

August 16, 2021

MAYOR

Deana Holiday Ingraham

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ward A

Sharon D. Shropshire
Lance C. Robertson

Ward B

Karen René
Thomas Calloway

Ward C

Nanette Saucier
Myron B. Cook

Ward D

Joshua B. Butler, IV
Stephanie Gordon

CITY MANAGER

Frederick Gardiner

Ms. Andrea Hudson
2671 Westchester Drive
East Point, Georgia 30344
ahudson2671@yahoo.com

Re: False and Defamatory Comments

Dear Ms. Hudson,

I am writing to you on behalf of the City of East Point regarding your recent false and defamatory comments during City Council Meetings. Members of the public are, of course, entitled to speak on subjects of their choosing during the “Public Comment” section of the City Council Meeting Agenda. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution and generations of court cases also provide strong protection for political speech by residents. However, this protection is not unlimited and does not extend to defamatory statements.

During the August 2, 2021 City Council meeting you referred to Council Member Shropshire’s credit card bills, stating she has paid for Mental Health Services with the City’s credit card. You went on to call her “crazy” and state words to the effect that she needs more prayer if she is having a hard time mentally. Your statements were false; there have not been any mental health services paid for using the city’s credit card and your attacks on Council Member Shropshire’s mental health are unfounded and inappropriate. You knew these statements were false, or spoke with reckless disregard for their false nature, when you made these statements.

You previously addressed Council Member Shropshire’s use of the city credit card, including the charges you now say are for mental health services, during public comments on July 19, 2021. During that same meeting, Council Member Shropshire made clear statements for the record that the charges referred to, are for robocalls related to the city’s food security efforts for residents during the ongoing pandemic. Due to the comments made, the city has reviewed the bills in question, has confirmed the payments were for robocalls, and that no health services (mental or otherwise) have been paid for using city funds. To subsequently call her “crazy” and state she has paid for mental health services when she has already publicly stated the nature of those charges on the record shows, at the very least, a reckless disregard for the truth or, even more seriously, a knowing falsehood regarding city finances and the conduct of city officials.

I refer you to the Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A.) Title 51, Chapter 5 which does not allow statements of a defamatory nature, such as your statements noted above, to be made without consequence. These statutes specifically outline a cause of action

City Attorney’s Office

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available to victims of such false statements. Therefore, I am advising you to cease and desist making any attacks on the city and its officials using untrue statements regarding city matters. You would also be well served to retract your previous false statements. Continued statements of a false and defamatory nature regarding city officials and matters may result in the city taking any and all further legal action necessary to protect its reputation against false statements. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

s/Brad Bowman

Brad Bowman
City Attorney

