

# CITY OF DARIEN

## MEMO

**TO:** Mayor Marchese, City Council, City Clerk, and City Treasurer

**FROM:** Bryon D. Vana, City Administrator

**DATE:** November 11, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Goal Setting Agenda Topic Summary– Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

---

### **Goal Setting Item 4-Citizen Survey**

One of the questions in the survey asked the main source used to obtain information about the city. As expected, Direct Connect is the main source followed by our web site and Facebook. The comment section of this question also references the use of Next-door (ND) for information. You may be familiar with ND and the city also posts info on the Darien ND page. We don't receive many comments on our ND page but there are many individual posts regarding the various city issues. The resident survey does include responses that people do use ND for information.

I periodically review ND for posts about the city. Many of the posts/responses are inaccurate, malicious and slanderous. The city always welcomes any feedback whether it's positive or negative. However, attached are several posts, regarding the Gerber issue, that cross the line of reasonableness. These posts are all public comments, not private messages between two parties. The comments include:

- Gee, I wonder who is getting the kickbacks
- A response linking Mr. Gombac to the comment above
- It's all about whose palm got greased

The challenge for the city is responding to such posts on social media. We typically respond to questions or inaccurate posts on DC, Facebook and the ND city page. Sometimes I will comment on a non-Darien page ND post if there is a serious allegation or material misinformation. We don't respond to comments as they reflect opinions and we encourage that kind of feedback, positive or negative.

We are asking the council to discuss this issue and work collectively to a develop and approve a statement/resolution denouncing comments like the kind illustrated above. The statement can also include expectations the city has for people to be reasonable with social media public posts. This statement is by no means suggested to discourage comments but to ask for civility from people using social media. Any statement approved by the Council is symbolic in nature, but is important since social media is integrated in much of what we do.



- Home
- Discover
- For Sale & Free
- Notifications 10
- Messages
- Neighbors
- + Post

between what/how staff should act in these types of hearings.  
Like Reply Share +1 2

Cathie K. • Brookhaven-Farmingdale Terrace • 2d  
Bryan gee, I wonder who's getting the kickbacks on this deal.  
Like Reply Share +1 3

Elisa Stewack • Dupage Suburbs • Edited 2d  
Cathie: Yep my point exactly. Feel like Im going back to Cicero with the whole Maltese way of doing things. (edited)  
Like Reply Share 🙄❤️ +1 3

Bryon Vana • Willowbrook • 2d  
Cathie please elaborate on your comment, thank you  
Like Reply Share

Drew K. • Concord • 2d  
Bryon Please elaborate if your comments when using this Nextdoor account are on behalf of the city of Darien Thanks!  
Like Reply Share ❤️ 1

Brian Liedtke • Bruce Lake/Farmingdale Ridge • Edited 2d  
Bryan I can elaborate for her. Dan Gombec was intimately involved with this proposal. Dan provided answers for questions directly asked of the petitioner. Dan was observed laughing with and shaking hands with Mike Peirce before the meeting, as if this deal was already completed. Throughout the whole process, staff and aldermen in support helped coach the applicant through, telling them where they

nextdoor

steve leopoldo



- 🏠 Home
- 🔍 Discover
- 🏠 For Sale & Free
- 🔔 Notifications 16
- 💬 Messages
- 👤 Neighbors

+ Post

Like Reply Share

1



Brian Liedtke • Bruce Lake/Farmingdale Ridge • Edited 2d

**Bryan** I can elaborate for her. Dan Gombec was intimately involved with this proposal. Dan provided answers for questions directly asked of the petitioner. Dan was observed laughing with and shaking hands with Mike Peirce before the meeting, as if this deal was already completed. Throughout the whole process, staff and aldermen in support helped coach the applicant through, telling them where they needed to fix things and helping correct their lies. Staff made a path to approval easier by removing a variance request that the petitioner originally filled justification narrative out for. At one point Alderwomen Sullivan had to cut Dan off by saying she will ask the petitioners to answer directly and didn't need his input. Despite saying there were other development options, including listing off costs to convert this for other purposes, there were zero records to support this claim or dollar figure, per my FOIA. So yes, it's natural to ask why was he so involved, why was the sole focus only on this proposal, and what financial incentive does Darien receive for approving this over unanimous community opposition and the applicant not having brought findings of fact to support their approval? (edited)

Like Reply Share

4



Drew K. • Concord • 2d

**Brian** Remember you are asking a city that opted in its entire population to an inconvenient 3rd party electric aggregation service for a grand total of 10k. I am not sure if magic beans were included as a sweetener.

nextdoor

Gerber



Home

Discover

For Sale & Free

Notifications 16

Messages

Neighbors

+ Post

Like Reply Share

David Anderson • Bolingbrook, IL • 1d  
will you people shut up about this issue already!! It's all about whose palm got greased the most and there is not a dam thing you can do about it!!

Like Reply Share 2

Elizabeth Uribe • Farmingdale Village • 1d  
David That is not necessarily true. We are exploring options about what we CAN do. As you note, there were some seriously suspicious irregularities in the process.

Like Reply Share 2

Brian Liedtke • Bruce Lake/Farmingdale Ridge • 1d  
David While I agree with you that it's suspicious how this whole thing happened and it's questionable why the city staff was so intimately involved, I do not believe anybody should just "shut up" about this issue. That's what the mayor and aldermen would want, to have people silently fall in line and not object and let them do their jobs with no pressure.

Like Reply Share 1

Susan Novak Author • Woodmere • 1d  
David - if this were happening in your community of BOLINGBROOK, you may feel differently. As this is nowhere near where you live, you might just want to scroll on by and put all that passion into your neighborhood.

Like Reply Share 2