# ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

## AFFIDAVIT OF LICATION

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STATE OF ALASKA
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Lisi Misa
being first duly sworn on oath deposes and says that she is a representative of the Anchorage Daily News, a daily newspaper. That said newspaper has been approved by the Third Judicial Court, Anchorage, Alaska, and it now and has been published in the English language continually as a daily newspaper in Anchorage, Alaska, and it is now and during all said time was printed in an office maintained at the aforesaid place of publication of said newspaper. That the annexed is a copy of an advertisement as it was published in regular issues (and not in supplemental form) of said newspaper on

Feb. 9, 16, 23/2023

and that such newspaper was regularly distributed to its subscribers during all of said period. That the full amount of the fee charged for the foregoing publication is not in excess of the rate charged private individuals.

Signed Lisi Misa

Subscribed and sworn to before

me this 24th day of Feb.

2023 Lisa McGuire

Notary Public in and for
The State of Alaska.
Third Division
Anchorage, Alaska
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES
8/4/2026

Lisa M. McGuire
ELECTRONIC NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF ALASKA
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES 08-04-2026

AMCO Rcvd 4/14/2023

Anchorage Daily News - 02/09/2023



FROM PAGE A1

# GIRDWOOD

MARC LESTER / ADN archive 2022

Signs in locations across Girdwood declare "Halt Holtan Hills," a proposed housing development, on July 19.

EMILY MESNER / ADN archive 2022

Girdwood residents Krystal Hoke, left, and Brittney Blackledge, president of the Girdwood Community Land Trust, walk in the area of the proposed development site of Holtan Hills in Girdwood on Jan. 5, 2022. The Assembly rejected the housing plan Tuesday while expressing its mistrust with the involvement of Bronson and his administration.

"That's really unfortunate for the community since we have such a desperate need for housing," she said. "But there are always other opportunities to explore … and I'm committed to helping create housing through my land development activities."

Many Girdwood residents, and the five-member Girdwood Board of Supervisors, the local governing body, had strongly opposed the project. They're concerned it would create high-priced housing that many community members won't be able to afford. The Assembly postponed a similar vote on the issue in December, when dozens of people testified against the project, some carrying signs that read "Public lands should equal public benefits."

Small groups of Girdwood residents showed up Tuesday night. Longtime resident Betsy Connell waved her hands in the air as it became clear the Assembly would reject the project.

"I'm ecstatic," she said. "My biggest thing is there's been no leadership and a lack of people running the Heritage Land Bank, and they're disposing of the land."

Mike Edgington, co-chair of the Girdwood supervisor board, said Tuesday that the vote was the "right one in the current circumstances."

"The Girdwood community has been very engaged in the topic of housing, and we looked forward to working together with the Assembly and administration to develop housing which benefits the Girdwood community's most pressing needs," he said.

Some Assembly members said they felt like Girdwood was part of the problem and that some residents wanted to keep housing values high for personal benefit, a charge that Edgington said doesn't properly characterize the larger community's goal of creating housing that's affordable for residents.

During the vote, several Assembly members praised Yoshimura and Adam Trombley, who has helped lead the project for the administration and took over as Bronson's chief of staff in September.

But some said they couldn't put the project in the hands of an administration that faces a number of allegations of wrongdoing, including from former municipal manager Amy Demboski, and one that's seen a steady departure of key staff. On Monday, that included the resignation of Niki Tshibaka, Anchorage's chief human resources officer, who blamed an "increasingly toxic, hostile, and demoralizing work environment."

Assembly member Meg Zaletel, who proposed the motion to stop the project, said the administration's "failed leadership" has contributed to serious shortcomings in top employees. It hasn't had a land bank director or real estate director for more than a year, among other key openings, she said.

"Firsthand reports of incompetence in the mayor's office really gives me no faith that this current administration will implement this ordinance in a way that does anything meaningful," she said.

"I do not believe that Mayor Bronson will work to bring the parties together to see this project to fruition," she said. "I have serious doubts that Mayor Bronson can even get this project off the ground."

Bronson was not on hand for the discussion about Holtan Hills, which began late in Tuesday's meeting. He left the meeting earlier, after the Assembly decided to ask courts to enforce a subpoena of his administration's records related to the hiring of Bronson's former Health Department Director Joe Gerace. Gerace resigned in August ahead of the publication of an Alaska Public Media report that found he had fabricated and exaggerated details on his resume.

On Wednesday afternoon, Bronson shot back at the Assembly in a prepared statement about Holtan Hills, saying the members who voted to stop the development "showed their true colors."

"Their hypocrisy was on full display: last night the Assembly passed a resolution claiming they support housing in Girdwood and on January 10th they passed a resolution stating they support housing development at all price points in all areas of the city," Bronson said. "And yet, they killed this project."

### 'We do not have an administration we can trust'

The decision was the second time in recent months that the Assembly had canceled a major project amid concerns over the Bronson administration. In October, members rejected Bronson's plan to continue funding the construction of a controversial homeless shelter and navigation center off East Tudor Road. The vote came weeks after the revelation that, against city code, Bronson officials authorized millions in construction work over the summer without first getting the required Assembly approval to increase the contract with Roger Hickel Contracting by $4.9 million.

