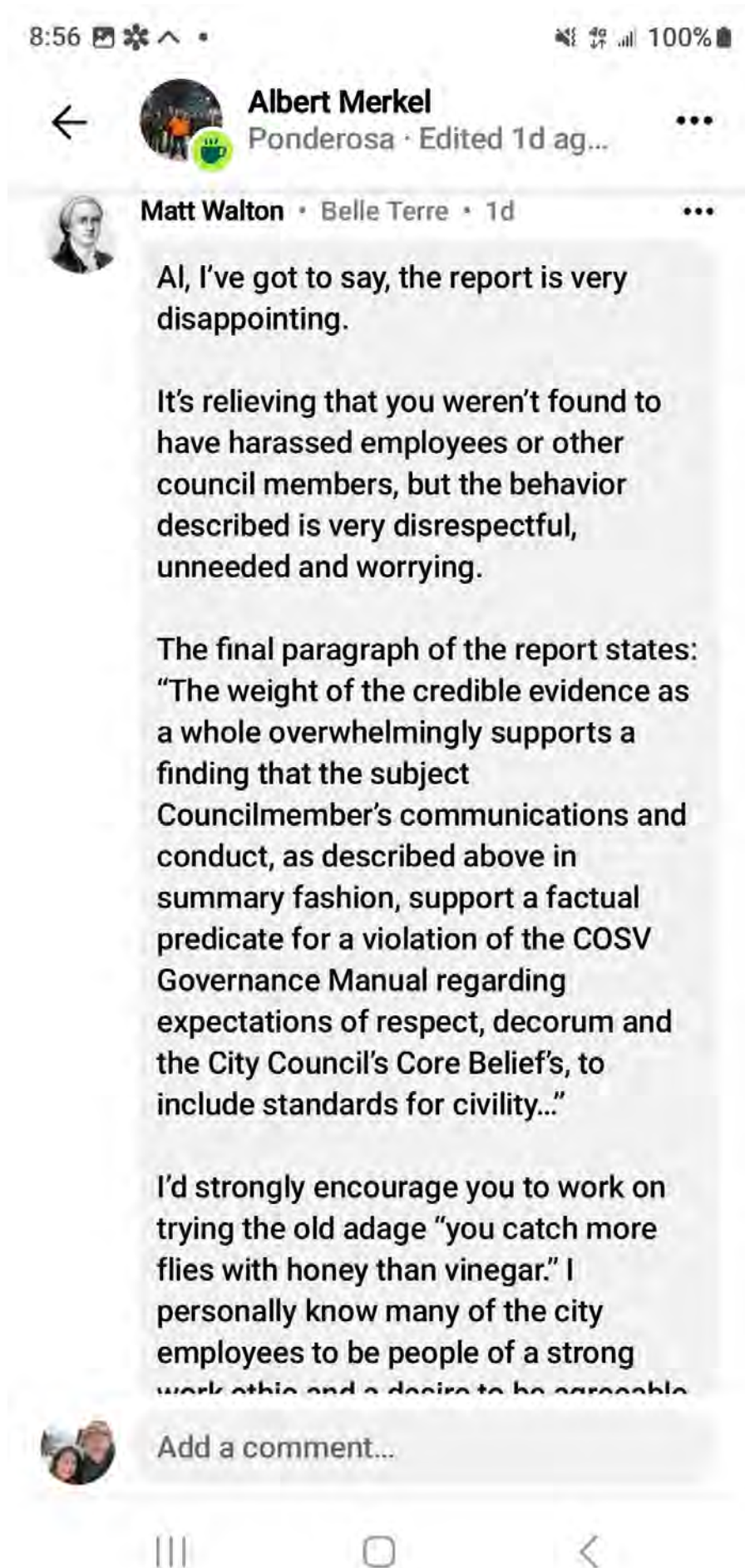


Jeff I see someone flagged my comment about you Mr. Beaulac where I calld out your past criminal history (stabbing the Paramore of your sgnificant other), involvement as a democratic operative, and how you havent liked me since highscool. while that is in appeal, I'll place this as a placeholder. I don't delete comments or flag comments.



Add a comment...





8:56

100%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ag...



I'd strongly encourage you to work on trying the old adage "you catch more flies with honey than vinegar." I personally know many of the city employees to be people of a strong work ethic and a desire to be agreeable. Please try to use this finding as an opportunity to mend fences and win hearts as you represent many important views and it's a shame that the way you comport yourself is taking up important oxygen.



12

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel**

Author

Pond...

1d



Matt I appreciate the feedback. I have to say that I categorially deny all of thet hearsay in this, aswell as "yelling at staff". I highlighted that I was cleared because the rest of this report was a lot of accusations without a lot of proof. I should note that many staff members, especially "seasonsed" staff did not feel that there was anything to report. as I said above, the staff decided to "fear" m before I even took office (note that 2 out of the 5 sections were about "interactions"



Add a comment...



8:57

100%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ago...



without a lot of proof. I should note that many staff members, especially "seasoned" staff did not feel that there was anything to report. as I said above, the staff decided to "fear" me before I even took office (note that 2 out of the 5 sections were about "interactions" before I took office. this report says that 12 staff members thought I was an active shooter threat, I don't even know 12 staff members.

I encourage you to ask the staff members you know if I ever even interacted with them.

the "violation" they speak of is of decorum, pretty subjective and weak if you ask me. (edited)



2

Like

Reply

Share

**Bryanna Franzen** · Pines and ... · 1d

Matt I can not speak to the allegations and witness statements but I can tell you my experiences when I have been a... [See more](#)



8

Like

Reply

Share

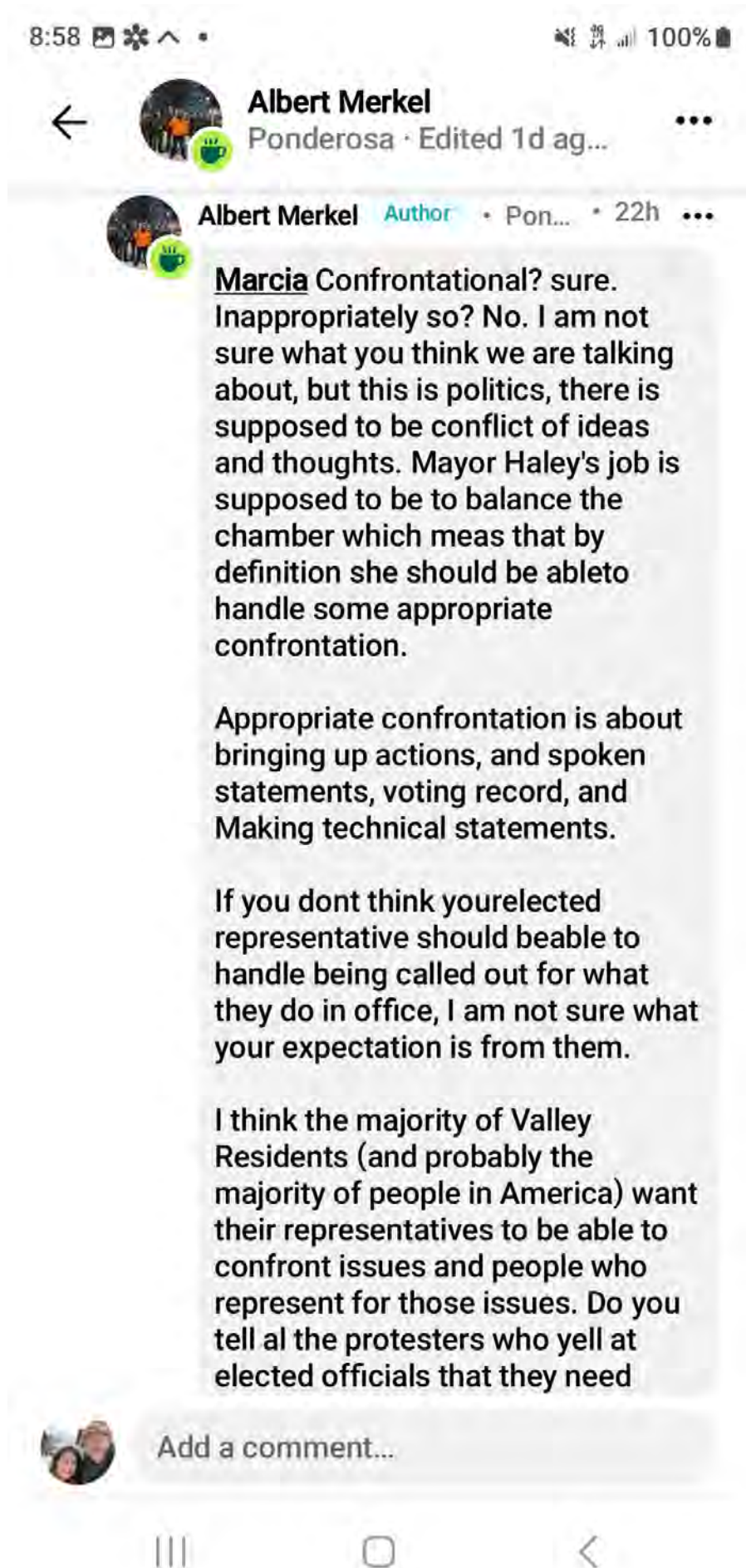
**Matt Walton** · Belle Terre · 1d

Bryanna I'm referring to the



Add a comment...





8:59

100%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ag...



