

John (Jack) R. Venrick

From: "Jack Venrick" <jacksranch@skynetbb.com>
To: "AJack R. Venrick" <jacksranch@skynetbb.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2009 4:30 PM
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Subject: Enumclaw Mayor accused of violating law



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EMAIL LETTER PRINT FOLLOW

Mayor accused of violating law

By **KEVIN HANSON**
Enumclaw Courier Herald Editor, Editor
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Councilman sends letter to attorney general

Enumclaw City Council Mike Ennis has charged Mayor John Wise with violating public disclosure laws and has asked the state's attorney general to investigate.

Ennis dropped the bombshell near the end of an already-contentious meeting of the Enumclaw City Council Jan. 26.

The complaint revolves around the city's ongoing effort to "brand" itself as a top-notch equestrian community and, specifically, the development of a logo to be used in that effort. A professional, paid consultant developed a preferred logo that city leaders showed to a few groups.

The consultant suggested that the logo be kept under wraps until the city could unveil a full campaign.

In a Jan. 26 letter to Wise, Ennis stated his dissatisfaction that, since the fall, the city has tried to keep the preferred logo from public view. He additionally criticized the consultant's stated view that "democracy and logos do not mix."

"I express my complete dissatisfaction with that philosophy," Ennis wrote. "With few exceptions, every art of business discussed by any municipality is and rightly should be available to the public."

In attempting to keep the logo hidden, Ennis charged in his letter, the mayor has created a "culture of secrecy" that puts Enumclaw at legal risk.

The letter Ennis sent to Tim Ford, the assistant attorney general for government accountability, leveled the same charges.

"The mayor has been very explicit in his attempt to 'hide' the process from public view," Ennis wrote.

With that, Ennis invited the AG's office to examine whether state laws were violated.

When Ennis introduced the topic during open session, Wise suggested the matter was best discussed behind closed doors in executive session. A quick survey of council members showed support for keeping the discussion in public view.

Adamantly disagreeing was Councilman Jeff Coats, who said he was "very embarrassed" that the attorney general's office was contacted.

He reiterated that the city was told by its consultant to keep the logo under wraps and noted his belief that the Ennis letter was "ridiculous."

Coats offered a motion that the full council ask Ennis to withdraw his letter to the AG's office. His request died when no one stepped forward to second the motion.

Reach Kevin Hanson at khanson@courierherald.com or 360-802-8205.

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