

From: KEITH RIDLER [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 9:24 AM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment for Ethics Review Board Meeting

My name is Keith Ridler and I reside at [REDACTED] The baseless and petty complaints against Councilman Relan should be dismissed. I feel this infringes on Councilman Relan's right to Free Speech. Any comments were not made in an official capacity but via social media. There is no guidance for social media via the city charter. This is a political attempt to quash a dissenting viewpoint. I do not feel city resources are well spent on pursuing this matter.

Councilman Relan is a conscientious member of the council with a strong emphasis on transparency. He is dedicated to serving residents and improving Grosse Pointe Park.

I feel these complaints should be dismissed. Thank you for your consideration.

From: Gregory Randall [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 9:37 AM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment for ethics review board meeting

My name is Gregory Randall and I reside at [REDACTED] I moved to the Park June 2020. Councilman Relan was very welcoming and helpful with our getting to learn more about the community and residents of the neighborhood. The petty complaints against Councilman Relan should be given little weight. I feel this infringes on Councilman Relan's right to personal speech. Any comments were not made in an official capacity but via social media. There is no guidance for social media via the city charter. This is an attempt to quash a dissenting views. I do not feel city resources are well spent pursuing this matter.

Councilman Relan a conscientious member of the council with an emphasis on transparency. He is dedicated to serving residents and improving Grosse Pointe Park.

I feel these complaints should be dismissed. Thank you for your consideration.

From: Melissa Dittmer [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 10:28 AM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Dismiss Vikas Relan Ethics Complaints

To the Members of the Ethics Review Board,

My name is Melissa Dittmer and I am a resident at [REDACTED] I am writing to request that the ethics complaints against Vikas Relan be dismissed, as they do not appear to substantiate a violation of the published Ethics Code. Based on my knowledge, the actions at the center of the complaints DO NOT:

- Involve decision making outside of proper channels
- Involve a use of public office for personal gain
- Involve abuse of political office
- Involve improper use of city resources

Rather, these complaints appear as an attempt to serve the political interests of a small group seeking to silence dissenting voices on the City Council.

To pursue these complaints further would be a waste of taxpayer money, set a bad precedent by allowing anyone to quash dissenting viewpoints for personal gain, infringe upon our freedoms of speech, and dismiss our democratic process.

Additionally, I have found Vikas Relan to be a trusted, well-respected community representative for Grosse Pointe Park city council. As illustrated by his actions during the summer basement floods, he can always be found out in the community helping all city residents.

Thank you for your time.

Melissa Dittmer
[REDACTED]

From: Mary Anne Brush [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 10:32 AM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public comment to be read at the Jan. 10 Ethics Review Board hearing

Dear Ethics Review Board members,

As a 21-year resident of Grosse Pointe Park, I am writing to ask you to dismiss these frivolous complaints against Councilmember Vikas Relan.

I got to know Vikas when he was running for city council and was impressed with his character, work ethic, and ability to listen to people. I value his contributions as my elected representative and believe he has always conducted himself with professionalism and integrity. I know him personally to be kind, empathetic, open-minded, honest and fair.

An ethics complaint should be reserved for when actions represent a conflict of interest, city council business is conducted outside of proper channels, public office is used for personal gain, or city resources are used improperly. It should not be a means to file personal grievances. Giving credence to complaints about statements made outside of Councilmember Relan's official capacity violates his right to free speech and sets a dangerous precedent. Any member of this community, whether an elected official or a private citizen, deserves to feel free to express their opinions without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

After the division caused by this election cycle, now is not the time to entertain a politically motivated distraction that does nothing to advance the best interests of our city or its residents. In fact, it is a waste of time and resources. I urge you to dismiss these allegations and allow Councilmember Relan to focus his energy where it belongs: on the priorities of this city.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Courtney Delmege

From: Jacek Blaszkiewicz [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 10:34 AM
To: clerk; citycouncil
Subject: In defense of Councilperson Relan

Dear Ethics Review Board,

My name is Dr. Jack Blaszkiewicz and I live at [REDACTED]. My wife and I met Councilman Relan while we were house hunting in the "Cabbage Patch." As new Michiganders, we chose the Park mainly because of Vikas and the entire Relan family, as well as welcoming families like them. During the disastrous floods of 2021, Vikas left his own flooded home to help his neighbors. Instead of commending him, the Cotton-sponsored Council has chosen to use its financial influence to slander their dissenting colleague. Not only do these ethics complaints not hold, they are yet another power grab by the Cottons to exert Tammany-Hall-style financial control over the Park's real estate. This behavior is getting broader press attention. This new ethics complaint will be seen as nothing less than partisan corruption.

Sincerely,

Jack Blaszkiewicz

--
Dr. Jacek Blaszkiewicz
Assistant Professor of Music History
Wayne State University

From: Jaime Rae Turnbull [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 10:58 AM
To: clerk
Cc: Michele Hodges; Nick Sizeland
Subject: Submitted Public written Comment - Ethics Committee Meeting January 11, 2021

Importance: High

As a female business owner and resident of GPP, I was disgusted to read the misogynistic public comments made by Councilmember Relan referring to Shery Cotton on a community Facebook page. The practice of bad public behavior, character assassination, and blatant disrespect for residents and business owners by an elected official has to end.

I have been unfairly attacked and wrongfully accused of being a liar, spreader of misinformation and unlawful by Relan and his supporters as the Interim Executive Director of the Schaap Center and GreaterGP board member. These coordinated personal attacks on myself and others have continued to be orchestrated by past council members and their supporters, some that no longer live or have never lived in GPP. Countless residents, including strangers have approached me about the excessive mistreatment of myself and other community members including Shery Cotton, other members of the Cotton family and current elected officials.

Comments by Relan and his supporters have negatively affected my ability to work, contribute volunteer time and talents to my community, and peacefully enjoy GPP. As a result of these actions over the past couple of years, I have left all social media community pages based on the unfair treatment of residents.

These actions have consequences and the committee should establish methods to prevent this from happening to other residents that may disagree with an elected official. We must hold these bad actors accountable for their actions, which has led to the unfortunate division within our community.

Jaime Rae Turnbull

From: Steve Wildern [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 11:30 AM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment - 1-11-22 Ethics Review Board

Submitted to be read in Public Comments and read into the public record.

Steve Wildern, Grosse Pointe Park

I am writing to request that this body dismiss the ethics complaints submitted regarding Councilmember Vikas Relan. As a 25-year resident of this city, it is clear to me that the complaints are politically motivated by those with business before the city administration.

Having reviewed both the complaints and City Ordinance 219, I can find no violation in the alleged conduct by councilmember Relan.

My fear is that such false and frivolous complaints will undermine the independence of our city officials and chill their exercise of free speech. I would again urge the Ethics Review Board to dismiss the complaints tonight.

Thank you for the opportunity to have my views heard.

--
Steve Wildern

From: Heather Bendure [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 11:55 AM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: PULIC COMMENT FOR ETHICS HEARING 1/11/22

My name is Heather Bendure. I have lived in Grosse Pointe Park for almost 30 years and currently reside on Beaconsfield.

I met Vikas under unfortunate circumstances when both of our basements fell victims to the sewage backup incident of 2016. From that event and after, I have only known Vikas to be a compassionate, spirited and proactive neighbor. I am grateful for his leadership.