I think the majority of Valley Residents (and probably the majority of people in America) want their representatives to be able to confront issues and people who represent for those issues. Do you tell al the protesters who yell at elected officials that they need counseling?

Politics is about conflict and confrontation. that's what I said above in my statement. I think you are demonstraing the problem:

If confronting people for what they actually, say, do and vote on is "bullying" then what am I supposed to do? oh that's right... GET IN LINE.

This is false morality. softening all interactions until they are esentially meaningless.

I wasn't elected to protect the majority's feelings, I was elected to bring change. Again, it's what I ran on!

This is exactly what they are trying to do at the city, say everything I'm doing that is driving change is



Add a comment...



9:00

100%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ag...



I wasn't elected to protect the majority's feelings, I was elected to bring change. Again, it's what I ran on!

This is exactly what they are trying to do at the city, say everything I'm doing that is driving change is wrong.... Why? So I can't drive change 💎💎



1

Like

Reply

Share

**Marcia Sands** · Ponderosa · 22h

Albert I voted for you but will not do so in the future and I suspect that there a a LOT of people who feel the same way. I am also beginning to understand why our city staff felt the need for active shooter training. It seems that if anyone does not agree with you then you will fight fight fight. This type of confrontation is not productive.



2

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel** Author · Pon... · 22h

Marcia okay I'll bite, what did you expect me to do when you voted for me? in your mind what was my platform?



Add a comment...



9:02

99%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ag...



investigation as you were reminded several times by attorneys and other residents as you claimed 6th amendment rights. It's incredible that you think this investigation is a win. Spinning as we need a change in our government is disgraceful and just means you are trying to hide the fact you like to harass and bully people and say that is progress.



3

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel**

Author

Pon...

18h

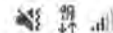


Scott I see the irony is lost on you huh. GOVERNMENT initiated an INVESTIGATION of me ACCUSING me of BREAKING THE LAW, but to get around the pesky need to give me the accusations and evidence against me they said "oh don't worry we aren't labeling it 'criminal' at this point so the constitution doesn't apply" Also, this process doesn't exist in writing anywhere so due-process also doesn't apply, or 14th amendment equal protection. Huh, that seems like a convenient loophole in the constitution. Finally, that same GOVERNMENT declared me



Add a comment...



9:03  99% **Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ag...



constitution. Finally, that same GOVERNMENT declared me innocent of breaking the law they were originally investigating, but to cover up this wasteful misadventure, they found me "guilty" of not complying with some extremely subjective ad vague language in the governance manual which at that point was only a guide for elected officials, and most importantly not even in the scope of investigation. I hope the word doest get out or we will have a lot of "non-criminal" investigations that throw people into jail.

Your trust in government is a bit strange and misplaced. I wonder if you will sill fee this way when the government changes... you seem like one of those people who calls for an end to the supreme Court when they don't make a decision you like, but are super happy and praise them for being unbiased when they do something you like.

Like a fair whether citizen.



2

Like

Reply

Share

**Daniel Moëller** · Progress an... · 17h ...

Add a comment...



6:34

42%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 1d ag...

**Albert Merkel**

Author

· Ponderosa · 4h



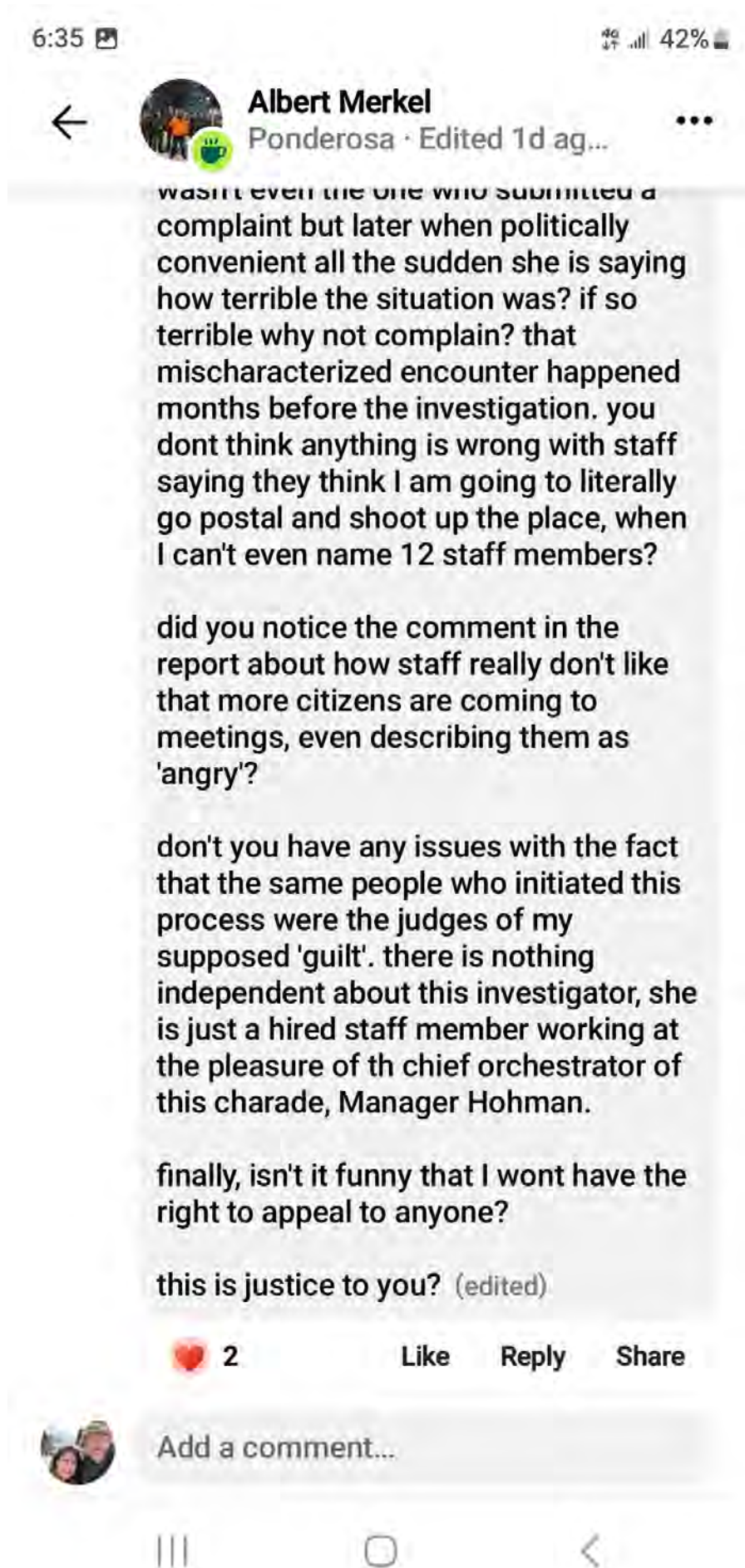
anthony I agree! I think when I look at the charges against trump, I see Republicans, Democrats, government officials, private individuals, it gives me pause. each has different motivations, different incentives, different jurisdictions. it does give me pause. I say at least he will have his day in court, had the charges presented to him, was able to confront the witnesses against him, and will be tried by a jury of his peers.

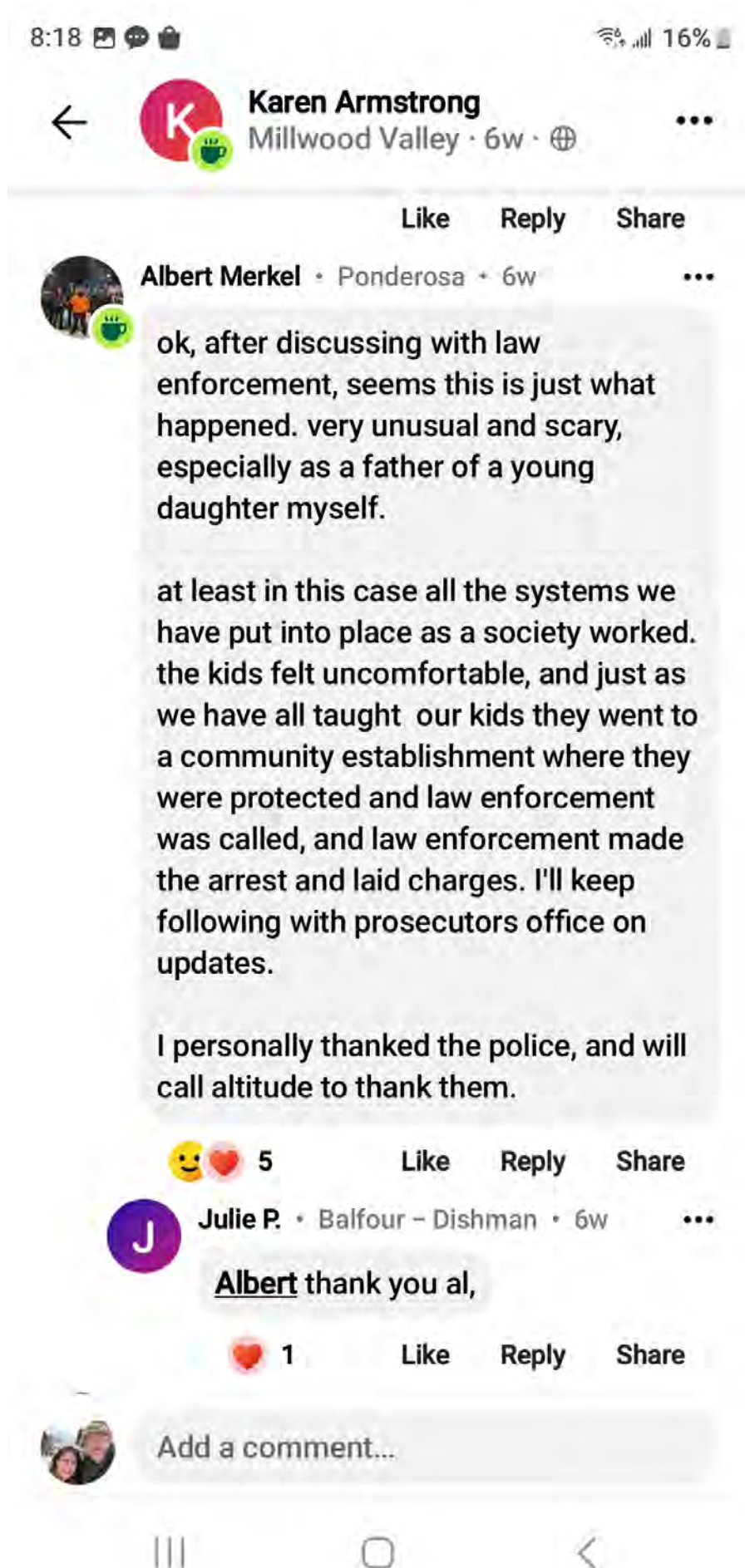
When I look at the group who made this report, I see city staff and city council, each and everyone of the witnesses with the same incentive and motive, all working together to silence and discredit me. Why? because I am asking hard questions about what staff is doing, and why council is voting the way they are. you don't find it interesting that 3 of the things in the report were from before I took office? or that the mayor wasn't even the one who submitted a complaint but later when politically convenient all the sudden she is saying how terrible the situation was? if so terrible why not complain? that mischaracterized encounter happened months before the investigation. you