Chair Suzanne LaFrance said Tuesday night that the Assembly had not received all the details about Holtan Hills that it had sought from the administration, including more data about finances and the land.

La France said it's "really frustrating" to stop the project after "so much work has gone into it and there is such a need for housing across all price points."

"But it's not ready to move forward because we do not have an administration we can trust," she said.

She said she doesn't believe the administration will properly execute the terms of the deal.

Trombley, during an unsuccessful plea to change Assembly members' minds, acknowledged Tuesday that the administration had erred with the navigation center.

But Trombley said he had communicated honestly with the Assembly about Holtan Hills, including when he was given directives not to communicate. He asked that the administration not be seen as one "giant entity" and instead that they consider his individual efforts to create more housing.

"Did the administration mess up on that with the navigation center? Yes it did," he said. "My ask is that you don't lump it all together."

But LaFrance replied that while she appreciates Trombley's efforts, the administration has time after time refused to work with the Assembly.

"It's not you guys who are here, it's not the long-standing dedicated municipal employees," LaFrance said "It's the mayor — I'm just going to be very frank about that. Because it is a huge disappointment as my colleagues have said, that an issue concerning housing hasn't been able to move forward."

Joining Zaletel and LaFrance in stopping the project were Kameron Perez-Verdia, Felix Rivera, Randy Sulte, Robin Dern and Pete Petersen.

Chris Constant, Austin Quinn-Davidson, Joey Sweet, Kevin Cross and Daniel Volland voted "no" on the measure to halt the project.

### 'NIMBYs'

Opposing Assembly members said the project was badly needed and that the vote could prevent future developers from working with the city. They said it seemed that Girdwood didn't want new multifamily housing.

Quinn-Davidson blasted Girdwood residents for "aggressive community feedback" that unfairly maligned Yoshimura, the developer. The process has been "so gross" to watch, she said.

"It feels like a lot of the folks providing testimony want this project to solve all the problems of Girdwood, and they want this private developer to roll in and solve all the problems of Girdwood, and they want her to pay for it," she said. "But that's not how the world works."

Echoing Constant, she said some Girdwood residents, without naming names, have fought the project but own multiple short-term rentals and are part of the town's housing problem.

Constant said the administration has been a "disaster," but that Yoshimura has a record of getting projects done. He said the Assembly has a duty to provide new housing in Anchorage but was giving in to the "NIMBYs," or "not in my backyard" opponents.

The Assembly's rejection would support Girdwood residents sitting in "their third and fourth home in Girdwood while they rent out short-term rentals," who want to see their property values remain high.

"I am so sad that we are going to watch this project crumble," he said.

Edgington, with the Girdwood board, said after the vote that most people in Girdwood want to see a variety of new housing built. He acknowledged that some of the louder opponents of Holtan Hills had "conflicts of interest."

"People are allowed to do that if they're not elected, but that doesn't reflect the general sense of the community," he said. "I own one home, and plenty of people are involved in the process want more housing. That's the overriding opinion of the community."

Volland said he shares skepticism with other members about the administration's ability to pull off the project. But he said he's also skeptical that residents in Girdwood would have accepted any compromise.

"I think if we don't move forward, we're going to have a very chilling impact on any future builders and developers wanting to do work in Girdwood, and we're going to be right back where we are at, square one, in the future," he said.

FROM PAGE A1

# COURT

attorneys to begin litigation. The Assembly will ask a court to compel the administration to publicly release its reports on Gerace's hiring and comply with a subpoena issued by Chair Suzanne LaFrance on Feb. 2.

The Assembly's move to enforce a subpoena came the night before the city's top attorney worked her last day on the job. Acting municipal attorney Blair Christensen resigned last month. Her last day was Wednesday.

It also comes as the mayor faces threat of a lawsuit from his recently fired city manager.

The February subpoena called for the administration to deliver two documents: a September 2022 document "styled as an investigation" and a January 2023 memorandum based on the September report, according to the subpoena.

It demanded that the city's top human resources executive, Niki Tshibaka — who abruptly resigned on Monday — turn them over by 5 p.m. Tuesday.

Acting Municipal Attorney Blair Christensen then declined to produce the documents in a Tuesday letter to Assembly leaders. Christensen argued that the documents are confidential, protected by city code and that "releasing such documents would violate code and employees' constitutionally protected privacy."

The February Assembly subpoena followed a previous subpoena issued to Tshibaka in January, which summoned him, along with the department's records, to a closed-door session. Afterward, frustrated Assembly leaders said they received little if any new information that hadn't already been made public.

In a heated moment Tuesday night, LaFrance ripped into the mayor for his refusal to honor the second subpoena, his silence on a recent series of allegations against him and his officials, and a recent exodus of his top officials.

At the closed session, "we get nothing, absolutely nothing," LaFrance said.