While I am not a regular attendee or commenter at Council meetings, as a former civil rights attorney, I feel compelled to comment on this issue. I urge the Ethics Review Board to dismiss the complaints against Vikas.

Section 2-4 of the ethics code explains that the code “is intended to be preventative and not punitive” AND that it “should not be construed to interfere with or abrogate in any way the provisions of any federal or state statutes...” Complainants’ requested relief both defies the stated purpose of the code and has constitutional implications. Sanctioning an elected official’s (even distasteful) comments on controversial issues addressed in the community and printed by local press sets a dangerous precedent. It is no secret that Vikas is now the sole dissenting voice on Council. Discourse is an important and healthy part of any democratic government. The Complainants’ attempts to silent (or temper) a minority voice should not succeed.

Given the stated purpose of the Code under which the Complainants seek relief and the chilling effect sanctions would have on elected officials’ speech, the Complaints should be dismissed.

--
Heather Bendure (she/her)



This email is subject to **MRE 408** as a compromise or offers to compromise and is prohibited from use as outlined in the rule.

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From: Joan Richardson [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 12:00 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: public comment on ethics charges against councilman Relan

I am submitting a public comment regarding the ethics charges brought against Councilman Vikas Relan. I encourage you to dismiss these petty and pointless allegations against Mr. Relan.

I write to you as a 40-year resident of Grosse Pointe Park and a former member and president of the Grosse Pointe Board of Education so I am deeply familiar with the expectations of public officials.

Mr. Relan's remarks may have been ill-considered, but they are not a violation of the city's ethics policy. Nothing in that policy restricts the free speech rights of city council members nor should it.

You may not like what Mr. Relan said — I don't especially like what he said nor his decision to become involved in these exchanges — but that does not mean that the city council should restrict his speech or officially chastise him for his remarks.

Honestly, considering the significant issues facing this community, I suggest that you and the complainants move on and spend your time on matters that will improve the lives of residents of Grosse Pointe Park. This situation is yet another example of childish behavior by both parties that does nothing more than embarrass this entire community.

Joan Richardson

[REDACTED]

From: Jarrod Kudzia [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 12:12 PM
To: clerk; citycouncil; [REDACTED]
Subject: Public Comment to be Read at Ethics Hearing

Hello, my name is Jarrod Kudzia. I've been a GPP resident for 11 years and deeply value this community. Along with other committed residents, I worked tirelessly with numerous departments and committees over the last 5 years to develop a dog park for the Park. In that time I've had the pleasure to work alongside many GPP public servants on various community interests beside the dog park such as creating safer crosswalks for students and parks and rec programs. Chief among those public servants has been Vikas Relan. Long before joining city council, Vikas regularly reached out to members of the community to hear their concerns and worked to help resolve them. He was a vital supporter of our dog park and worked tirelessly to improve crosswalk safety. Over the past several months, Vikas has endured cruel and defamatory attacks from the GP News and its owners. They harassed him at his work, trying to undermine his integrity and commitment to his employers. Particularly fierce public attacks from the GP News and on social media were launched while he was in the ICU fighting for his life. These are unconscionable acts and have received no government scrutiny or attention, yet a simple comment on Facebook attempting to give context to the many attacks has yielded legal action and wasteful government spending, simply because the "offended" parties hold significant financial sway. That our government could allow this is heartbreaking. I urge the Ethics committee to dismiss these charges definitively and completely.

Jan. 10, 2022

From: Louis J. Mleczko [REDACTED]

To: clerk@grossepointepark.org

Subject: Public Comment regarding Ethics Committee Meeting

To Members of the Ethics Committee:

My name is Louis J. Mleczko, and I have been a Park resident for 43 years at [REDACTED]. As a retired journalist reporting on virtually every City Council meeting since Vikas Relan was elected, I have been very impressed with his dedication, honesty and energy in representing all Park residents.

Vikas encourages all citizens to be involved in Park issues and has demonstrated great deference and respect to his council colleagues and Park employees. The three complaints filed against Vikas are totally without merit. They are attempting to muzzle Vikas' free speech rights in communicating with constituents. It smacks of censorship.

Originating during the heat of a political campaign several months ago, I view these complaints as being politically motivated by those opposed to Vikas' stance on city business. The complaints have nothing to do with Park business or formal Council actions.

By giving these kinds of frivolous complaints validity, the Ethics Committee will only encourage more of these kinds of scurrilous attacks on other elected officials and Park employees. Committee members should summarily dismiss these complaints.

Sincerely,

Louis J. Mleczko

My name is Johnathan Ho and I live at [REDACTED] I write today to ask the Ethics Review Board to dismiss the frivolous complaints filed against Councilmember Vikas Relan. I moved here 7 years ago and Councilmember Relan went out of his way to make my family feel welcome in this community. As an Asian American, I wondered about diversity in the area since I had heard various rumors insinuating that I might not be openly welcomed here. Councilmember Relan not only welcomed me, but he introduced me to a number of community members who subsequently became good friends. I have come to love GPP in part because of Councilmember Relan.

Upon review of the ethics ordinance complaints, it is evident that the comments in question made by Councilmember Relan do NOT constitute a violation of the Ethics Code. In no way do these comments adversely affect the confidence of the public or the integrity and operation of the city government. The fact that such a complaint was filed is what undermines my confidence as it sets a dangerous precedent in which one may infringe on the First Amendment whenever they feel offended on social media. This would result in a long slew of complaints which would serve to do nothing other than silence dissenting viewpoints and waste taxpayer money. The complaints are a poor effort to vilify an outstanding resident. Please do not take Councilmember Relan's words out of context and dismiss these complaints.

Johnathan Ho

From: Rose Tokatlian [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 12:20 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: GPP Ethics Review Board Meeting: Public Comment

Please include this message in public comment during the Jan. 11, 2022 Ethics Review Board meeting. I am a resident on [REDACTED] and have been a resident of Grosse Pointe Park for nearly 30 years.

I am writing to express my concern with the ethics violations brought against Council Member Vikas Relan. I understand these complaints stem from a Facebook post. It's disappointing that a social media post has escalated to this level of city government, especially one posted using a personal account.

My primary concerns with these charges are twofold. First, if the Ethics Review Board agrees with these complaints, they will set a precedence where future complaints may be filed when disagreements arise. Secondly, it will infringe upon not only Council Member Relan's freedom of speech rights, but potentially the rights of all residents.

Further, simply by holding this meeting, the Ethics Review Board is wasting valuable taxpayer funds, including attorney fees, staff time and building costs. This is especially disappointing when there are incredibly urgent issues facing our city like preventing future flooding of our homes.

I respectfully encourage the Ethics Review Board to dismiss these complaints.

Thank you,
Rose Tokatlian

January 10, 2022

Ethics Board of Review
15115 Jefferson Avenue
Grosse Pointe Park, MI. 48230

To the honorable members of the Ethics Review Board,

First, thank you for your service. Dedicating your time to volunteering on behalf of the residents is a laudable undertaking.

I write to you today to ask that all ethics complaints that have been filed against Council Member Vikas Relan, another public servant, be summarily dismissed. Besides being a waste of taxpayer dollars, a finding of fault would also set a bad precedent that could cause the ordinance to be abused by employees or contractors or any other individual who wants to make a frivolous claim.