Add a comment...







8:19

16%

**Karen Armstrong**

Millwood Valley · 6w ·



kidnapping in CDL. I guess there was another attempt but it was white men in their 20s

Like

Reply

Share

**Cynthia Hodge** · East Valley · 6w

Christee you obviously didn't even look at the news report with their photos. My point in bringing it up is, that it all could have been avoided if they were illegal and had NOT been allowed in the country. I don't know if they are or not. My only concern is for the safety of our children and our community.

Like

Reply

Share

**Christee S.** · Mead, WA · 6w

Cynthia the news article I read (krem2) said nothing about them



Add a comment...



8:19

16%

**Karen Armstrong**

Millwood Valley · 6w ·



Yesterday two men tried to nab two young girls in the trampoline parking lot at Argonne and Mission. As the weather gets better, more kids are going to be out. Please talk to your children about stranger danger, or better keep a close eye on what they are doing! Also please respond if you can read this post, because mine seem to get blocked. This is a really important post, I've already been to a child's funeral, and those family's, including my own, will never be the same.



240



114



Share



All comments



Julie P. · Balfour – Dishman · 6w



I can read it. That is horrible. Thank you for the notification



9

Like

Reply

Share



Maggie Bomengen · Ponderosa · 6w



That is horrifying



4

Like

Reply

Share



Linda Dawidjan · Spokane, WA · 6w



Add a comment...



6:41  C 5G UC  88% **Wanda R.**Ponderosa · 4y · 

Hello everyone! Sorry I was camping this weekend and did not have reception. I will be happy to help as always! I will review the application and applicable case history over the next few days.

Wanda, can you give me a call? Im at 5093156416

Thanks so much for bringing this to our attention!



9

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel** · Ponderosa · 4y

Ok so the actual number is CUP-2019-0001.

This is a type 3 application for a conditional use permit.

This is good news because these are the "easiest" to oppose! What they are asking for is an exception to the zoning use requirement for the zone that property is located in. We obviously dont think that this use is appropriate within a single family zone.

So here is the first step:



Add a comment...



6:41 C

5G UC 88%

**Wanda R.**

Ponderosa · 4y ·



So here is the first step:

EVERYONE: if you are reading this, you need to submit a written public comment to:

planning@spokanevalley.org

CC:

CityCouncil@spokanevalley.org

Use subject: public comment
CUP-2019-0001

IMPORTANT: In order to make your comment most effective reference the approval criteria for CUPs here:

19.150.030 Decision criteria.

A. A CUP may only be granted if the applicant demonstrates that:

1. The conditional use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and with the character and appearance of the existing or proposed development in the vicinity of the subject property;

2. The location, size, and height of buildings, structures, walls and fences, and visual screening for the conditional use shall not hinder or discourage the



Add a comment...





8:08

91%



Albert Merkel

Ponderosa · 1d ·



Councilmember Merkel decries Spokane Valley Council 'taking a summer vacation' (The Center Square) – Spokane Valley C...

14



2



Share



Vickie Patterson · Millwood · 1d



Off topic but could you please work to get all of the graffiti and gang tags out of Mirabeau park by the trail? Thanks.

1

Like

Reply

Share



Albert Merkel Author

Pond... · 1d



Vickie thank vickie! can you send me an official email to amerkel@spokanevalleywa.gov sonl cantae action on it?

1

Like

Reply

Share



Add a comment...



6:43  5G UC  91% **Mike Dolan**McDonald · 1w · 

Whats up with all of the 25mph signs in front of city hall? They are official speed signs not the orange construction zone type. I thought city council had to approve speed limit changes? Is this going to be the new permanent speed limit?



52



Share



All comments

**Albert Merkel** · Ponderosa · 1w

ill look into it



Like

Reply

Share

**Ed N.** · Pine Valley · 1w

There is no such thing as "an orange construction zone type". Most active construction zones have reduced speed limits. The orange sig... [See more](#)



Like

Reply

Share

**Kevin Anderson** · Castle · 1w

No, the entire stupid project is a Big Deal. As for OSHA and NTSB having regulations to speed limits in construction zones I couldn'... [See](#)



Add a comment...



8:20

41%



Albert Merkel



Albert Merkel

Ponderosa · 23h ·



Should Spokane Valley Reduce Sprague to 3 Lanes? News Coverage:

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2024/mar/11/getting-there-sprague-ave...> See more

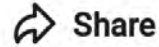
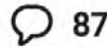
Yes, this sounds like a good project

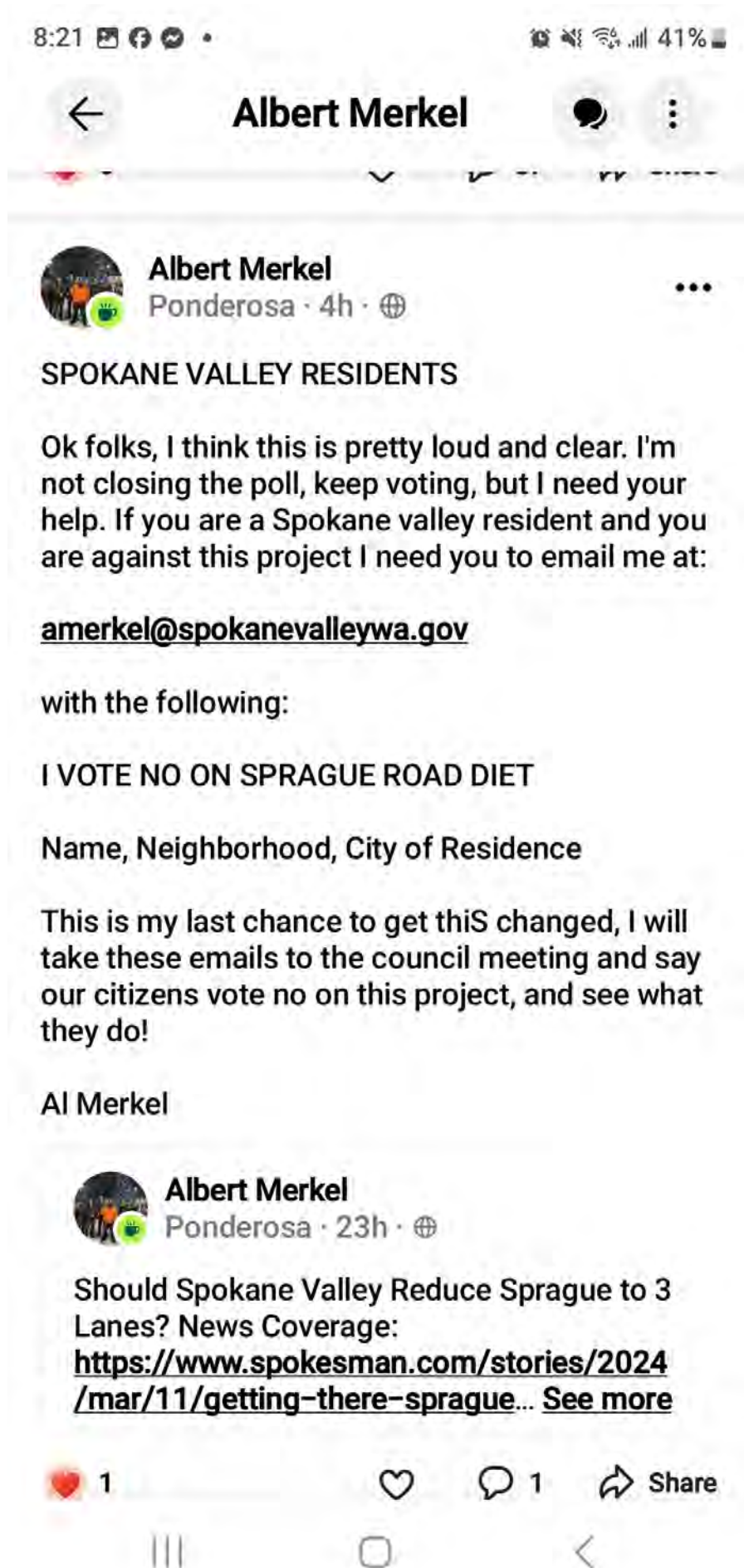
No, please stop this project

289 votes



Getting There: Sprague Avenue to see biggest transformation in decades
spokesman.com







6:44

96%



Albert Merkel



Albert Merkel → Spokane Val...