"The municipality, the mayor's administration is on fire. It's burning. We get nothing. And it's a little bit … hard to be here, in our meetings, over and over, where the mayor refuses to talk to the community. He refuses to share information with the Assembly. He refuses to share information with the public. And we're supposed to go on continuing, 'Oh, everything's OK,' " LaFrance said. "It's not OK. This is a very serious situation. "

Bronson promised an investigation, and the Assembly and community have received nothing, she said.

"Yes, I am upset. Forgive me. But this is really hard to take, Mr. Mayor, and I don't understand your behavior. It's like you don't give a hoot about our community. So I think it's time that you address us all and tell us what the heck is going on with your administration."

Bronson, responding to LaFrance, doubled down on his attorneys' arguments that personnel matters cannot be made public.

"I understand your emotion. At the end of the day, you need to understand this as a legal issue. The people that need to answer this are over here," Bronson said, referring to the city attorneys.

"I could order all the documents, whatever, and it, the law department will still refuse. I can order them released. It makes no difference. I don't know — we've been dealing with some of these issues, Blair (Christensen) has, for over a year," Bronson said. "And the answer is always going to be the same .. in that this is a legal issue. I don't know how you don't understand that. But, I just thought I needed to be on the record to summarize what Blair's been saying for a year."

Assembly leaders contend that the information isn't protected and that any protected parts of the reports could be redacted. LaFrance in February had also called on the administration to release the reports, with any information the administration believed to be privileged redacted from the reports, and with a log of the omissions.

LaFrance issued the first subpoena to Tshibaka after city lawyers told members a subpoena and closed session was necessary to discuss personnel records protected by privacy rights in the Alaska Constitution.

On Tuesday, LaFrance and others called that January executive session, essentially, a farce orchestrated by the administration to keep information from the public.

"We were duped into going into executive session. The reason we were given wasn't really valid. And when we got into executive session, we learned there was nothing confidential there. And that's a dangerous precedent. It's us, as the Assembly, the legislative and oversight body that represents the people of Anchorage, being asked to keep this administration's secrets. And that's not OK," Assembly member Meg Zaletel said.

Initially, members had voted after the January executive session to immediately release tapes of the meeting. Before passing the resolution on Tuesday to begin litigation, members rescinded that decision — assembly attorneys had advised the matter be settled by a court.

As administrator of the department, Tshibaka was responsible for overseeing the vetting of Gerace's experience and qualifications and has been at the center of the Assembly's ongoing investigation into the matter.

Tshibaka in his resignation letter on Monday said that he'd been directed to vet and onboard Gerace with a "one-day business turnaround." He did not say who gave him that direction.

When questioned about that by Zaletel on Tuesday night, Bronson said he could not comment on personnel issues, citing the advice of Christensen.

Zaletel pushed back, saying, "Whether or not you asked for additional vetting or actually only asked for a one-day turnaround is a factual issue," not a legal or personnel issue.

"As it addresses a former employee and current employees in that process … that is an HR issue, and I think you should know that. I know you feel differently, but the facts are the facts, and this is an HR issue," Bronson replied.

Since Bronson's firing in December of former city manager Amy Demboski, turmoil within his administration has rapidly escalated, including a string of resignations of some of his top executives — Christensen, former deputy chief of staff Brice Wilbanks and Tshibaka.

Demboski issued a scathing letter accusing Bronson and members of his administration of unethical behavior, misconduct and fostering a hostile work environment, among other issues.

Recent Daily News reports and interviews with several City Hall workers have corroborated some of Demboski's claims.

More reports of a hostile work environment have poured into the Anchorage ombudsman's office from current and former city employees.

The ombudsman referred a case to municipal prosecutors, who then referred it to the state Department of Law, after multiple City Hall employees said they were afraid to make complaints to the ombudsman because an executive had been talking openly about reviewing surveillance footage within the building.

Bronson has largely remained silent over the issues in City Hall. He has refused multiple interview requests and declined to answer questions about Demboski's allegations, citing the advice of attorneys not to discuss matters of "potential litigation."

On Tuesday, Assembly member Kameron Perez-Verdia urged the mayor to speak to the public and address the issues, including "the massive amount of resignations and the toxic work environment."

"I'd like to give you an opportunity to respond to those — not the HR issues — the issues of the fact that your administration is crumbling. And I'd like to hear from you as to what's going on and what you're doing about it," Perez Verdia said. "The second question is, have you seriously considered resigning?"

Bronson replied that he had not.

"I have not considered resigning in any way, in any fashion whatsoever," he said. "As to the issues that you are reading about in the media, we are, I think, prepared to have a work session on that, if you are prepared for that."

Several key executive positions leading the city's departments are not permanently filled and have only an acting executive working in a temporary capacity.

The extent of vacancies or temporary appointments is not entirely clear, as multiple leadership changes have been made over the last several months. Anchorage's Human Resources Department has not yet filled a Jan. 26 request by the Daily News for information on top executive positions.