It is also worth noting that neither the code of conduct nor the ethics ordinance has any specific language or guidance as it relates to social media use by elected officials. Further, the Michigan Municipal League's only counsel was that social media should not be used in a manner that violates the Open Meetings Act. This was part of the training I received in November 2020 as part of the MML's session for newly elected officials.

Thank you for your service and your deliberation. I urge this body to dismiss these complaints for the aforementioned reasons.

Sincerely,

Darci McConnell, former member, Grosse Pointe Park City Council
Resident, [REDACTED] 18 years

From: Michele Lindsay [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 1:27 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil; Nick Sizeland
Subject: Public Comment regarding Ethics Complaint against Councilmember Relan

Dear Members of the Ethics Review Board,

My name is Michele Lindsay and I am a resident of Grosse Pointe Park as well as a member of the GPP Planning Commission. As a member of the Planning Commission, the City Ethics Code applies to myself and my fellow commissioners. Therefore I have taken a great interest in these complaints.

I believe the complaints should be dismissed immediately.

In my review of the complaints filed against Councilmember Relan, none of these satisfy the threshold set by the City's Ethics Code. These complaints do not involve improper use of city resources, use of a public office for personal gain, any conflict of interest, or the abuse of political office (as council is non partisan).

Furthermore, I am deeply disturbed by the complaints as they seek to infringe upon Councilmember Relan's rights under the First Amendment of the US Constitution. As a city commissioner, my worry is that if these complaints move forward, what type of precedent is the City setting in terms of freedom of speech for our elected officials, city employees, and the volunteers who comprise our city commissions and committees?

I respectfully ask that the Ethics Review Board dismiss these complaints. Thank you for your time.

Best regards,
Michele Lindsay

From: Melissa Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 1:35 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment Submission for Ethics Review of Vikas Relan

Dear Review Board Members:

I am writing to express my support for Councilman Relan as it relates to ethics complaints brought against him.

I have lived in Grosse Pointe Park since 2010 and have known Councilman Relan personally for several years. My first engagement with him was raking leaves together for some of our senior neighbors as part of a grass-roots effort he organized during his free time. I was immediately impressed by his sincerity, enthusiasm, passion for good and willingness to help others. Since that day I have continued to witness his positive impact on this community, both as a neighbor and council member, including his earnest efforts to create a culture of transparency and accountability in our city government.

Based on my understanding of the language, I fail to see how his comments in question can be considered a violation of the city's ethics ordinance. It is clear he was not acting in an official capacity, for personal gain, or otherwise, but simply exercising his right to defend himself.

It's good that we have a process in place to hold the city's employees and elected officials accountable to a code of ethics; however, it should not be used as a means to settle personal or political disagreements. That is a waste of our city's resources, especially at a time when our efforts should be focused on working together to address the issues that impact all of us.

Regards,
Melissa Smith
[REDACTED]

From: Mary Fegan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 1:39 PM
To: clerk
Subject: Ethics review board

Mayor Hodges and Council members,

We would like to go on record noting that complaints to the Ethics Review Board made against Councilman Relan we feel, are unwarranted and petty.

There are many problems facing our city currently and to be wasting time with what we feel are frivolous complaints is a great disservice to our city.

To Councilman Relan, although we have only met you briefly during your run for Council and at council meetings pre-Covid, we have always felt your passion and concern for our community. We have also felt your frustration at having to try to fight for our community when the deck is stacked against you. We truly are sorry you and your family are going through this.

We hope the Mayor and Council will treat you fairly and show good judgment when making their decision. Good luck to you.

Mary Fegan
John King

Sent from my iPhone

From: Janie Slayden [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 1:39 PM
To: clerk; citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment for Ethics Review Board Meeting , January 11, 2022

As a resident of Grosse Pointe Park and a follower of the City government, I am writing to request that the City Council dismiss the ethics complaints against Vikas Relan.

The all-encompassing formal complaints of misogyny and disrespect for motherhood are excessive and misplaced; the Facebook exchange in question is subject to alternate interpretations that are innocuous and have nothing to do with these two targeted issues.

It is noted that the Ethics Ordinance does not provide any guidance for social media and, in fact, does not mention it, leaving freedom of speech intact.

Pursuing these complaints can set a disturbing precedent for the Ethics Review Board, not the least of which is the appearance of attempting to silence dissenting voices in City government.

Thank you for your consideration in dismissing the complaints against Vikas Relan.

Respectfully,

Janie Slayden
[REDACTED]

From: Lauri Read [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 1:42 PM
To: Nick Sizeland; clerk; citycouncil
Subject: Public comment for Ethics Review Board meeting 1/11/22

Dear Ethics Review Board members,

I write as a resident, former city council member, and former member (and chair) of the ordinance review committee. I served on the ordinance review committee that drafted the Grosse Pointe Park Ethics Ordinance. The ordinance we adopted was patterned after the City of Birmingham's ordinance, which I found and presented to the committee. The intent was to put in place a process for disclosing and reviewing conflicts of interest. It was not intended to create a board to adjudicate private disagreements between residents and city officials, nor was it intended to abridge the free speech rights of duly elected officials. As stated in the ordinance, the code of ethics is intended to be preventative, not punitive.

City administration should have summarily dismissed these complaints for what they are: personal disputes and opinions. Please do not allow the use of city resources, including this body, in this manner, lest we devolve into the Grosse Pointe Park version of Judge Judy. Our residents deserve better. I encourage all involved to end this carryover from election year politics and return to civility.

Regards,

Lauri Read

From: Andrea Daniell [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 1:47 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comments for Ethics Hearing 1/11/22

Good afternoon. My name is Andrea Daniell, and I reside at [REDACTED] in Grosse Pointe Park.

Today, I'm writing on behalf of my neighbor and friend, Vikas Relan. I wish these comments to be entered into the public record during his ethics hearing on January 11th.

I have known Vikas for approximately six years and have always found him to be kind, reasonable, truthful, and helpful in all situations.

I am asking that this committee dismiss the complaints against him.

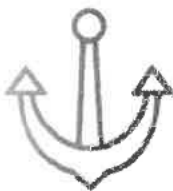
While Vikas's online comments may have a tone of disrespect, they do not violate any ethical standards in place today. There is no guidance on social media and what can/cannot be said in exchanges between citizens, outside of the requirement that council members do not violate the Open Meetings Act. Nor *should* there be policing of internet conversations, lest we find ourselves embroiled in a debate over first amendment rights and in a constant state of settling citizen disputes.

While current and succeeding council members may appreciate *guidance* on how to conduct themselves online, any such guidance put in place today would have no bearing on this situation.

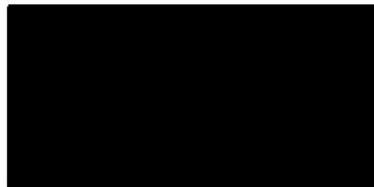
This hearing is wasteful of taxpayers' time and resources and comes at the end of a very divisive campaign season that has left us more bruised than ever. It's time to move beyond that. Per the Mayor's direction, it truly is time for us to turn the page and heal this community.

Thank you,

Andrea Daniell
Marketing Consultant | Freelance Writer
[South Tide Media](#) | [dia creative](#)



SOUTH TIDE MEDIA



From: Beth Newhart [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 1:57 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Ethics Board comment

Please consider the following a submission for public comment at tomorrow night's Ethics Board meeting. Thank you for your help.