Ponderosa · 6h ·

Pilot Project Feedback

- 21 direct responses through phone, email, or media interviews
- 296 online survey responses
- 32% support the project, 63% oppose the project, 5% are unsure
 - First week, 28% supported and 71% opposed
 - May indicate a learning curve and earned support

3.26.24 SAD UPDATE ON SPRAGUE ROAD DIET!!

Hi Folks,

500+ VOTES!!! THE COMMUNITY IS DECISIVELY AGAINST SPRAGUE ROAD DIET!!

BAD NEWS: THE SPOKANE VALLEY COUNCIL DOESNT CARE 😞

Tonight, I presented 100 emails I recieved on this issue, a survey of every business in the area with the majority against this project, and reminded the City Council that THERE OWN SURVEY SHOWED 63% OF SPOKANE VALLEY RESIDENTS ARE AGAINST THIS PROJECT!

after all that, the council still voted against us 6 to 1 😞. I suppose their hatred of me surpasses all common sense and care for what the residents of this city want.



6:44

96%



Albert Merkel



after all that, the council still voted against us 6 to 1 🙄. I suppose their hatred of me surpasses all common sense and care for what the residents of this city want.

Frankly, I am at a loss. I am just not sure how more clear we can get. Mayor Haley said that the reason you all were against this project was because I just didn't tell you the city's excuse about how doing this project on this 4/10ths of a mile of the 10 miles of Sprague (about 4% of Sprague) will somehow magically heal the aquifer from dirty road run off, despite the fact that the other 9.6 miles of Sprague are still at 5 lanes or more... Give me a break.

I think you are all smart enough to make decisions about what impacts you in this city, despite the fact that the Mayor thinks you guys just can't figure this out (let alone the fact that if this is some sort of holy Grail exo project, the city and these politicians still did a bad job of conveying that).

Well, I am truly sorry I couldn't get this stopped. As your representative I have failed, and for that I apologize. If someone has any tips for how to get through to a bunch of electeds who no longer care about what citizens want, I am all ears.... 🙏



6:44

96%

**Albert Merkel**

Well, I am truly sorry I couldn't get this stopped.
As your representative I have failed, and for that I
apologize. If someone has any tips for how to get
through to a bunch of electeds who no longer
care about what citizens want, I am all ears.... 🙏



lots more happened at the meeting, stay tuned for
my full report tomorrow!

Al Merkel

disclaimer: nothing here is meant to convey the
position of the city or the city council as a whole.

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · 1w · 🌐

Should Spokane Valley Reduce Sprague to 3
Lanes? News Coverage:

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2024/mar/11/getting-there-sprague...> **See more**



1



Share

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · 1w · 🌐

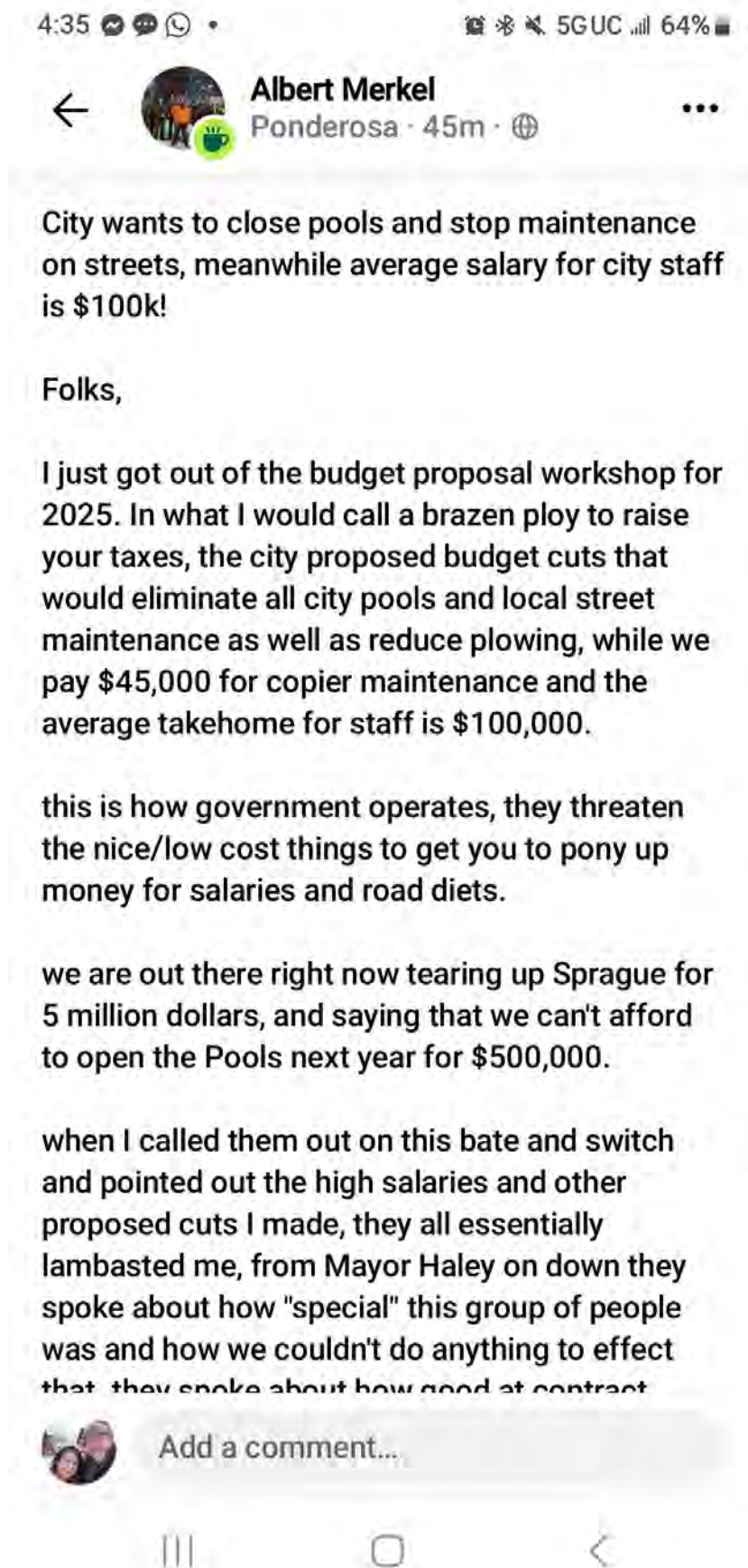


Should Spokane Valley Reduce Sprague to 3
Lanes? News Coverage:

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2024/mar/11/getting-there-sprague-ave...> **See more**



Exhibit 8



City wants to close pools and stop maintenance on streets, meanwhile average salary for city staff is \$100k!

Folks,

I just got out of the budget proposal workshop for 2025. In what I would call a brazen ploy to raise your taxes, the city proposed budget cuts that would eliminate all city pools and local street maintenance as well as reduce plowing, while we pay \$45,000 for copier maintenance and the average takehome for staff is \$100,000.

this is how government operates, they threaten the nice/low cost things to get you to pony up money for salaries and road diets.