Later Tuesday night, citing serious doubts over the Bronson administration's competence and the numerous vacancies, the Assembly voted down a long-planned project to build a large new housing development in Girdwood.

Pete and Eva Foudeas dba 36th Ave. Liquor located at 1207 W 36th Ave #B, Anchorage is applying for transfer of a Package Store AS 04.11.150 liquor license to ALLOCATED LLC dba ALLOCATED. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave. Suite 1600 Anchorage AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov

Alternative Distributors, Inc. is applying under 3 AAC 306.300 for a new Retail Marijuana Store license, license #35326, doing business as AK Smoke and Vape, located at 570 E Benson Blvd, Suite 20, Anchorage, AK, 99503, UNITED STATES.

Interested persons may object to the application by submitting a written statement of reasons for the objection to their local government, the applicant, and the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) not later than 30 days after the director has determined the application to be complete and has given written notice to the local government. Once an application is determined to be complete, the objection deadline and application information will be posted on AMCO's website at https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco. Objections should be sent to AMCO at marijuana.licensing@alaska.gov or to 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq at jana@jlwcounsel.com or 901 PhotoAvenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

Reilly's Alaska, INC
dba Reilly's Irish Pub
located at 317 Fireweed Lane,
Anchorage, Ak 99503

is applying for transfer of a Beverage Dispensary
AS 04.11.090 liquor license to Angel Share, LLC.

Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at
550 West 7th Ave.
Suite 1600
Anchorage AK 99501
or
alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov
PUB: 1/25, 2/1, 2/8

Maria Gallo-Covarrubias DBA, Los Arcos Restaurant located at 2000 E Dowling Rd. #1 Anchorage, Alaska 99507 is applying for transfer of a Beverage Dispensary with a security interest to Jose Gallo. AS 04.11.090 liquor license to 10 Gallo Inc. DBA Los Arcos Restaurant. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave. Suite 1600 Anchorage AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov

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FROM PAGE A1

# GIRDWOOD

destinations nationally, Girdwood has many second homes and vacation rentals that have sharply boosted rents and home values. That has priced workers, including child care providers, firefighters and teachers, out of the housing market, residents say.

But as Girdwood residents look beyond Holtan Hills to other ways to address the town's housing crisis, fixing the problem won't be easy, people on all sides seem to agree.

New construction will be costly in a hard-to-build landscape without a local workforce and materials. Getting federal subsidies could be difficult for a town with a relatively high average income, though residents say many people there don't make much money. The town will also need the support of the city's land bank, which holds most developable land in Girdwood. And any big project will be complex, likely requiring partnerships with outside entities and new funding sources.

LOREN HOLMES / ADN

Emma Kramer, seen outside her off-grid home Monday in Girdwood, has a well at her residence but no septic system. The home is heated by a wood stove, and power is from both solar panels and a back-up generator.

Several Assembly members who rejected Holtan Hills cited turmoil and turnover in Mayor Dave Bronson's administration to argue that the city was ill-prepared to oversee the housing project. But Girdwood's concerns about the project were also a factor — the project became a flashpoint in the community, with "HALT HOLTAN HILLS!" signs proliferating in front of homes there over the past year.

"This actually increases the urgency of Girdwood and the municipality and other partners to find a solution to our housing crisis," said Mike Edgington, co-chair of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors, the local governing body. "We have to rebuild bridges that were potentially burned and move forward with achievable goals to get an increase in attainable housing in the next two to three years."

Holtan Hills was largely expected to provide housing for sale at market-rate prices, which in Girdwood are far above the state average, residents say. But resort towns are unique and need a sizable number of houses available for workers because of the strong demand for housing from outside buyers, they say.

"The general solution in Anchorage is you build more housing, you help the problem," Edgington said. "That's not true in resort towns. It has to be targeted in some way."

### A desire to be an 'innovator' for housing

The Assembly recently provided Girdwood, which is part of the municipality but a 40-minute drive from Anchorage proper, with new tools to develop affordable housing.

Assembly members last week called on the land bank, at the administration's direction, to work with Girdwood to transfer city-owned parcels to a qualified nonprofit there and develop housing that year-round residents can afford. The nonprofit could be the land trust or another entity, as well as a partner.

The Assembly also approved a measure allowing Girdwood residents to vote in April's municipal election to expand the powers of their local government to provide services that support housing development and economic stability.

"The ball really is in their court," said Assembly Chair Suzanne LaFrance, who represents Girdwood and other South Anchorage areas. "I'm interested to see what they'll come up with."

Patching up Girdwood's reputation is key, residents say.

Assembly members who supported Holtan Hills suggested at last week's meeting that Girdwood doesn't want new residential development. They said the rejection of the project could have a chilling effect on new development in the town.

Assembly Vice Chair Chris Constant said at the meeting that some wealthy community members prefer to keep the housing stock limited for their financial benefit. He referred to the opposition as "NIMBYs," or "not in my backyard" opponents. Member Austin Quinn-Davidson said the community had unrealistic expectations that Holtan Hills should solve all its housing problems, and that residents were rude and aggressive in fighting the project. Their treatment of Yoshimura was "outrageous," she said.