My name is Beth Newhart, and I have enjoyed living in Grosse Pointe Park for 17 years, raising our two children. Although I may not have grown up here, Grosse Pointe Park is definitely "home." Today, I'd like to address the complaints brought against Councilmember Relan.

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." It's an old adage my mother taught me, and I taught my son and daughter. I think it's a staple of most mothers. I even expanded it as they got older - is it annoying, is it mean or is it racist or threatening? We only address racist or threatening. The other two are left to color our opinion of the one calling names. At 13 and 17, they're doing a good job navigating that.

Unless our Ethics Board wants to spend its time weeding out childish name calling, these complaints need to be dismissed. Yes, we hold elected officials to higher standards, but we also allow them room speak. By siding with the complainants, the Ethics Board will find itself convening to mitigate residents' issues ranging from public name calling to loud parties held at council members' homes running afoul of the noise ordinance. We simply cannot trivialize the ethics rules on our books, as it will turn our city into a virtual sandbox of arguing children.

Let's remember the words our mommies taught us. When we do, we're stronger people.

Beth Newhart Freelance Writing
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 2:22 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Letter to the Ethics Committee Re: Vikas Relan (I am submitting this for public comment)

I am submitting the following for public comment:

Hello, my name is Leon Dantzer, [REDACTED] resident of Grosse Pointe Park for over 47 years. I got married in the Park and have raised a family here.

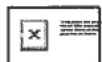
I strongly urge you to dismiss the ethics complaints against councilmember Vikas Relan. I don't know Mr. Relan personally, but I do believe he has been doing the job he was elected to do.

Surely the city and council have more important things to be working on than these silly accusations brought against Mr. Relan. The accusations seem to be vindictive and an attempt to silence (or dispense) of a dissenting voice on the council. This whole affair is definitely wasting the city's time and money. Of course, I happen to still believe in Democracy, not Autocracy.

Again, I urge you to dismiss these trivial complaints against Mr. Relan.

Thanks for your consideration.

Leon J. Dantzer



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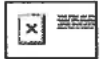
From: Karen Kastely [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 2:36 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Letter for public comment to the Ethics Committee re: Vikas Relan

Hello. This is Karen Kastely, [REDACTED], resident of Grosse Pointe Park for over fifty years. I am submitting my letter for public comment.

I urge you to dismiss the ethics charges against Vikas Relan. Mr. Relan has worked hard to make our community safe and welcoming to everyone. Petty accusations against him are a waste of time and of tax payer money. They are a discouragement to good people who want to run for public office. As a Mommy of four - all raised in the Park - a sometimes loser – jobs, elections, my keys – and a liar (Yes, there is a Santa Claus!), I would find these accusations silly, if they were not so vindictive. Freedom of speech in a private conversation is a Constitutional right as, apparently, is freedom of speech in letters to the editor in local papers. I hope this is not an attempt to quash dissenting viewpoints.

Your responsibilities are so important. Thank you for serving the community. We have seen so many unethical actions by public officials, that we must take violations seriously. This in not one of them. Please dismiss these charges.

Thank you for your consideration.



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From: Ben Roeder [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 2:37 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: City Clerk: To be read at Ethics Review Board public meeting/hearing 1/11/2022.

City Clerk: To be read at Ethics Review Board public meeting/hearing 1/11/2022.

Dear Ethics Review Board members,

I am Grosse Pointe Park resident, Ben Roeder, residing on [REDACTED] for nearly 10 years. I am proud to be represented on City Council by Vikas Relan, and urge you to dismiss these trivial complaints against him. I have always found Councilman Relan to be representative of the values of Park residents, prioritizing important issues, and transparent in his actions.

After reviewing the ethics complaints about Mr. Relan, I have concluded they are frivolous and will set a dangerous precedent for our city. Mr. Relan's comments on Facebook were made as a private citizen, no city ordinance or council guideline should preclude this type of activity. If it does, his right to free speech is clearly impacted.

I urge this Board to not further the divide in this city by crushing political voices. One of the precepts of our democracy is the majority rules with the minority's rights' being protected. If the board votes to censure Mr. Relan it will be nothing more than a political act.

The Board and city administration need to be very careful about how it chooses to regulate the behavior of its council, commission members and employees, and this seems to be a far stretch from what the ethics ordinance was intended. The regulation of speech in this manner is a very slippery slope.

Elections have consequences, but not this.

Respectfully,

Ben Roeder

Courtney Delmege

From: Taashi Priya khurana [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 2:46 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment for Ethics Review Board Meeting

My name is Taashi Priya Khurana and I live at [REDACTED] My husband and I met Councilman Relan when renting a flat on Somerset. We chose to live in Grosse Pointe Park because of Councilman Relan. After knowing him for less than one year, we even asked him to officiate our wedding. He is committed to making Grosse Pointe Park a fantastic place to live and raise a family! We can't imagine this city without him.

The complaints against Councilman Relan are warrantless and seem quite trivial. I'm saddened that our city is wasting time and tax money to entertain such silly complaints, based purely on bruised fragile egos. Please dismiss these complaints and allow us to focus on more pressing matters.

Thank you.

--

Taashi Priya Khurana
[REDACTED]

From: Marie Wallace [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 2:58 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment for Ethics Review Board Hearing

Hello,

My name is Marie Bennett and I have been living in Grosse pointe park for over seven years now.

I don't know Vykas Relan personally, but I have followed him since he ran for city council and I did vote for him. As a democrat, I think Mr Relan is an intelligent and educated man who represent my values to the highest standard.

I think the complaints against him need to be thrown out. I believe that those complaints are the result of a witch hunt determined to have him kicked out of city council, not because he is not doing his job, but for the sole reason that his presence and his vote at said city council goes against the plans that certain people have for the city of Grosse Pointe Park and its development.

I understand that his words may have hurt some feelings. This is politics. If we have to fire someone every time a temper is lost or words are said against one another, there wouldn't be anyone left in office. The fact that we focus on this instead of infrastructure problems is just laughable to say the least. I really don't think that the city of Grosse Pointe park has time to waste on things like this. This is wasted taxpayer's money.

I hope the board throws out those complains and we can move on to more important matters.

Thank you,

Marie bennett

From: Allison Keelean [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 2:58 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Ethics Hearing

Hello,

My name is Allison Keelean, I live on [REDACTED] and have been a resident of Grosse Pointe Park from 1988 to 2001 and August 2019 to now. I am writing in support of Councilmember Vikas Relan. Vikas has served the community through many challenges and I have enjoyed the energy and knowledge he has brought to the council. I am asking the Ethics Commission to dismiss the complaints against him. The complaints against Vikas do not meet the ordinance's requirements. It would set a dangerous precedent to punish Vikas for personal comments made not in his capacity as a council member. It infringes on his free speech. This is also a waste of taxpayer money when the city needs to focus on pressing issues like infrastructure improvements. These complaints do not involve abuse of his office, improper use of city resources, or use of his office for political gain. Please dismiss these complaints and let Vikas continue his important work on the council. Thank you.

Allison Keelean

From: Karen Stock [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 3:02 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment for Jan 11, 2022 Ethics Board hearing

To: Members of the Ethics board

From: Karen Stock, [REDACTED]

RE: My full and unwavering support for Councilmember Vikas Relan

My husband and I moved here in 2018 because we loved the character and diversity of the Park. Since then, we've been very impressed with Councilmember Vikas Relan--the way he keeps his constituents informed, his courage to speak out when in the minority, and the way he pitches in to help his neighbors in need. Councilmember Relan demonstrates the **true meaning of respect** for his community and its future.