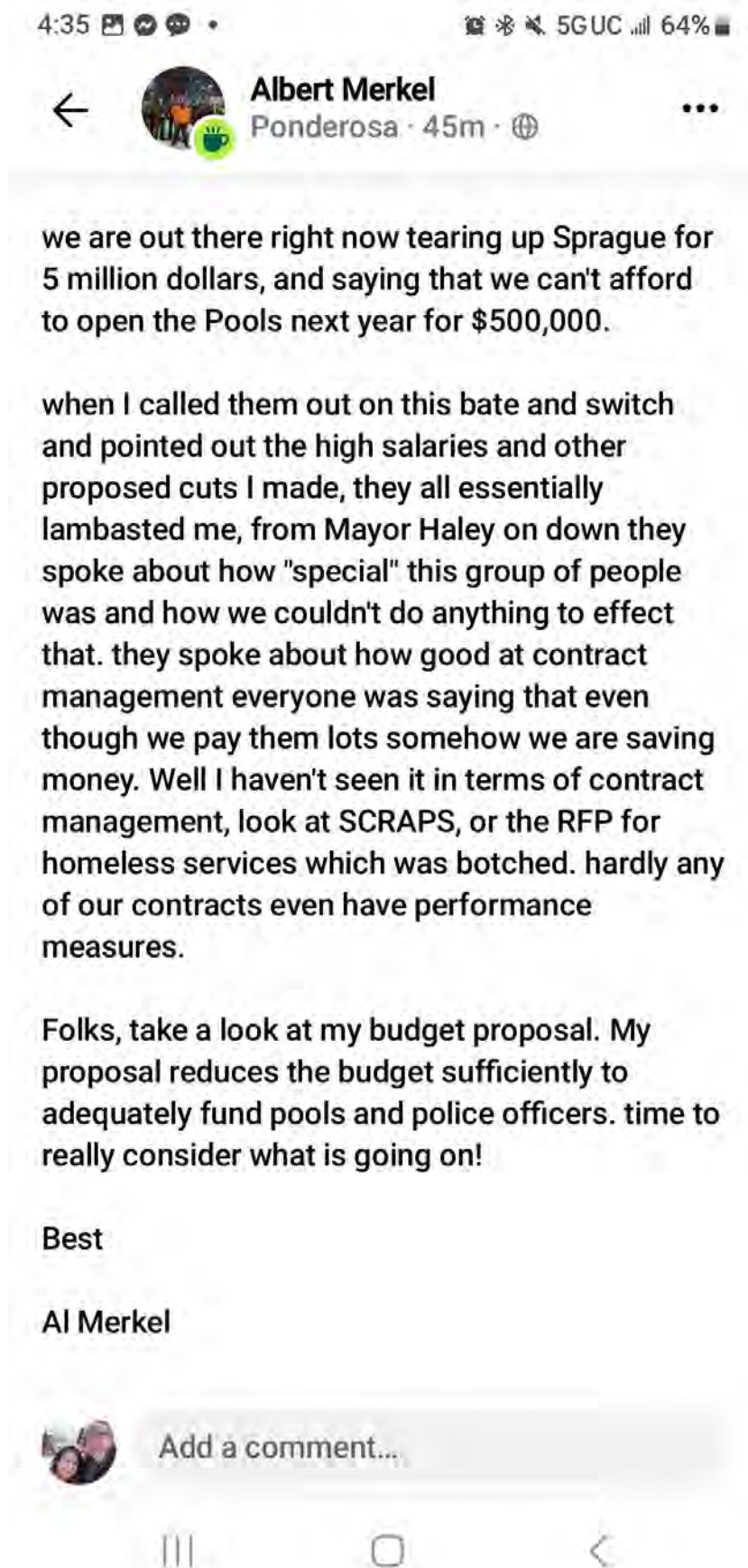
we are out there right now tearing up Sprague for 5 million dollars, and saying that we can't afford to open the Pools next year for \$500,000.

when I called them out on this bate and switch and pointed out the high salaries and other proposed cuts I made, they all essentially lambasted me, from Mayor Haley on down they spoke about how "special" this group of people was and how we couldn't do anything to effect that. they spoke about how good at contract



Add a comment...

Exhibit 8





1:59

67%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · 6d ·



Not following your logic in making the cuts. All you have provided is a lower number next to a budget line item. You need to show your work. I expect more detail if you're offering an alternate budget.



1

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel**

Author

· Pond...

· 5d



Rob very good. I have the detail. I'll post on website, just need to format it.

the point of this was to provide to city staff because how they organize the money is up to them.

will update momentarily.



2

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel**

Author

· Pond...

· 5d



Rob ok posted in the same place. the center column are the budget line items I used for reductions. I asked about most of these at the meeting. Again, the point is to push them to "find efficiencies" as the staff said during a meeting this year.



Add a comment...



Exhibit 8

2:00 67%							
X ↶ ↷ D+ ⋮							
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1							
2	Number	Account	Category	2025	Over under	10%	Recommen
3	1	GF	City Council	\$ 754,111.00	\$ 32,704.00	\$ 75,411.10	3
4	2	GF	City Manager	\$ 868,450.00	\$ (14,524.00)	\$ 86,845.00	5
5	3	GF	Deputy City Manager	\$ 637,381.00	\$ 27,155.00	\$ 63,738.10	14
6	4	GF	City Attorney	\$ 983,089.00	\$ 31,707.00	\$ 98,308.90	11
7	5	GF	Public Safety			\$ -	
8	6	GF	City Services Admin	\$ 467,290.00	\$ 28,472.00	\$ 46,729.00	1
9	7	GF	Facilities Admin	\$ 589,649.00	\$ 4,956.00	\$ 58,964.90	1
10	8	GF	City Hall	\$ 189,100.00	\$ 41,500.00	\$ 18,910.00	
11	9	GF	Center Place	\$ 328,010.00	\$ 49,380.00	\$ 32,801.00	11
12	10	GF	Police Campus	\$ 168,450.00	\$ 24,850.00	\$ 16,845.00	
13	11	GF	Balfor	\$ 83,375.00	\$ (27,925.00)	\$ 8,337.50	
14	12	GF	Other General Facilitie	\$ 54,900.00	?	\$ 5,490.00	
15	13	GF	Finance	\$ 1,506,684.00	\$ 49,528.00	\$ 150,668.40	11
16	14	GF	General Gov	\$ 2,977,390.00	\$ (1,571,222.00)	\$ 297,739.00	6
17	15	GF	IT	\$ 444,125.00	\$ (13,409.00)	\$ 44,412.50	11
18	16	GF	HR	\$ 410,751.00	\$ 21,634.00	\$ 41,075.10	1
19	17	GF	Public Works	\$ 405,023.00	\$ (4,409.00)	\$ 40,502.30	1
20	18	GF	public works engineerin	\$ 2,118,034.00	\$ 61,353.00	\$ 211,803.40	2
21	19	GF	Building	\$ 2,354,430.00	\$ 68,768.00	\$ 235,443.00	3
22	20	GF	planning	\$ 1,113,019.00	\$ 13,886.00	\$ 111,301.90	2
23	21	GF	Economic Developmen	\$ 1,244,350.00	\$ 35,836.00	\$ 124,435.00	4
24	22	GF	Parks and rec admin	\$ 456,981.00	\$ 52,201.00	\$ 45,698.10	1
25	23	GF	parks and rec maint	\$ 2,535,908.00	\$ 116,743.00	\$ 253,590.80	1
26	24	GF	Parks and rec recreatic	\$ 376,949.00	\$ 27,002.00	\$ 37,694.90	
27	25	GF	parks and rec aquatics	\$ 550,000.00	\$ 550,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	
28	26	GF	parks and rec senior ce	\$ 45,678.00	\$ 10,896.00	\$ 4,567.80	
29	27	GF	Parks and rec centerpl	\$ 724,628.00	\$ 39,416.00	\$ 72,462.80	11
30	28	GF	public works departme	\$ 7,449,582.00	\$ (2,206,083.00)	\$ 744,958.20	2
31	29	GF	public works stormwat	\$ 5,563,136.00		\$ 556,313.60	26
32						\$ -	
33						\$ -	
34						\$ -	
35						\$ -	
36						\$ -	
37						\$ -	
38						\$ -	
39						\$ -	
40						\$ -	
41						\$ -	
42				35,400,473	-2,549,585	3,540,047	6.71
43							
44							
45							
46							
47							
48							
49							
50							
51							
52							
53							
54							
55							
56							
57							
58							
59							
60							
61							
62							
≡ Sheet1 Sheet2 +							