"The first thing in my mind is getting the story right and repairing any damage done to our community," said Kramer, president of the Upper Crow Creek Community Association, a neighborhood of about 35 off-grid households in Girdwood.

She and her family use solar panels and backup generators for electricity.

"I hate feeling like people see us as a group of white, privileged people. I'm white, but I have an outhouse and no running water," said Kramer, former owner of the now-closed Java Haus bake shop at the resort.

"I really want to bring the narrative back to, 'Hey, we're trying to do this, so that all those who enjoy Girdwood can benefit from it,' " Kramer said.

Edgington said Girdwood has found innovative solutions to its problems, like zoning that makes duplexes an option on any residential parcel in town.

If the community in April votes for the right to expand its powers, it could have the option of raising taxes locally and finding other funding streams to provide services that support housing development, Edgington said. That could allow the local governing body to take steps like hiring consultants to study housing projects.

The expansion of authority is a step the town has already taken for police, fire and other services. It would be a first for a service area in the municipality, he said.

"We want to be an innovator across the municipality for housing," Edgington said.

### Cabins, yurts, treehouse villages

The land trust recently met with the Heritage Land Bank staff to discuss housing concepts, said Krystal Hoke, a member of the Girdwood land trust.

The community needs housing quickly, she said. Some businesses can't fully open because they lack enough workers.

One idea is installing perhaps 30 insulated yurts on city-owned property near the library, she said. A communal building would house a shared kitchen and bathrooms for each unit, significantly reducing costs because the yurts would not have plumbing or permanent foundations.

Other quick-fix ideas being tossed around include adding spots for vans at the campground, with sewer and power hookups, or acquiring old modular military housing. A small raised village among the trees that could also be a tourist destination is another idea, like the Cannaley Treehouse Village in Toledo, Ohio, Hoke said. Small dwellings could be built on stilts among the trees, and perhaps a raised visitor center could be constructed there, too.

"It would create an iconic area and be very Girdwood-esque," Hoke said.

More permanent housing could be built in the next three to five years on parcels that are currently city-owned, Hoke said. For that, the trust has proposed small A-frame cabins with modern amenities. The simple triangular frames would limit construction costs, Hoke said.

Girdwood includes some large, expensive homes, she said. But many residents, like her family, also enjoy living in cabins or modest dwellings, she said.

She said the community has also been collecting ideas from officials in ski resort towns in the Lower 48 on how they address their housing issues. She hopes to use Community Development Block Grants, federal funding, to support residential development in Girdwood, she said.

"As much as we are in the municipality, we are really our own town," Kramer said. "Living here with nature instead of being in the city is what a lot of Girdwood folks appreciate."

But the town supports development, she said.

"We are not just holding onto our trees like we don't want to cut them," she said.

### 'Prove it'

Assembly member Randy Sulte once had a second home in Girdwood and represents the town as part of his South Anchorage district. He said the community needs to quickly update its land-use plans, an effort that's underway.

It also needs to submit a proposal to the Heritage Land Bank for a possible land transfer.

Sulte said because Girdwood is not a disadvantaged community, tapping public funding for affordable housing will be a challenge.

Girdwood will need to find a new revenue stream to support its housing efforts, he said. That could include raising taxes locally or establishing a local carve-out from the Anchorage bed tax, he said.

If the community really wants new housing development, they need to "prove it," he said. He said he's concerned that Assembly colleagues might be right when they say Girdwood doesn't want new housing.

Assembly member Meg Zaletel, representing Midtown, proposed the resolution calling on the land bank to prioritize a land transfer for Girdwood housing.

She envisions the land bank and the community working together. The land bank needs to consider financial mechanisms that can support development, like possibly creating a special tax improvement district in Girdwood to support development.

"We need to see what are our tools, how can they be leveraged and is there a developer who can come in," she said.

City officials associated with the land bank were not available for comment.

Andre Spinelli, with Spinell Homes, said any project in Girdwood will face significant challenges that could push costs much higher than the community anticipates. Developing wetlands, building new roads or going through the permitting process are some hurdles.

He said there's demand for new housing in Girdwood, so real estate developers like him will remain interested in pursuing projects there.

Yoshimura, the longtime Anchorage real estate agent and residential land developer who led Holtan Hills, said the project was her first in a public-private partnership. It can be a complicated effort, she said.

"It's obvious to me many factors come into play in a public-private partnership," she said. "It's difficult for most of us who are private developers to understand that and participate in that process."

"I wish anyone who wants to attempt it all the good luck in the world," she said.

# Treat spouse with affection

AMY DICKINSON
ASK AMY

**Q. Dear Amy:** You published my question signed, "Looking For Love."

My question seems to have generated a number of responses and considerable speculation about my situation.

Here goes: It is now 7 p.m. and I have just returned from the store. I went at the request of my wife, who asked that I get her some wine, a dessert, and Benadryl.

I don't consume any of these things.