I've seen the complaints; I've read the Ethics ordinance. I see nothing in the Ethics ordinance that applies to Mr. Relan in this situation. I do, however, see clear political motivations for the complaints.

I urge the Ethics Board to dismiss these complaints. Pursuing them would be a waste of taxpayer resources.

Also, any action other than dismissal would be a violation of the first amendment, not to mention opening the door for similar complaints to be leveled against any elected city official, appointee, employee--whomever is covered by the ordinance--whenever passions run high in conversations outside of official city channels.

Again, I urge the board to dismiss these complaints.

Respectfully,

Karen Stock
[REDACTED]

From: Lee Kirtley [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 3:09 PM
To: clerk; citycouncil
Subject: Ethics Board Public Comment

Good Evening,

My name is Lee Kirtley, resident of [REDACTED] in Grosse Pointe Park. I am writing today to have the ethics complaints charged against Councilperson Relan dismissed. My reasoning is threefold:

- First and foremost, the allegations simply do not violate the Ethics Code.
 - They do not involve decision making outside of proper channels.
 - They do not involve a use of public office for personal gain.
 - They do not involve abuse of political office.
 - They do not involve improper use of city resources.
- Second, this infringes on the Freedom of Speech. The interactions were not a city page, but on a personal page.
- Finally, this would set a bad precedent. The proverbial can of worms would be open for any citizen to launch an ethics complaint when they disagree and/or are offended by personal opinions of a councilperson, leading to a waste of taxpayer resources.

It is clear this is nothing more than an attempt to silence dissenting viewpoints towards the only member of Council that consistently advocates for transparency.

Thank you for your time.

From: Susan Dundon [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 8, 2022 7:43 PM
To: clerk
Subject: citycouncil@grossepointepark.org

Please accept the following as written comment in advance of the 1/11/22 Ethics Review Board meeting.

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Grosse Pointe Park posted notice of an Ethics Review Board meeting regarding three separate complaints against one of our council members. The meeting notice indicates where to send and/or make public comments, however GPP residents have not been provided with any information or documentation from the City administration or the Ethics Review Board as to the specific nature of these complaints – rendering it impossible for any resident, including myself, to assess these allegations and provide informed public comment. An ethics review process is a very serious one that necessitates the highest level of transparency to all residents – which, in this case, was undermined before this proceeding even started.

Regards,

Susan Dundon
[REDACTED]

From: Brian Vosburg [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022 3:02 PM
To: clerk
Subject: Public Comment for Tuesday Ethics Committee Meeting

I have personally known Vikas Relan for over 10 years. He and his family were one of the first to welcome my family when we moved to Grosse Pointe Park. When he chose to run for City Council, I could think of few others in our community who listen as closely and care as deeply about his neighbors as Vikas does. Vikas has proven that he continues to care and listen to all citizens of this community as an elected Council member.

The ethics accusations before you today do not meet the test of an ethics violation per the City's ethics ordinance that you are charged with reviewing. I request that you summarily dismiss all of these accusations.

These ethics accusations are politically motivated. If your body were to give credence to them it will set a precedent that is not in line with the intent of the ethics ordinance and will unleash a barrage of future ethics accusations which will cloud and render ineffectual the purpose of this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Brian Vosburg

Courtney Delmege

From: Clem Fortuna [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022 4:01 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment for Ethics Committee Meeting

I am writing to ask the Ethics Committee to dismiss the frivolous and politically motivated complaint against Council Member Vikas Relan. These complaints set a dangerous precedent for censoring anyone with dissenting views. Mr Relan is a highly regarded public servant and neighbor, and clearly did not violate the ethics ordinance.

Charles Fortuna
[REDACTED]
Grosse Pointe Park

From: Betsy Fortuna [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022 4:50 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment For Ethics Committee meeting 1/11/22

Please read this into public comment at the Ethics Committee meeting on Jan. 11, 2022:

My name is Elizabeth Fortuna and i have owned commercial property, residential property and businesses here in the Park since 2004. When Vikas Relan was elected to council in 2019 I was happy to have my voice represented at long last. I was a bit stunned to hear about the frivolous ethics complaints that have been brought up against him and I am asking you to dismiss these complaints.

These complaints are clearly political in nature and an attempt to silence the one remaining voice for transparency on council. If you allow this to go forward, I can only imagine the complaints that will be lobbied at any council person whenever someone is unhappy about something. Clearly this is not a precedent you want to send.

Again, please throw out these complaints, it is a waste of time and taxpayer money.

Elizabeth Fortuna
[REDACTED]

Courtney Delmege

From: Susan Sutorka [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022 7:45 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Vikas Relan -Tuesday Ethics meeting

Comment for Tuesday's meeting:

My name is Susan Sutorka, I am GPP resident on [REDACTED] with a comment on the politically motivated ethics complaints against Vikas Relan.

The main purpose of the ethics code is to address conflicts of interest. The purpose of the ethics code is not to allow individuals to attack a council member's freedom of speech when they are not doing city business. There is not a serious accusation of misconduct in this case, but rather a personal issue and retaliation against Mr. Relan for asking questions.

A ruling against Mr. Relan would set a precedent where complaints could be filed against other current city council members - including our mayor - who have made comments to residents as well. It would allow for residents with grievances unrelated to city business to waste taxpayer resources over and over.

Please dismiss these matters as none of the alleged ethical violations apply to the Ethics Code.

Susan Sutorka

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Patrick Chesterton [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022 7:58 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment for the Ethics Review board to be read into record

To the Ethics Review Board;

I am writing to urge this body to dismiss these frivolous complaints against Mr. Relan for what they are; the hangover from a difficult, acrimonious and highly contested election cycle.

These complaints before you are an attempt to weaponize this body, in a continued political effort to suppress an opposing point of view and to silence a duly elected city council member from speaking freely. This body is not the forum for these complaints, the ballot box is.

It is time to embrace the mayor's call for a return to civility and to turn the page and move forward. This body can take a needed step in clearing the slate.

Please do your part to move forward and summarily dismiss these actions, as your charge allows.

Patrick Chesterton
Grosse Pointe Park

From: noah resnick [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022 9:16 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment for Ethics Review Hearing, Jan 11 2022

To the members of the Ethics Review Board,

My name is Noah Resnick, and I am a resident of the [REDACTED] in Grosse Pointe Park. I am writing to request that the ethics complaints against Vikas Relan be dismissed, as they do not appear to substantiate a violation of the published Ethics Code.

The actions at the center of the complaints do not:

- - involve decision making outside of proper channels
- - involve a use of public office for personal gain
- - involve abuse of political office
- - involve improper use of city resources
-

Rather than proof of an Ethics violation, these complaints appear as an attempt to serve the political and business interests of Ms Cotton, Mr. Pitera and Mr. Fikany, by seeking to silence dissenting voices on the City Council.

To pursue these complaints further would be a waste of taxpayer money, and set a bad precedent by allowing anyone to quash dissenting viewpoints for personal gain, usurping the democratic process.

Thank you for your time.