Exhibit 8

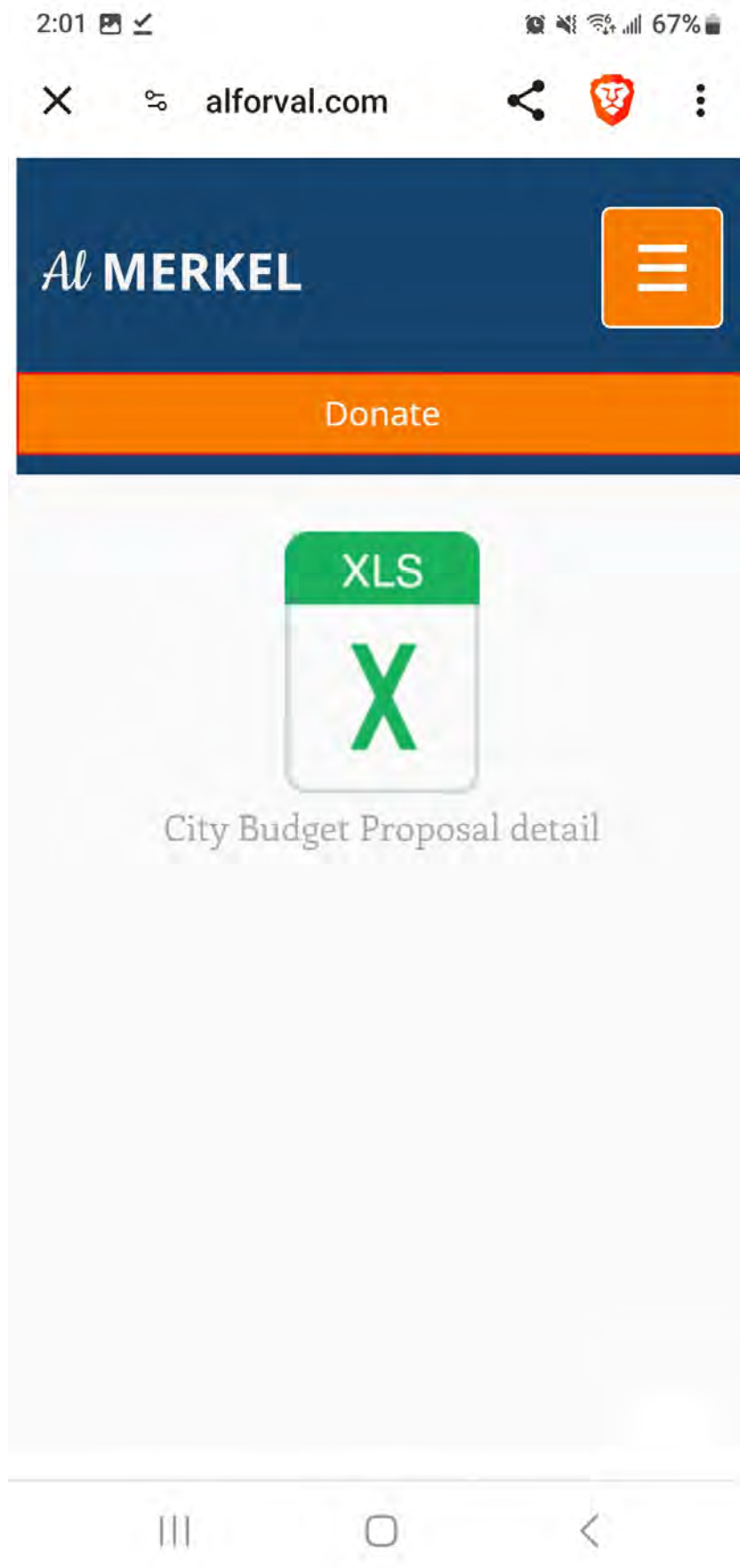
2:01 67%											
X ↶ ↷ 👤 ⋮											
	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1					replace copiers						
2	3000	2000	1700	2200	20000	200	100	330	5000	1320	3500
3											
4											
5											
6	1	City under or at budget									
7	2	City Minutes are on time and accurate									
8	3	city council meetings are accurately recorded									
9	4	City Council Assesement good									
10									software		
11	1	Needs assesment for excess city staff								\$ 16,500.00	
12	2	what do these people do?								\$ 14,966.00	
13										\$2,500.00	
14	1	minimize city attorney needs								\$ 12,000.00	
15	2	minimize need for outside council								\$1,000.00	
16										\$1,000.00	
17	1	Work with agencies to establish								\$1,000.00	
18										\$9,000.00	
19	1	Establish what these people do								\$ 61,000.00	
20										\$ 254,000.00	
21	1	what do they do?								\$ 110,800.00	
22										\$ 600.00	
23	1	City Hall is cleaned and maintained								\$ 30,200.00	
24	2	City Miantanence checklist								\$ 100.00	
25										\$ 950.00	
26										\$ 32,642.00	
27										\$ 11,858.00	
28										\$5,000.00	
29										\$ 25,000.00	
30										\$ 14,575.00	
31										\$ 16,500.00	
32										\$ 500.00	
33										\$1,390.00	
34										\$ 500.00	
35										\$6,600.00	
36										\$ 18,225.00	
37										\$1,650.00	
38										\$ 35,432.00	
39										\$6,056.00	
40										\$ 50,000.00	
41										\$ 741,544.00	
42											
43										\$7,415.44	
44											
45											
46											
47											
48											
49											
50											
51											
52											
53											
54											
55											
56											
57											
58											
59											
60											
61											



Sheet1 ▼

Sheet2





2:01  

   67% 

2025 SpoVal Budget Proposal

The attached budget proposal provides my suggestions for cuts in order to provide for and additional 20 officers tax free satisfying our commitment to public safety as our number one priority, while still maintaining needed city services but eliminating unneeded fluff. some examples are our under the current budget our city pays more than \$45,000 per year for copier maintenance and \$740,000 for "software" for a city of approximately 100 employees.





8:10

90%

For you

Recent

Nearby

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · 20h ·



🌟 ANNOUNCEMENT 🌟: WE CAN ENFORCE
LAWS ON HOMELESSNESS AGAIN!!!! Grants
Pass V Johnson DECIDED! 🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸
🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸

I NEED YOUR THOUGHTS NOW!

Spokane Valley,

the day has finally come, the tyranny of the 9th
circuit's disastrous Boise decision on
homelessness is finally over!

The time is now to propose reasonable responses
to homelessness that leverages the law to
encourage homeless folks to rejoin society by
getting the mental health, drug addiction, and/or
social services they need.

Let's discuss what we want the cities framework
to be!

background:

Martin V Boise was a 2018 9th circuit (applies to
WA, OR, ID, CA, MT, NV, AZ) decision with
disastrous consequences. the decision
essentially required municipalities within the 9th
to have sufficient NO BARRIER (Meaning no
sobriety/behavior requirements) shelter space for



Home



Search



Post

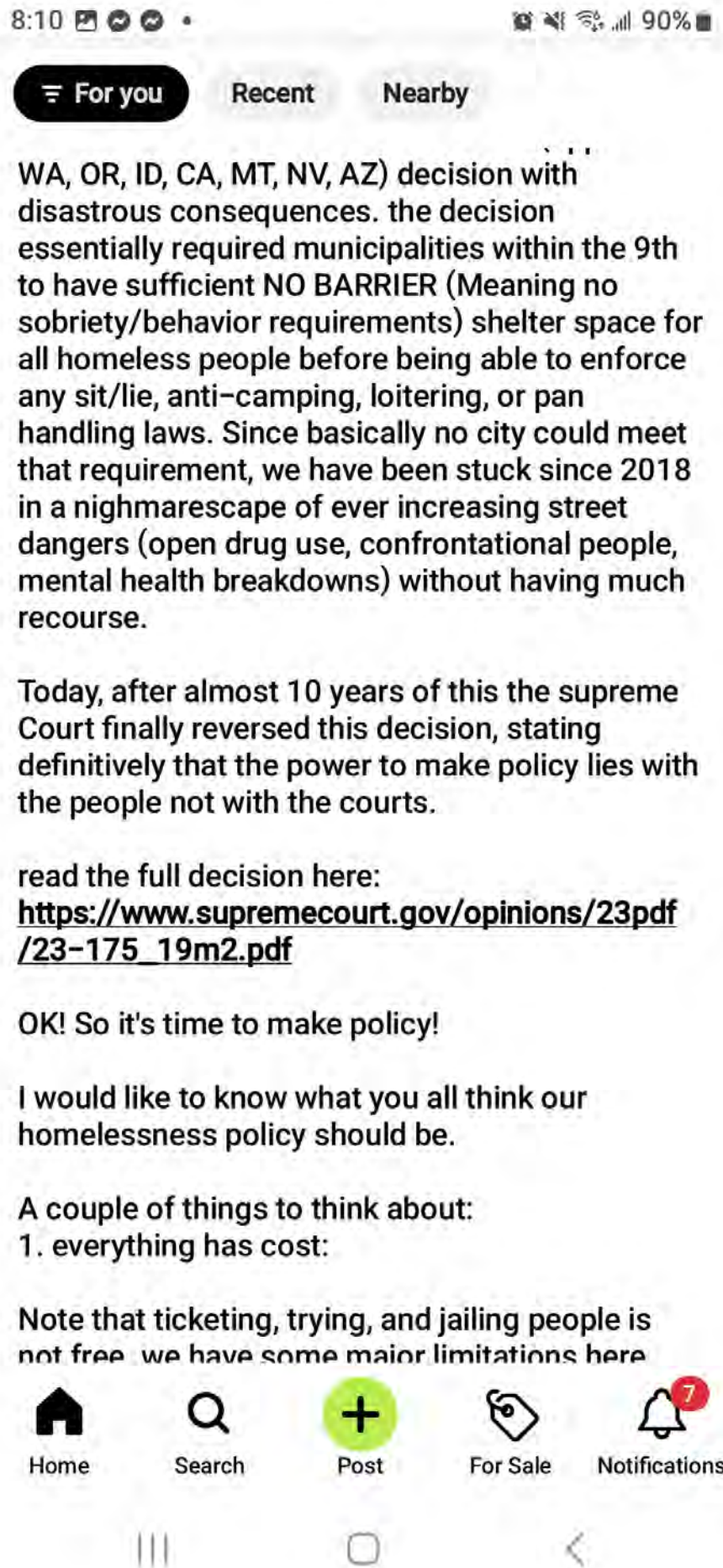


For Sale



Notifications





8:10

90%

For you

Recent

Nearby

Note that ticketing, trying, and jailing people is not free. we have some major limitations here starting with the fact that we don't have enough police officers (we really need to fix this 😞). If we are too big with our policy choices, this may be all our police end up doing. Also remember that courts have costs as well, and currently the courts are over stuffed as it is. Clogging the courts with homeless cases may also be very detrimental to other important issues. also, Jailing is very expensive, ranging between \$350-\$700/day depending on how we calculate the cost, plus space is incredibly limited right now and filling the jail with homeless people means less space for violent criminals.

2. All people are INNOCENT until PROVEN GUILTY, and that is a decision of courts not police officers.

This matters a lot because a police officer does not have the authority to determine guilt even if that guilt is obvious. in other words, if someone is camping at the park, even though it is obvious they are breaking the law, they cannot be found guilty by the cop. they must have a process involving the judicial branch where they are given the right to respond to the charge (potentially with legal representation depending on if it a criminal or civil charge), and appeal the decision before final disposition.

3. Fines don't really work



Home



Search



Post



For Sale



Notifications



8:11

90%

For you

Recent

Nearby

3. Fines don't really work

I shouldn't have to say this but you can't squeeze blood from a stone.