What would be reasonable to expect in return?

A hug? No.

A kiss? No

A thank you? Well, sure. I did get a thank you. But isn't it reasonable to expect something more than the kind of thank you that a stranger might get for holding the door open?

*— Still Looking*

**A. Dear Looking:** Your sadness and frustration is evident. You should express all the same to your wife. I received some great and timeless advice once from a long-married friend — to always remember to treat your spouse with the same enthusiasm and affection that you treat your most treasured friend.

You can email Amy Dickinson at askamy@amydickinson.com or send a letter to Ask Amy, P.O. Box 194, Freeville, NY 13068. You can also follow her on Twitter @askingamy or Facebook.

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FORECLOSURE SALE

2/17/2023 at 11:00 A.M.
Ouside the Main Entrance of the Boney Courthouse
303 K Street, Anchorage, AK 99501

Property Address:
18132 Misty Falls Circle Eagle River AK 99577
Lot 30, Block 2, PARKVIEW TERRACE SUBD. under Plat No. 82-448, Anchorage Recording District, Third Judicial District, State of Alaska
1,763 sq.ft. 3 Bedroom, 1.75 Bathrooms, 2 Car Garage/8,282 sq.ft Lot
This property is not available for viewing prior to sale

Tax Assessed Value 2022: $345,200.00

OPENING BID AMOUNT: $317,969.00

Cash or Certified Funds Only
Property is sold "as is, where is," no warranties expressed or implied

For more information contact Mary Fox - NMLS# 1558934, at 907-261-8711 or Michelle Lozano - NMLS# 1831112 at 907-261-4628 - Northrim Bank - NMLS #490464, Servicing Agent for AHFC

FORECLOSURE SALE

February 24, 2023 at 10:00 AM
Property Address: 657 N. Ray Floyd's Place, Wasilla, AK 99654

Lot 4, Block 3, Mission Hills Subdivision, Phase II, according to Plat No. 84-124, located in the Palmer Recording District, Third Judicial District, State of Alaska.

3 bed, 2 bath, 1617 sq. ft

This property is not available for viewing prior to sale

306,800.00 Tax Assessed Value

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AMCO Rcvd 4/14/2023

ANCHORAGE

# Bronson seeks gag order against fired director after suit filed

Kyle Hopkins
and Zachariah Hughes
Anchorage Daily News

The former director of the city Office of Equal Opportunity filed a lawsuit in federal court Tuesday accusing Mayor Dave Bronson of firing her in retaliation for investigating alleged illegal acts by the mayor's leadership team.

The complaint mirrors a lawsuit that Heather MacAlpine filed nearly a year ago in state court. The city answered that lawsuit in July, saying MacAlpine was not fired in retaliation for acting as a whistleblower and denying claims that a library official made racist statements.

"Despite her good standing and stellar job performance, (Municipality of Anchorage) terminated Ms. MacAlpine for reporting the complaints made by MOA employees regarding JE's conduct," the new lawsuit claims, using the initials for Judy Eledge, who at the time was Bronson's appointee to serve as acting library director.

The complaint, filed in U.S. District Court in Anchorage, says MacAlpine was investigating claims by library employees that under Eledge the workplace had become toxic, rife with discriminatory remarks, political favoritism and emotional distress.

Last week, a city attorney asked a state judge to issue a gag order preventing MacAlpine and her attorneys from talking about her claims against the city.

In that request, filed Feb. 13, assistant municipal attorney Linda Johnson asked that MacAlpine be ordered to not speak about potential depositions given by Bronson, former Municipal Manager Amy Demboski and other witnesses in the state lawsuit.

"MacAlpine knows or should know that providing selective items of evidence and making statements to the media would have a substantial likelihood of materially prejudicing an adjudicative proceeding, especially in light of the media attention paid to the current administration," Johnson wrote on behalf of the city.

MacAlpine's attorney, Eva Gardner, refused an interview request Wednesday. Johnson didn't respond to a phone call or emails.

In response to questions about the federal lawsuit, Bronson spokesman Hans Rodvik responded by email, "We have received the following advice from the Legal Department, that due to the pending litigation at hand we cannot comment on this matter."

The Bronson administration has been under a public spotlight since Demboski— who ran the city on a daily basis for Bronson and was once among his most ardent public supporters — sent a letter to the city saying she had been fired for flagging potential illegal activity. Demboski made a slew of allegations against the mayor and his executives and advisers, including assertions of corruption, unlawful contracting and enabling an adviser to attempt to obstruct an ongoing criminal case.

Bronson fired MacAlpine on May 11. Her lawsuits say the firing came as she began investigating claims by employees that Bronson's pick to run the library had made racist statements and other derogatory comments.

The filing includes several examples of discriminatory remarks staff reported that Eledge made during her tenure as acting library director.

"Employees told MacAlpine that JE had used the term 'Eskimo,' and stated that (Alaska Natives) 'diddle their kids' and infect them with venereal disease," according to the complaint. "(Eledge) stated 'The atmosphere here has gone downhill with woke movements like Black Lives Matter … I'm telling you, the woke culture is killing libraries and this country. If I could get rid of those employees I could turn this library around for good.'"