--

Professor Noah Resnick, AIA
Associate Dean
University of Detroit Mercy
School of Architecture

[REDACTED]
laavustudio.com

From: Sangeeta Relan [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022 10:19 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment - Ethics Board Hearing

Dear Ethics Review Board,

My name is Sangeeta Relan and I reside on the [REDACTED]. I have known Councilman Relan since he was born, when I came to the realization, I was no longer an only child. The baseless and petty complaints against Councilman Relan should be dismissed. After reading the ethics ordinance and the complaints, it's clear there were no violations and the complaints were intended to harass the lone independent voice on city council that represents the broader Grosse Pointe Park population and seeks transparency in City Council activities.

Vikas and Wendy have helped make GPP a welcoming and diverse community. Councilman Relan is committed to representing the interests of all GPP residents and truly wants to make our city a safe and thriving home for his family and constituents. These trivial complaints are diverting precious city resources and should not be taken seriously.

Thank you for your consideration.

From: Frank Joyce [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 8:28 AM
To: clerk
Subject: Public comment to be read at Ethics Committee meeting January 11, 2022

Public comment to be read at Ethics Committee meeting January 11, 2022:

Given that Vikas has proven himself to be a thoughtful, dedicated and engaged neighbor, citizen and public servant, these charges say more about those bringing them than they do about him. They are worse than frivolous. They expose an autocratic intent to impose the will of an entrenched elite upon a vibrant and diverse community. The charges should be dismissed.

Frank Joyce
[REDACTED]

Comment from Mike Bannon, Park resident for over 35 years.

It is my understanding that one of our City Council members, Vikas Relan, has been summoned before the Ethics Review Board because of several complaints about social media posts that he made as a private citizen (that is, not in an official capacity). If this is the case, these charges would seem to fly in the face of Mr. Relan's right to speak his piece, within very broad limits, as guaranteed by the First Amendment. It is the same freedom of speech that allows the new owner of the local newspaper to use it as a platform to regularly publish denigrating comments (and even cartoons) directed against Mr. Relan and others.

From the outside looking in, it's hard to imagine that these superfluous charges have even risen to the level of holding a hearing, as they don't seem to involve any violations for which the Board was presumably created, such as the use of office for personal gain, abuse of office, improper use of city resources, and the like. I do not know the members of the Ethics Review Board personally, but I can only assume that they are volunteering their time to work for the betterment of our City. As such, hopefully the Board will send a clear message, through the summary dismissal of these complaints, that they will *not* serve as a blunt instrument to stifle open discourse.

Honorable Grosse Pointe Park Ethics Board,

Thank you for your work as members of the Ethics Board. The Ethics Board and Ordinance No. 219 serves an important function in our community insuring honest transparent government where elected officials and city employees objectively serve the interests of all citizens.

We have read through the 3 complaints filed against Vikas Relan as well as the Ordinance 219. Based on the intention of Ordinance 219 Section 2.4, we are requesting the Ethics Board dismiss the 3 complaints filed against Vikas Relan. The complaints clearly are not a violation of Ordinance 219 as specified in Section 2.4. bullet items 1 through 5.

These three orchestrated complaints are attempts to misuse Ordinance 219 and the Ethics Board to intimidate and discourage free speech in our community by members of our community with considerable wealth. The optics of hiring an attorney to draft a 10 page amendment to a simple GPP Ethics complaint form has the appearance of using wealth to intimidate. In the end, these complaints are political in nature and attempts to utilize the Ethics Board to silence and intimidate a council member with whom the filers have political differences.

The time and effort of the Ethics Board is a valuable part of open honest government in GPP. These complaints are a waste of the GPP Ethics Board time and effort as well a waste of GPP city government resources.

Thank you,

Mark and Sonja Franchett



Courtney Delmege

From: Karr, Justin [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 17, 2022 9:49 AM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Grosse Pointe Park Ethics Ordinance

My name is Justin Karr and I have lived at [REDACTED] in Grosse Pointe Park for the past 20 years.

I am writing to request that the complaints against councilperson Vikas Relan be summarily dismissed. I see no evidence of any violations to the Ethics Code in the correspondence between the parties involved. Pursuing such a violation is a waste of time, effort, and money. Petty, personal political squabbles should not be the business of our city council. By engaging in this type of activity, the council sets a bad precedent in displaying shameful examples of governmental overreach and infringement on private speech.

Our city council is above partisan infighting, and as a resident, I ask that taxpayer resources not be wasted on such endeavors.

Thank you,
Justin Karr

[REDACTED]

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Complaints filed against Council Member Vikas Relan

I am writing as a public comment on the complaints mentioned above.

My name is Susan Griffin. I have been a resident of Grosse Pointe Park at [REDACTED] since 1998. My three children attended Grosse Pointe schools, and I was active on the PTOs, serving as president of the PTO at both the elementary and middle school. I was also active in the Mother's Club at South.

I know Relan to be an honest, fair-minded, non-discriminatory individual, with a desire to serve his community. I am writing to have the complaints against Relan dismissed. None of the social media comments referred to are a violation of the ethics ordinance.

In point of fact, per Sec. 2-4 "the code of ethics is intended to be preventative and not punitive." However, these very complaints are punitive.

The social media posts in question state fact and personal opinion. They are not "abusive, veiled threats." They are not "blatant attacks." The complaints themselves seem to be a political maneuver to discredit and malign a Council member who has a different point of view than the complainant.

I understand being in public office may result in one being ridiculed or attacked for their performance. How is it possible that a small city has had so many bitter, accusatory, defaming attacks against our Council members? I am ashamed to be a resident here.

Please dismiss all these inflammatory complaints.

To the members of the Grosse Pointe Park Ethics Committee:

I am writing to you as a former city council member, a woman, and a Grosse Pointe Park resident.

I am not on social media. But when council member Relan attacked Ms. Shery Cotton in a Facebook post with his misogynist and mommy shaming comments my friends, neighbors and acquaintances reached out to me in dismay.

Vikas Relan said the Grosse Pointe News "printed a letter to the editor from the owner's mommy" and later referred to her as a "loser".

What is going on in Grosse Pointe Park? How can a City Council member conduct himself on social media in such a disrespectful manner?


This is not our city. His conduct is a poor reflection upon him, City Council, and the community as a whole. Council members Relan's behavior cannot continue unchecked.

I am asking you, the Ethics Committee, to address this issue because if you don't, it will appear as though you are endorsing these types of misogynist mommy shaming comments.

Council member Relan should adhere to section 2.2 of ordinance No 219 – Responsibilities of Public Office and be honest, fair and most of all respectful of all persons with whom he has contact.

As my mother and grandmother always said – if you don't have something nice to say – don't say it at all.

Grosse Pointe Park deserves better – Council member Relan should either voluntarily resign or undergo counseling and publicly apologize to Ms. Cotton.



Barbara Detwiler

[REDACTED]

January 19, 2022

Courtney Delmege

From: Brian Wachter [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 4:57 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Letter for public comment re: Vikas Relan ethics complaint

I am submitting the letter below for public comment.

My name is Brian Wachter, and I live on the [REDACTED]. I do not know councilmember Vikas Relan or his family personally, but I admire the work he has done and continues to do for our community. I am asking the ethics committee to please dismiss all ethics complaints filed against Mr. Relan. Letting this disagreement go any further than this is a waste of taxpayers' time and money. Let's not set a precedent that it's ok to file a complaint or lawsuit every time you feel insulted. Mr. Relan did not violate the ethics ordinance by using his position for personal gain or favors. What is the purpose of this ethics complaint? It appears frivolous. Again, please dismiss these complaints. Thank you for your consideration.

