

Culver City Observer -

COMMENTARY: FARRAGUT PARKING ISSUE EXPOSED CULVER CITY GOVERNMENT

By [Editor](#)

Dear Editor:

We won. We exposed the ineptitude, incompetence and lack of ethics of the Culver City City Council.

We exposed that, in Culver City, influence peddling trumps reason and justice. Ken Smith, a prominent member of Grace Church, has given new meaning to the phrase, “Ask and You Shall Receive.” We exposed Smith’s business, social and political relationships with former City Council member Andrew Weissman that Weissman conveniently forgot to mention. Apparently, in Culver City, bias greases the wheels of progress. That is, progress for the connected.

We exposed that the City Council and the City Attorney consider that Weissman’s intimation of staff in violation of the Code of Ethics ain’t no big deal. In fact, it appears that the City Attorney feels that the Code of Ethics ain’t no big deal.

We exposed that Culver City has a dark underbelly—a closed Facebook page maintained by Dan O’Brien, a prominent and active member of Grace Church—where bullies-in-training dwelled. That’s where Council member Jeffrey Cooper spewed his venom against Farragut residents. When he ignored our requests that he recuse himself, we exposed that Cooper is blind to the concept of bias. He must have studied at the Weissman School of Ethics.

We exposed that pay-back-time prevails in Culver City. Mayor James Clarke reminded us that the City Council, instead of simply denying any Brown Act violation and saying the City Council would not violate the Brown Act in the future—a legal requirement, anyway—spent \$300,00 to defend our legal actions.

Culver City paid \$300,000 to defend Weissman’s ego. That was a very bad business decision. Conveniently, Clarke forgot the \$30,000 per year in parking citations the City will no longer write against those who violated the permit-only-parking restrictions on Farragut.

Clarke lost it when he confused an expression of pride—“our street”—with alleged claims of ownership. He has probably seen *Les Misérables* one too many times.

Pay-back also came from the distant past. We exposed that some politicians will not gracefully fade away. Former City Council member Paul Jacobs, bearing the scars of prior disputes with Farragut residents, supported revoking our permit-only parking restrictions. It must have gotten to him that he was on the losing side for many years. He still is. Rumor has it that, for years, he goes ballistic every time he hears my name. “Les Greenberg.” “Les Greenberg.” “Les Greenberg.”

Another politico, who will not go away, was at the hearing. Weissman was literally standing in the shadows at the back of the room—making sure that the City Council members saw him, and remembered that the Godfather is still in charge here.

On the merits, we exposed that there has never been any showing that the permit-only-parking restrictions on the 10700 block of Farragut ever impeded any activity at the Grace Church.

Further, we exposed that the City Council will legislate by fiat and ignore the expertise of its staff. The City Council rewrote the parking law. It used to be, if a district met certain parking-intrusion criteria, the residents were entitled to permit-only-parking restrictions. Now, by fiat, one must demonstrate that, with TOW AWAY two-hour parking restrictions in place, one can meet the criteria. That is the moral equivalent of testing whether one can run a four-minute mile, but requiring that they carry a 30-pound bowling ball during the run.

We showed how the “parking study” was rigged. Weissman, before he and Cooper concocted their plan to suppress the parking intrusion count, wrote: “Pull off all restrictions on Farragut and conduct a brand new study to determine if 14 hour restrictions are necessary and appropriate.” (Emphasis added.) Then, when Weissman rolled his 30-pound bowling ball idea, the City Engineer informed Weissman, “This will not test whether the original restrictions that are being removed were warranted in the first place based on the City’s criteria.” (Emphasis added.) The Traffic Engineer added, “It would not be a fair study.” (Emphasis added.)

One of Clarke’s most inane statements exposed that he and the others may need to visit an audiologist. Clarke heard no criticism of the KOA “parking study.” He heard nothing about the Weissman-Cooper scheme to suppress the parking count. He did not hear that KOA “parking study” included parking spaces that have never had permit-only parking restrictions and, thus, skewed the numbers. He did not hear about the 59 cars that parked on the periphery of Farragut in unrestricted areas—obviously avoiding the tow away two-hour restrictions. He did not read the eight page counter-report that we provided to him. Perhaps, he should, also, visit a reading specialist.

We exposed that Thomas Small is not a progressive, but just another good ole-boy in sheep’s clothing. We learned that Göran Eriksson should go back to his old campaign promise to make the trains run on time, instead of tackling more intellectual-ethical issues. Our condolences to Meghan Sahli-Welles who serves with this crew of lessers (sic).

What more have we learned? We get the kind of government we vote into office. We need a new generation of competent and ethical City Council candidates who did not participate in the good ole-boy network. We need candidates who believe in improving the quality of life in Culver City as opposed to development at any costs. We need those who place residents’ interests first, and do not worship at the altar of the Chamber of Commerce.

We need to terminate the services of the City Attorney. It appears that the taxpayers are paying over \$300,000 per year for someone who tells the City Council whatever it wants to hear. We need a stand-up attorney, not a namby-pamby.

We won, but, unfortunately, Culver City has lost. The facade of Mayberry is gone forever. In the immortal words of Barry Scheck, “zay gezunt.”

Les Greenberg

Culver City