According to MacAlpine and her lawyers, there were other comments that were sexist, disparaged disabled people, and were politically hostile.

The lawsuit says the discrimination extended beyond remarks and into library policy.

"They also reported that (Eledge) had instructed security to enforce (the Loussac Library's) 'one bag' policy — allowing patrons to bring only one bag into the library — in a selective, discriminatory way. Specifically, she instructed security not to enforce the policy against 'mothers with diaper bags,' but to enforce it strictly against individuals who appeared homeless, many of whom appeared to be Alaska Native," the filing states.

On multiple occasions, according to MacAlpine, library employees heard Eledge say that her job was protected because of her close relationship with Bronson.

"I'm untouchable. No one can fire me in my position," Eledge is alleged to have said. "The mayor picked me, he put me here for a reason — he won't fire me."

Eledge did not immediately respond to an email or phone call about the new federal filing. In its answer to MacAlpine's lawsuit in state court, the city denied that Eledge had made racist statements and denied that she claimed she could not be fired and that she ordered selective enforcement of the bag policy.

Both lawsuits name the mayor and former human resources director NIki Tshibaka, among other city employees, as defendants.

Tshibaka resigned Feb. 6, citing "an increasingly toxic, hostile, and demoralizing work environment." In his letter of resignation, Tshibaka wrote that he had been directed to "vet and onboard" former city health director Joe Gerace in a single day. The state filed a lawsuit against Gerace in December, claiming he owes more than $61,000 after fraudulently claiming to be a high-ranking former U.S. military officer.

MacAlpine's lawsuit says that MacAlpine had received positive feedback on the job she was doing not long before she began investigating Eledge and complaints about the library. According to the filing, the city's human resources department "has received instructions from Mayor Bronson, or someone acting on his behalf, not to investigate JE or take any disciplinary action against her."

Eledge still works for the municipality and is listed as the deputy director of library services online.

MacAlpine's lawsuit is seeking that she be reinstated to her former job, receive back pay and compensatory damages, along with punitive damages and attorney's fees. If a jury decides the case in her favor at trial that would mean the municipality would be on the financial hook once damages are determined.

In the city's Feb. 13 request for a gag order, Johnson wrote that the accusations against the mayor had become the subject of a "media frenzy." The filing included copies of letters exchanged between the city and MacAlpine's attorney.

In one Feb. 9 letter, MacAlpine's lawyer wrote: "I trust your letter is not a threat by your client to refuse to engage in discovery unless our client agrees to confidentiality requirements not imposed by the law or the court."

Johnson did not respond to questions asking if the mayor would indeed refuse to engage in the discovery process if MacAlpine did not agree to a confidentiality agreement.

FROM PAGE A1

## ROOF

apparently caused by sloping on the roof, may have been the biggest factor in the collapse.

"The roof area in general is quite large, and it looks like a substantial portion of the roof was sloping in that direction," he said, toward the northeast corner of the building where the gym was located.

Noffsinger said more analysis must be done before officials reach a final conclusion.

But Noffsinger said it appears that the ice buildup was so thick in the area above the gym that its weight may have been more than double the amount of the city's design criteria for ice and snow on roofs of 40 pounds per square foot.

Noffsinger said that liquid may have been collecting on the roof over the gym, and with freezing and thawing it may have turned into massive amounts of ice — almost "creating glaciation," he said.

"It definitely resulted in substantially overloading that northeast corner of the building," Noffsinger said of the ice buildup.

The city is waiting on an engineer's structural report that should provide more information about the building. The report is being done by a private sector engineer that works for the building owner, SBV Leasing.

A contractor, Chuck Dunn of Dunn Contractors and Associates, has been hired by the building owner. Dunn said he is shoring up the building and working with the structural engineering company, DCI Engineers.

Dunn acknowledged that ice buildup may have been one factor, but he said other issues may have been at play. He said the analysis includes an extensive look at many factors including the building's condition, history and building materials, such as the use of wood framing in the northern section of the building instead of the cinder block used in other parts.

"We have a lot to determine still, so it's premature to say what the cause was," he said.

Building owner Ruth Lonser with SBV Leasing declined to comment on Wednesday. "I don't have anything to report at this time," she said in a text.

Dunn said the second roof collapse occurred on the northwest side of the building, adjacent to the former gym. No one was hurt, but the roof crashed down with "a big loud bang" on Sunday morning, said Dunn, who was holding a safety meeting on the site at the time.

The new caved-in area is a bit smaller area than the original collapse on Friday, measuring about 2,000 square feet. It wasn't a completely unexpected event, given that the original collapse destabilized the neighboring portion of the building, Dunn said.

The building was constructed in 1979, and is more than 35,000 square feet, according to city property records.

Some people have speculated that heavy snow loads on the roof, in a year of record snowfall, were the reason for the roof's collapse, Dunn said.