Courtney Delmege

From: Elizabeth Kurta [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 4:51 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil; Elizabeth Kurta
Subject: Public Comment for January 11 Ethics Committee

Members of the Ethics Review Board –

My name is Beth Kurta, I reside at [REDACTED] and have been a resident of GPP for nearly 40 years. I have known and respected Vikas Relan and his family for 10+ years and have always appreciated his transparency, candor, and commitment to our community.

I am writing to request that complaints that have been brought against Vikas be summarily dismissed by this Board. After reviewing the Ethics Code, it appears that none of the alleged ethical violations apply. The alleged “incident” doesn’t involve decision making outside of proper channels, doesn’t involve use of public office for personal gain, doesn’t involve abuse of political office, and doesn’t involve improper use of city resources. The alleged ethical violations do pose an attempt to regulate or punish a citizen's freedom of speech.

As a resident who continues to deal with the ramifications of both the 2016 and 2021 sewer back-ups into my basement, I feel very strongly that this is a waste of taxpayer resources at a time when there are real issues to contend with.

This action seems political - an attempt to remove dissenting points of view from leadership in our city. We live in a wonderful community with many points of view that should be represented, respected and recognized with freedom of speech protected, not censored.

Thank you for your service to the community I love, please do not misuse your role as a member of this Board.

Beth Kurta

Courtney Delmege

From: Laura Ochab [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 4:48 PM
To: clerk
Subject: Ethics Review Board Meeting

Hello,

I am a resident of Grosse Pointe Park and live on [REDACTED]. I am planning to attend the Ethics Review Meeting on 1/11 and share my comments at that time, but also wanted to ensure that my comments are on record. I am writing to request that the Ethics Review Board please dismiss the complaints against Councilmember Vikas Relan.

I have known Councilmember Relan since his campaign for Council. I have found him to be very responsive, honest, and trustworthy. As a taxpayer, I greatly appreciate his transparency and the accessible manner in which he shares City information with residents.

I am requesting that the ethics complaints be dismissed because they are clearly not a violation of the Ethics Ordinance. The intent of the ordinance is to prevent conflicts of interest, abuse of political office, and improper use of city resources. If these frivolous complaints are not dismissed – this will set an extremely dangerous precedent for any citizen to file a complaint when they disagree with an action of the City or a City official. This is a waste of taxpayer resources and valuable city time.

Councilmember Relan is a valuable asset to our community and I urge you to please dismiss these irrelevant complaints.

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Thank you,

Laura Ochab

Courtney Delmege

From: Matt Ochab [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 4:43 PM
To: clerk
Subject: Ethics Review Statement

Hello –

I am a resident of [REDACTED] in Grosse Pointe Park. I am writing today to ask you to please dismiss all current ethics complaints against Councilmember Vikas Relan. I met Mr. Relan in 2016 when our basements flooded for the first time. Mr. Relan was vital in organizing a group via Facebook where information and help could be found in one central location. As a councilman, he is very active on social media. Citizens who tag him with their questions or concerns will find that he responds very quickly to provide an answer, or direct them to the appropriate people who can help.

Councilman Relan is a man who truly cares about this community and its members. He's always offering to lend a hand to those who need help. Councilman Relan embodies what it means to serve the community. I'm proud that he represents me and my neighbors. I wish more of our council members were as active and as visual as he is within our community. To punish him would be a disservice to our community.

In reviewing the Ethics Code, the allegations are not a violation and do not involve anything improper regarding Mr. Relan's role on the Council. Anything said on social media under an individual's personal account is protected by their first amendment freedom of speech rights. Frankly, I find this witch hunt troubling and in poor taste.

Thank you,

Matt Ochab

Courtney Delmege

From: LAURIE ARORA [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 4:32 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Ethics Review Board Meeting - Jan. 11 - Public Comment

Public Comment for Ethics Review Board

RE: Jan. 11 meeting

Dear Members of the Ethics Review Board,

I am writing to you as a former city council member and a 32-year resident of Grosse Pointe Park. I am asking you to dismiss the complaints against council member Vikas Relan. While I was not subject to the ethics ordinance during my term of service, I understand the ordinance was instituted for disclosing and reviewing conflicts of interest.

The complaints lodged against Mr. Relan are aimed at his free speech for comments made from his personal account on Facebook. Expressing himself on a social media platform should not be subject to scrutiny by the Ethics Review Board or any other board. Please do not allow this board to be used as a mechanism to monitor and silence differing opinions.

Further, this meeting to deliberate these frivolous complaints wastes taxpayer resources including attorney fees, staff time, and building costs. I respectfully ask you to dismiss these complaints.

Sincerely,
Laurie Arora
[REDACTED]

Courtney Delmege

From: John F Martin [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 4:31 PM
To: clerk
Subject: Public comment 1/10/22

John Martin, [REDACTED] I find it sad so much time and energy is being spent on these accusations against Mr. Relan. These claims hold even less water than our sewer system. I suggest our new council members and their supporters focus on actual problems instead of inhibiting their opposition's free speech.

John Martin
[REDACTED]

•mobile•

Courtney Delmege

From: Graig Donnelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 4:28 PM
To: clerk
Cc: Nick Sizeland; citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment -- Ethics Review Board Meeting on 1/11/2022

Please read my comments below aloud during the "Public Comment" portion of tomorrow's GPP Ethics Review Board meeting.

I am a resident of Grosse Pointe Park, near the Kercheval business district and close to our neighbors in Detroit.

I have known Council Member Relan for several years, having met when he ran for Council in 2019. He listens to all residents and does everything he can to address their concerns and dreams for our City. Indeed, listening to residents is a primary role of any elected official.

These ethics complaints are not about Council Member Relan, though. They are an attack on those who speak out and speak up, an attempt to quiet voices of people who share truths that those in power do not want heard. Council Member Relan just so happens to be the target today. Tomorrow it could be any of us.

In fact, the complaints aren't even describing behavior relevant to the City's Ethics policies, known as Ordinance #219. To uphold or take action against Council Member Relan based on these complaints would itself be an attack on his first amendment rights.

I urge the Ethics Review Board to dismiss these complaints, and to hold accountable those who knowingly made them under false pretenses. Please exercise your duty, per the Ethics Ordinance, to "recommend to Council that Council, in its discretion, recommend or impose a civil infraction and fine on the person making the false or frivolous complaint or refer the matter to the prosecutor for potential prosecution."

Thank you,
Graig Donnelly

From: Kate Pierce [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 4:11 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil; [REDACTED]
Subject: Request to dismiss complaints against Council Member Relan

To the Clerk and Council of Grosse Pointe Park,

My name is Kate Pierce and I am a resident of Grosse Pointe Park. I am writing to ask that the g complaints against Council Member Vikas Relan be summarily dismissed. None of these alleged violations involve Council Member Relan using the office for personal gain, abusing the office nor improper use of city resources. I think that this sets a dangerous precedent.

As a new resident who moved to the Park just before the pandemic began, I turned to social media to learn more about our city, activities, and to connect to other residents. Mr Relan is the only member of council who I have seen responding to residents and advocating for transparency. I do not want our access to council to become even more limited.