4. There are many different types of people experiencing homelessness.

I know we tend to focus on the visible ones, (people on the street right in front of us), but the fact is there is a whole strata of people who are homeless. there are the obvious categories of mental health crisis, drug addicts, anti society people, but there are genuinely people who for many reasons can't get housed (whether bad credit, criminal convictions, health dept, homeless children, or other reasons). our solution cannot ignore these circumstances.

I'll go first:

1. I think we should establish a mobile justice service consisting of police, some sort of magistrate, a defense lawyer, and a social worker that can quickly go to homeless encampments and adjudicate on the spot. this would ensure that all due process rights were upheld when determining that someone is breaking laws (anti-camping, loitering, panhandling, etc). that service could make an immediate determination whether the accused is breaking a law, and determine sentence.



Home



Search



Post



For Sale



Notifications



8:11

90%

For you

Recent

Nearby

I believe this cost would be approximately 150k-300k/year depending on usage (Spokane valley local cost).

2. I think that we still should setup a facility in the county (away from city centers and residential areas) that can provide social services and shelter/camping space. shelter space should have behavior/sobriety requirements. social services should include sobriety assistance, mental health care, physical health care, Job source assistance, and housing transition assistance.

Short term cost would probably be in the millions for acquiring/building the facility. long-term costs would likely not be cheap either, probably 3-5 million per year for staffing, materials, damages, etc.

3. those found in violation in point 1 above would be transported to the facility in 2, and would have 1 week (flexible depending on judgement by mobile justice service) mandatory meetings with a case manager to try and get on a program of assistance and societal reintegration. after the meetings, they would be free to leave the facility if they chose but no transport would be provided. Cost would be relatively negligible, food for the duration of mandatory stay, shelter space is already paid for, and if full camping space would be available for free by the facility. some police



Home



Search



Post



For Sale



Notifications



8:11

90%

For you

Recent

Nearby

duration of mandatory stay, shelter space is already paid for, and if full camping space would be available for free by the facility. some police would be needed on site for legal violations but as a civil facility guarding requirements would not be the same as a jail. costs would be created if the person actually uses the social services afforded to them such as sobering and health care, but hopefully these costs would be offset by the person rejoining society.

I estimate that my plan would cost less than 20% of what our region is currently expending on this problem.

I would like to hear your thoughts and criticisms below, as well as alternative plans. remember this is a draft plan and needs a lot of work. after we get some responses, I will put together some sort of poll to get more direction.

Thanks!

Al Merkel

disclaimer: nothing here is intended to represent the view of the city or the council as a whole.



6:06

95%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 7h ag...

**Carol W.** · University · 11h**Albert**

After reading Jessica's complaint it made me wonder if you are really in compliance with the city's social media policy regarding your nextdoor account. Since your nextdoor account(s) like this one are strictly and only "posts and/or messages between you and others regarding city and or council meetings" the IT manager needs to associate your account with the city's social media archiving platform to ensure that all content, including posts and comments, is archived for public record retentions.

This is not only a requirement in the City's Governance Manual but also by RCW's for public records for the State of Washington and also the Federal Freedom of Information Act and Open Record Act.

I am a huge advocate for the Freedom of Information Act so I hope I interpreted her complaint wrong and you are in compliance. I can't think of one reason why you



Add a comment...



6:06

95%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 7h ag...



State of Washington and also the Federal Freedom of Information Act and Open Record Act.

I am a huge advocate for the Freedom of Information Act so I hope I interpreted her complaint wrong and you are in compliance. I can't think of one reason why you would not make your accounts available to the archive and all citizens of the Spokane Valley.

The legal consequence for enforcing those requirements to make your accounts compliant with the city, state, and federal government could be very costly for both the city and you. Litigation, settlements and fines could easily be thousands of dollars .

You campaigned on fiscal accountability and transparency in government so I hope if you are not in compliance you will become compliant and save the city possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars if not more in court cost, settlements and fines. It would also resolve this complaint easily.

1

Like

Reply

Share



Add a comment...



6:07

95%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 7h ag...



compliant and save the city possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars if not more in court cost, settlements and fines. It would also resolve this complaint easily.



1

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel**

Author

Pon...

10h



Carol your interpretation was correct the first time. her complaint is indeed wrong. did you see above? if my account is out of compliance so is hers. I think neither is. nothing has changed in the months I've been on council, so why complain now.



1

Like

Reply

Share

**Carol W.**

University · 9h



Albert No, my interpretation wasn't correct the first time. It has nothing to do with what or where you post or even what you say or don't say. Her complaint is about not complying with Washington's Open Record Act and making your nextdoor account(s) part of the city's archive so your comments on city and or council meetings



Add a comment...



6:08

95%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 7h ag...



not complying with Washington's
Open Record Act and making your
nextdoor account(s) part of the
city's archive so your comments on
city and or council meetings
business is archived and available
to every citizen of Spokane Valley.

You seem to be confusing the Open
Public Meetings Act (OPMA) with
the Open Public Records Act. Her
complaint had nothing to do with
OPMA and is clearly focused on
Washington State Open Public
Records Act.

Like

Reply

Share

**Carol W.** · University · 9h

Albert Yup, that is what she said
and was repeated on other
networks. I am trying to figure out
what she said that is inaccurate.
Seems pretty accurate to me.

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel** Author · Pond... · 8h

Carol no her complaint is about the
governance manual. she is just
couching it pretty language. her
account is the same as mine



Add a comment...



6:08

95%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 7h ag...



1

Like

Reply

Share

**Carol W.** · University · 8h

Albert Yes, it is about the governance manual Appendix H page 81 requiring you and all Councilmember's social media accounts to comply with the Washington Open Records Act and archive those records for public record retention.

Like

Reply

Share

**Carol W.** · University · 7h

Albert I did not reverse myself because when I replied I couldn't imagine you would not comply with Washington States Open Public Records Act. You are all about transparency. After reading her account it was apparent you were not archiving your account or she wouldn't have a leg to stand on. Presented with new facts I had another opinion. You and all council members must comply with the Open Records Act. It has nothing to do with your's or her's disclaimers or lack of disclaimers. You can disclaim all you want but everything you put on nextdoor about city and/or city council



Add a comment...



6:08

95%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 7h ag...



another opinion. You and all council members must comply with the Open Records Act. It has nothing to do with your's or her's disclaimers or lack of disclaimers. You can disclaim all you want but everything you put on nextdoor about city and/or city council business must be preserved and retained in public records. As I stated previously there are city, state and federal mandates to retain those records for public accessibility. Are you doing that? If you are there is no validity to her complaint. Quit trying to make this something it is not. It is about you, the governance manual and the Open Records Act. The only social media account I have ever seen on the main feed of nextdoor is yours.

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel** Author · Pond... · 7h ...

Carol not for personal accounts, which is exactly what YOU pointed out the first time. that's for OFFICIAL accounts. per legal definition, official accounts for legislative bodies are those which



Add a comment...



6:09

95%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 7h ag...



OFFICIAL accounts. per legal definition, official accounts for legislative bodies are those which are used to post things ON BEHALF of the council as a whole. in other words, if the council required me to get an account and post on behalf of the council or the city, then I would HAVE to register it. As I told everyone, in the beginning of the year I actually offered to do that but Manager Hohman said nextdoor was not supported. after researching the matter I found that it was not needed anyway since I am not posting on behalf of the council or the city.

the fact is, I have no legal power by myself which is why my personal accounts are not government records. my government authority exists only when I am in council (ie on the dias during an official function). there is an exception if I credibly claim to speak on behalf of the council as a whole (in other words if I were to lie or to make a mistake and claim that I am



Add a comment...



6:09

95%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 7h ag...



function). there is an exception if I credibly claim to speak on behalf of the council as a whole (in other words if I were to lie or to make a mistake and claim that I am speaking for the council).

so tell me Carol, have you ever felt that I was speaking on behalf of the whole council or the city 🤔🤔🤔🤔?

I would say it is pretty clear that nothing I say could be interpreted as being on behalf of the council since it is OBVIOUSLY clear that I am in the minority by myself.

in fact many have argued that even my council emails might not be considered government records IF It wasn't for the fact that the public records act ALSO includes documents that are CUSTOMARILY stored by government in addition to records that are government business.

my nextdoor items are clearly



Add a comment...



6:09

94%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 7h ag...



records that are government business.

my nextdoor items are clearly available for anyone with a nextdoor to read, they are not government records and storing them would only be a waste of your tax money.

as for violating the open meetings act, that has nothing to do with my account. if anyone violated the act it would be the council members who went out of their way to post on my posts.

Finally, the city has no authority to investigate the public records act, that's just not how that works.

(edited)

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel**

Author

Pond...

7h



Carol well I will let your words stand for themselves 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

let's see what other people think.



Add a comment...



7:31

88%



Albert Merkel



Albert Merkel

Ponderosa · 9h ·



SpoVal Council Changing Rules To Stop Me From Asking Your Questions- Al Merkel

Friends,

Another week another issue. In a continuation of attacks on me the council majority (politburo) will be changing the rules of council to limit my ability to ask questions and represent all of you.

Reported here:

<https://rangemedia.co/spokane-city-council-overdose-crisis-scraps/#:~:text=live%20streamed%20here.-,Spokane%20Valley%20City%20Council,-The%20rules%20are>

Emerging from their secret governance committee (not open to the public) the politburo is making big changes to the governance manual which will have the impact of limiting my questions, and probably placing me under continual investigation going forward.

here are the proposed changes (highlighted in red:

https://spokanevalley.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=3&event_id=579&meta_id=87787

most important are the following:

1. Page 20/85, section 6. Mayor will now be able to decide whether any of us can ask questions:





Albert Merkel



most important are the following:

1. Page 20/85, section 6. Mayor will now be able to decide whether any of us can ask questions:

“Councilmembers shall, at all times, confine their remarks to those facts that are relevant, as determined by the Presiding Officer, to the question or matter under discussion”

2. Chapter 5: 57/85. This whole chapter is new. It prescribes an enforcement mechanism for council actions.

a. Page 57/85, Section C. Why does this only apply going forward? It should apply from the beginning!