But he said snow on the intact south side of the building, which was cleared after the first roof collapse, was determined to weigh about 25 pounds per square foot, well below the city design standard for 40 pounds.

"I'm hoping engineers learn from this, the city learns from this, so we can actually figure out the failures" of the building and prevent future incidents, Dunn said.

Noffsinger also said records show that the northeast portion of the building had settled significantly, perhaps due to the 7.1-magnitude earthquake in 2018 or natural settling over years.

A permit had been issued in 2021 to allow the building's owner to stabilize the building and prevent it from sinking further, he said.

Dunn said the work had been properly permitted and completed, and he doesn't think the roof collapse had anything to do with the settling of the building.

"Everything was done by the book," he said.

On Wednesday, Dunn stood outside the two gutted areas of the building where the roofs had collapsed, speaking with reporters.

A few sagging and damaged roof timbers remained, sheeting materials hanging down. Exercise bikes and other workout equipment still occupied the former gym.

The owner had hired a security guard and fencing has been erected to prevent people from accessing the site, Dunn said.

The building, which housed multiple businesses, has been closed to occupancy by the municipality since the first roof came down.

Dunn said one important question is how soon it will be before the intact building will be safe enough for businesses to return. That's something he hopes to know in the coming days, he said.

Dominion Propeller, a company that buys, sells and repairs propellers for aircraft, had used the area where the second roof collapsed for storage.

People with Dominion Propeller were in the storage area on Saturday, removing merchandise the day before the roof collapsed, Dunn said.

Dunn advised the building owner, who had been in contact with the Dominion employees, that the building was not safe for anyone and that no one should be there. The people with Dominion soon left, he said.

Jerry Allsup, co-owner at Dominion Propeller, said the company has offices in a nearby building and was able to remove most of its items from the storage area on Saturday.

"It's a little upsetting," Allsup said of the collapse on Sunday. "It's put a crimp in our operation, because now I don't have storage for some of these expensive things. But some people are far worse off than we are, so I'm not complaining."

Daily News reporter Tess Williams contributed.

LOREN HOLMES / ADN

The roof over a section of a building used as storage by Dominion Propeller at 1101 East 76th Ave. collapsed on Sunday morning, two days after a deadly roof collapse at Turnagain CrossFit. No one was hurt Sunday .

BILL ROTH / ADN

Gym equipment is visible after snow and debris was removed Friday from the fatal roof collapse at Turnagain CrossFit in South Anchorage.

FROM PAGE A1

## HOLIDAYS

Qassataq said, adding that the U.S. has a long way to go in telling the history of all its people equally.

"Recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day and Juneteenth Freedom Day are but one step in elevating public consciousness of the rich and sometimes unjust histories of the vibrant peoples whose stories deserve to be recognized and respected," Qassataq said.

Alaska Black Caucus President Celeste Hodge Growden also spoke.

"Black history is American history, and it's also Alaskan history," she said.

"Anchorage has been the territory of the Dena ina people since time immemorial, since settlers brought inequality to these lands," Growden said. "Alaska Native people have fought for their rights, and as Black Americans came to Alaska, many of them joined the struggle."

On Wednesday morning, Growden said the Assembly's vote Tuesday night was emotional for her and marked a big step forward for Anchorage.

"It's huge," she said. "… Last night I found I found myself even shedding tears, you know — it was so unbelievable to see this come to fruition. The fact that we have Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples Day connected is … noteworthy. It is just timely for both groups, and I'm so happy for all of us."

Growden said she hopes the state of Alaska will soon follow Anchorage and add Juneteenth as an official holiday. A bill introduced by Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson is under consideration in the Legislature.

Tuesday night's ordinance got support from Mayor Dave Bronson after one last-minute change. The first version of the measure would have removed Seward's Day as a holiday, but Bronson moved to keep Seward's Day as a holiday, and the Assembly approved his amendment. Seward's Day, March 27 this year, marks the signing of the Alaska Purchase treaty on March 30, 1867.

"This might be one of those rare instances where I think we can agree on something between myself and the Assembly. I think it is time that we recognize Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples Day here in Alaska," Bronson said.

Assembly member Felix Rivera said the new municipal holidays aren't just days off.

"These holidays are a meaningful way to reflect on our community and what makes our communities so amazing," Rivera said.

Contact Emily Goodykoontz at egoodykoontz@adn.com.

Alternative Distributors, Inc. is applying under 3 AAC 306.300 for a new Retail Marijuana Store license, license #35328, doing business as AK Smoke and Vape, located at 570 E Benson Blvd, Suite 20, Anchorage, AK, 99503, UNITED STATES.

Interested persons may object to the application by submitting a written statement of reasons for the objection to their local government, the applicant, and the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) not later than 30 days after the director has determined the application to be complete and has given written notice to the local government. Once an application is determined to be complete, the objection deadline and application information will be posted on AMCO's website at https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco. Objections should be sent to AMCO at marijuana.licensing@alaska.gov or to 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq at jana@jdvcounsel.com or 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

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