There are no clear violations of the code of ethics. The code is intended to protect us against conflicts of interest. If anything, the conflict here is for the complainants. The residents submitting the complaints have made it clear which candidates they support using a very large media platform already, and they are clearly attempting to continue their campaign against Mr Relan, where they can without impunity print personal attacks.

Please dismiss all charges and stop this waste of our resources. I want my council to focus on improving our city and preventing water from entering our homes. Let's return to work on the items that will continue to improve our city, together.

Sincerely,
Kate Pierce



NAACP

Grosse Pointes & Harper Woods

January 10, 2022

Chartered 2015

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State Conference President

Yvonne M. White

Board of Ethics City of Grosse Pointe Park
11115 Jefferson Avenue
Grosse Pointe Park, MI. 48230

To the Honorable members of the Ethics Review Board,

On behalf of the Grosse Pointes & Harper Woods branch of the NAACP, I write today to ask that your body summarily dismiss these frivolous claims that have been made against Council Member Vikas Relan.

Aside from being politically motivated, the alleged acts do not appear to violate the ethics ordinance, which was crafted to address conflicts of interest, nor do the social media posts in question involve use of public office for personal gain or an improper use of city resources.

Instead, this hearing results in a waste of taxpayer resources. Additionally, a finding of fault could invite further abuse of the ethics ordinance by allowing for further scurrilous claims to be made by anyone who chooses to do so. It is not just bad precedent it also opens the door for future abuse.

On behalf of the Grosse Pointes & Harper Woods NAACP, I urge this body to act with integrity by dismissing these complaints.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia M. Douglas, President
Grosse Pointes & Harper Woods NAACP

Courtney Delmege

From: Betsy Fortuna [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 21, 2022 6:14 PM
To: clerk; citycouncil
Subject: To be read aloud at 1/24/22 Ethics meeting

To the Ethics Committee,

I am very disappointed that the ethics board has decided not to read aloud the letters that residents have sent to be read at the ethics hearing on January 24, 2022. Residents have a right to have their voices heard in public and it is not safe for many of us to attend in person due to the ongoing pandemic. This gives the appearance of the committee's desire to shut down public opinion, even if that is not what you have intended. Please reconsider your decision and read all of the letters you have received regarding this hearing.

Sincerely

Elizabeth Fortuna
[REDACTED]

Courtney Delmege

From: Edward Keelean [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 22, 2022 2:30 PM
To: clerk
Subject: Public Comment for 1/24/2022 Ethics Review Board Meeting

My name is Edward V. Keelean and I am a 35 year Park resident and live at [REDACTED] GPP. I am also a licensed attorney, now retired, who has practiced law in the area for over 44 years. I am a frequent attendee at council meetings, a former candidate for council in 2015, and a Democratic Precinct Delegate in precinct 2.

I have reviewed the three complaints at issue, the ordinance and the procedural rules of the board and conclude that these complaints should be summarily dismissed pursuant to Rule 204 (e) because the complaints do not show any violation of the ordinance. The intent of the ordinance is to regulate official acts that are a conflict of interest between public employment and private gain. These three complaints involve social media posts during a very contentious election race and have virtually nothing to do with conflicts between Councilman Relan's private interests and the public's interest.

Thank you for your service on this important board.

Courtney Delmege

From: Nina G [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 23, 2022 11:11 AM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: Citizen public comment for ethics review board agenda

Hello,

I am submitting this letter to be included in public comments for the upcoming Ethics Review Board meeting.

My name is Marina (Nina) Gazel and I live at [REDACTED] I am writing to recommend dismissal of the claims against council member Relan.

Though I find the social media commentary unnecessary, it is not a violation of the ethics ordinance and infringes on Mr. Relan's Freedom of Speech since he was posting as a private member of the community, not via official council page/comment. I believe these complaints set a bad precedent and risk becoming increasingly political in nature on both sides. Mr. Relan is not using his office for personal gain, not making impartial decisions, and not making governmental decisions outside of proper governmental channels.

As a new member of this community (1.5 years) I am embarrassed by the way social media **and print media** is used to inflame and build divides on ALL sides of the political spectrum. It's childish, sets a terrible example for actual children/young people, and makes me legitimately ashamed of living here (which is a shame because the in-person (non-virtual) experience of connecting with members of the community across the political spectrum is so pleasant, helpful, and supportive).

That said, use of social media by council members on their personal accounts is not in violation of the ethics ordinance and infringes on their Freedom of Speech. If the city council wishes to add language to the ordinance about social media usage in the future they are free to do so, but cannot punish Mr. Relan for something not included in the current ordinance.

Thank you,

Marina (Nina) Gazel
[REDACTED]

Courtney Delmege

From: Graig Donnelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 23, 2022 4:13 PM
To: clerk
Cc: Nick Sizeland; citycouncil
Subject: Public Comment -- Ethics Review Board Meeting on 1/24/2022 (Re: Public Comment -- Ethics Review Board Meeting on 1/11/2022)

I am again submitting my below comments with a request that they be read aloud at tomorrow's Ethics Review Board meeting. I will not be able to attend in person and, in the midst of a pandemic, I find it more than a little embarrassing for our City's administration to not read all written comments aloud.

Thank you,
Graig Donnelly

On Monday, January 10, 2022, 04:28:19 PM EST, Graig Donnelly [REDACTED] wrote:

Please read my comments below aloud during the "Public Comment" portion of tomorrow's GPP Ethics Review Board meeting.

I am a resident of Grosse Pointe Park, near the Kercheval business district and close to our neighbors in Detroit.

I have known Council Member Relan for several years, having met when he ran for Council in 2019. He listens to all residents and does everything he can to address their concerns and dreams for our City. Indeed, listening to residents is a primary role of any elected official.

These ethics complaints are not about Council Member Relan, though. They are an attack on those who speak out and speak up, an attempt to quiet voices of people who share truths that those in power do not want heard. Council Member Relan just so happens to be the target today. Tomorrow it could be any of us.

In fact, the complaints aren't even describing behavior relevant to the City's Ethics policies, known as Ordinance #219. To uphold or take action against Council Member Relan based on these complaints would itself be an attack on his first amendment rights.

I urge the Ethics Review Board to dismiss these complaints, and to hold accountable those who knowingly made them under false pretenses. Please exercise your duty, per the Ethics Ordinance, to "recommend to Council that Council, in its discretion, recommend or impose a civil infraction and fine on the person making the false or frivolous complaint or refer the matter to the prosecutor for potential prosecution."

Thank you,
Graig Donnelly

Courtney Delmege

From: Amy Greenroyd [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 23, 2022 4:47 PM
To: clerk
Cc: citycouncil
Subject: public comment for ethics review board meeting Jan 24, 2022

My name is Amy Greenroyd, I am a resident of Grosse Pointe Park. I am writing this for submission as public comment in the ethics review board meeting.

I am requesting complete dismissal of the three alleged ethical violations charged against Councilman Relan. As a resident I have found his behavior both officially in council and unofficially as a fellow resident to be above reproach. The appearance of these purported "violations" are remarkably coordinated and feel to be an attack against our community as a whole and specifically Councilman Relan. None of the "violations" apply to the city's code of ethics and instead are a personal attack on a resident of this community. The behavior is abhorrent. The city should request the Cotton Family as a whole to cease and desist these attacks via phony ethics violations and numerous attack columns in the Grosse Pointe News. The community deserves better.

Respectfully,
Amy Greenroyd