“However, said enforcement provisions shall apply only to that conduct occurring after the date Council passed the resolution adopting this Chapter 5 of the Governance Manual.”

b. The procedure is costly and empty. Why does it need to go to an investigator first? Why not simply go to the hearing examiner and let the hearing examiner decide? Why does it come back to council after hearing examiner? This seems like 1. Extra cost 2. Convoluted excuse for this to go to city manager first and keep me under investigation.

3. 65/85 Copies, out of state travel, dress code, and volunteers. All these sections are direct attacks on me. I am the only one who was looking for a student volunteer to give political



**Albert Merkel**

go to city manager first and keep me under investigation.

3.65/85 Copies, out of state travel, dress code, and volunteers. All these sections are direct attacks on me. I am the only one who was looking for a student volunteer to give political experience to.

4.Pg. 83/85 Social Media Policy, section 5. This is directed at me, but I am not sure what it means.

"Costs for the social media archiving platform shall be deducted from each councilmembers individual annual budgets."

84/85 section 9. I believe this is directed at me, but is no problem. There is still nothing in here that says I cant post about the city.

5.Page 54/85 section 2, all these committees should have been open to the public including this governance committee. It was done in secret

6.Page 28/85 section 19. This should be 3 touch rule:

"a. Except for unusual circumstances or emergencies, ordinances and resolutions shall customarily be prepared, introduced and proceed in normal fashion with an administrative report, then first and second reading in accordance with the "Three Touch Principle." Prior to final passage of all ordinances or resolutions, such documents shall be designated as drafts"



7:32

88%



Albert Merkel



Finally, they are moving to suspend the rules and pass this in one meeting. normally we are supposed to have a 3 touch rule, meaning that issues such come up in at least 3 meetings before being passed to give the public a sufficient chance to comment, but the politburo will be suspending the rules so that you all don't have a chance to comment on this change.

folks, it is clear that this majority has no interest in representing the public, only caring about wielding power.

if you are interested in making sure your elected representatives can actually represent you, please come tomorrow and comment or submit a comment in writing to the following email address:

councilmeetingpubliccomment@spokanevalley.org

thanks all!

Al Merkel

disclaimer:nothing in this post is meant to reflect the position of the city or the council as a whole.

Note that the Spokesman has reported on Sprague:

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2024/mar/11/getting-there-sprague-avenue-to-see-biggest-transf/>



7:32

88%



Albert Merkel



thanks all!

Al Merkel

disclaimer:nothing in this post is meant to reflect the position of the city or the council as a whole.

Note that the Spokesman has reported on Sprague:

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2024/mar/11/getting-there-sprague-avenue-to-see-biggest-transf/>

we will also be addressing scraps tomorrow so of you have any interest in that topic, feel free to come!



🔗 Spokane City Council to discuss declaring an overdose crisis – RANGE M...
rangemedia.co



2



3



Share



Albert Merkel



8:02  5G UC  88% 

Albert Merkel

Albert Merkel →  Spokane Val...Ponderosa · 9h · 

CM Yaeger takes out complaint about my nextdoor account.

folks, remember how at the beginning of the year I told you all they were trying to silence my nextdoor account? Remember how the other council members and their hired shills on here said that it wasn't true?

HA! Well that didn't last long... CM Yaeger says that in her opinion my nextdoor account violated the same manual that she insisted wasn't being created to silence my nextdoor account 😏.

I wonder if they think people won't remember?

well as I have emphasized all along, this was always their plan, attack, attack, attack. silence me so I can't be available. It's all been part of the plan: attack nextdoor, create investigations, harass my family, all to shut me up!

I ask again, if you think this is wrong please write the city council members, let them know that we see them!

also, keep. in mind the hypocrisy considering that both CM Yaeger and Mayor Haley have been posting on next door about city issues



8:03

5G UC 88%

**Albert Merkel**

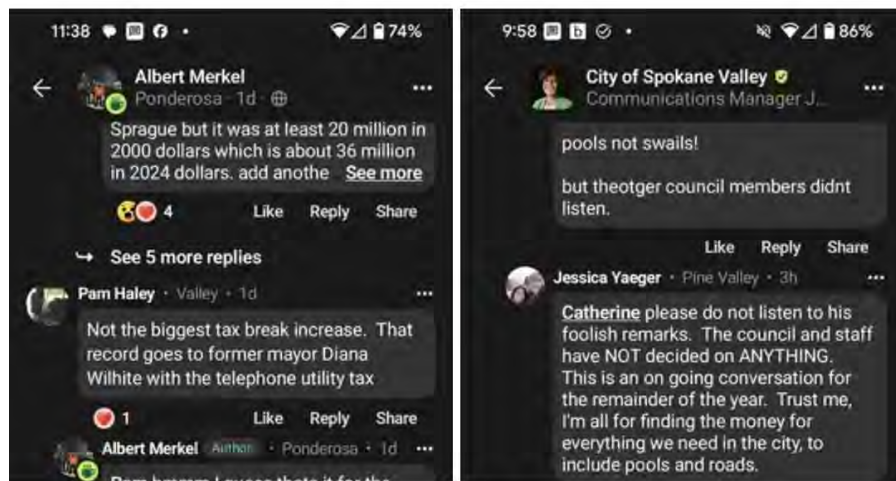
plan: attack nextdoor, create investigations,
harass my family, all to shut me up!

I ask again, if you think this is wrong please write
the city council members, let them know that we
see them!

also, keep. in mind the hypocrisy considering that
both CM Yaeger and Mayor Haley have been
posting on next door about city issues...

thanks!

disclaimer: obviously nothing in this post
represents the city or councils position as a
whole.

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · 22h ·



6:20

5G UC 85%

**Albert Merkel**

Ponderosa · Edited 19h a...

**Malika Dulce** · Colbert, WA · 8h

Votes never matter! Voting 🗳️ is a symbolic gesture to pacify people.



1

Like

Reply

Share

**Albert Merkel**

Author

Pond...

4h



Malika they matter to me! as your elected representative I would not be here without your votes.

I can tell you that none of the political elite wated me in this office. they still shun me and avoid me today. ifyou see what the city council has been doing it is as much to punish me as it is to punish all of those who got me elected.

I know there are many people these days who say similar things, but really the political people of all types hate me, because you all do matter.

they hate that I sincerely ask your opinions. they hate that I advocate for you all as I am doing on this project. they hate that I stand up for neighborhoods like Ponderosa. All of this stands to ruin the power they



Add a comment...



6:20 

5G UC  85% 



Albert Merkel

Ponderosa · Edited 19h a...



~~main~~ main they matter to me: as your elected representative I would not be here without your votes.

I can tell you that none of the political elite wated me in this office. they still shun me and avoid me today. ifyou see what the city council has been doing it is as much to punish me as it is to punish all of those who got me elected.

I know there are many people these days who say similar things, but really the political people of all types hate me, because you all do matter.

they hate that I sincerely ask your opinions. they hate that I advocate for you all as I am doing on this project. they hate that I stand up for neighborhoods like Ponderosa. All of this stands to ruin the power they have created by preying on your apathy and disconnectedness with decisions being made.

trust me, I am living proof that your votes do matter!

Like

Reply

Share



Add a comment...





1:42 •

5GUC 70%

Mike Dolan
 McDonald · 3d ·

issues people both on a... [See more](#)

1 Like Reply Share

Lucille Williams · Sprague · 1d

Day and time of mtgs?

1 Like Reply Share

Albert Merkel · Ponderosa · 1d

Lucille hello! meetings are on tuesdays at 6PM at city hall. I would come early though at 530PM to get a seat and sign up if you want to comment.

1 Like Reply Share

Lucille Williams · Sprague · 23h

Albert thank you.

1 Like Reply Share

Albert Merkel · Ponderosa · 23h

Lucille anytime!

Like Reply Share

Nancy Gaffney · Rossvale · 21h

I agree with you. It isn't said enough.

Add a comment...

DECLARATION OF ALBERT MERKEL

Pursuant to RCW § 5.05.050, I, Albert Merkel, state and declare as follows:

I am currently a member of the City of Spokane Valley City Council. I make this Declaration based upon my own personal knowledge and/or belief.

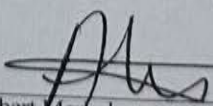
1. I have reviewed a copy of the public records request from an unknown requestor at the email address fordbradley82@gmail.com dated March 26, 2024, a copy of which is attached to this Declaration as attachment A.

2. I personally reviewed all content on all of my personal Nextdoor social media accounts to determine if I had any responsive posts and/or messages between me and others ^{that are} ~~regarding~~ _{Public Records} ^{and} ~~city and/or council business~~ from January 1, 2024, through March 21, 2024. _{Am 4/2/24}

3. I do not have any responsive social media posts on any personal Nextdoor accounts relating or responsive to the request in attachment A.

I hereby declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct.

DATED this 2 day of April, 2024, in Spokane Valley, Washington.



Albert Merkel

