



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | POSITION 9

COUNCILMEMBER M. LORENA GONZÁLEZ

July 23, 2017

Mayor Ed Murray
Seattle City Hall
600 Fourth Avenue, 7th Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mayor Murray:

I am in receipt of your letter dated Friday, July 21, 2017. Thank you for your thoughtful response to the concerns I expressed to you privately and publicly. I continue to appreciate your willingness to collaborate. And I concur with your assessment that we must continue to work together to ensure that the remaining months of your term and the eventual transition of Mayoral administrations is effective, coordinated and transparent.

To begin with, I wanted to take a moment to address my request that you consider resigning in light of the State of Oregon's Child Protective Services' findings of a founded child sex abuse report against you. Last week, in response to my expressed concerns, you publicly stated that you intend to fulfill your term through December 31, 2017. As you know, I cannot legally compel you to resign, as there is nothing in the Charter that provides Council with that authority nor does the Charter articulate a "resignation standard" or protocols. The decision to voluntarily vacate the Office of the Mayor remains with you even if I continue to have concerns about your ultimate decision. I hope that, consistent with Council President Harrell's and Councilmembers Bagshaw, Herbold and Juarez's statement of last week, you will endeavor to refrain from using the court of public opinion to disparage your alleged victims of sexual abuse. I also encourage you to refrain from categorically attacking the credibility of caseworkers and institutions, who are charged with the difficult work of investigating serious child sex abuse allegations. These are often times the only entities available for a child to report possible sex abuse to and I am sensitive to the chilling impact that the words of highly-elected officials can have in this context.

With regard to your letter of July 21, you propose a joint Mayoral-Council transition coordination committee to execute a plan for ensuring a smooth transition of power to the next Mayor. Your proposal assumes that there will be no vacancy in the Office of the Mayor between now and December 31, 2017. While I continue to have grave concerns about Oregon's Child Protective Services' findings, I believe that you have listened to my broader governance concerns in light of these allegations. At this juncture, I would like to communicate my support of your proposed joint Mayoral-Council transition coordination committee for the following core reasons:

1. The proposed joint coordination committee is unprecedented. I am not aware of another time in modern City of Seattle history in which the Mayor voluntarily agreed to jointly coordinate with the legislative branch the transition of power from one executive

administration to the next. This unprecedented proposal signals to me that you take the implications of these allegations on governance seriously and I view it as a commensurate response to the unprecedented nature of the allegations lodged against you.

2. The proposed joint coordination committee will provide the Executive and Legislative branches of our City government the opportunity to collaborate in a manner that will maximize transparency regarding pending policies, procedures and operations. This will advance the goal of providing the Council with a way to independently evaluate whether the Executive is indeed effectively governing in spite of being under the cloud of these serious allegations. Additionally, there will be a significant benefit to our overall understanding of the state and condition of the Executive branch that will facilitate a smooth transition from your administration to the next. I believe this level of coordination while minimizing transition disruption.

For these reasons and those stated in your own letter, I have personally asked each of my colleagues to join me in supporting your proposal to establish a joint Mayoral-Council transition coordination committee.

Lastly, I would like to address your proposal in light of my request that the Council coordinate it's own committee to address these issues by July 24, 2017. While your proposal is responsive to my concerns regarding your ability to continue governing through the remainder of your term, I continue to believe that the Council has an independent duty to prepare contingency plans to prepare for all possible scenarios. I have had conversations with Council President Harrell about my ongoing interest in preparing those Council-driven plans that provide the Council and the Mayor with an understanding of what would need to occur if there was a voluntary or involuntary vacancy in the Office of the Mayor. Council President Harrell indicated to me that he began working on a draft proposal for collective consideration by the Council on Monday, July 17. It is my continuing hope that the Council, under the guidance of the Council President, will expeditiously work to finalize these contingency plans to assure the residents of Seattle that, in these unprecedented times, we are prepared for whatever might come. I continue to believe that this is how we best serve the people of Seattle given the circumstances surrounding the ongoing public vetting of the allegations against you and the spectrum of possible outcomes related to the same.

This Monday, during Council Briefing, I will publicly communicate my thinking as articulated here. I will continue to articulate my concerns in a respectful, thoughtful and judicious manner. I share with you the principle that it is of critical importance that we remain focused on ensuring effective governance and a coordinated transition of Mayoral administrations.

Should you wish to speak to me before Monday, I am available to you via cell at (206) 390-0593.

Very truly yours,



Councilmember M. Lorena González

Chair: Gender Equity, Safe Communities and New Americans Committee

Vice Chair: Education, Equity and Governance Committee

cc: Council President Bruce Harrell (District 2)
Councilmember Tim Burgess (Position 9)
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw (District 7)
Councilmember Mike O'Brien (District 6)
Councilmember Lisa Herbold (District 1)
Councilmember Rob Johnson (District 4)
Councilmember Debora Juarez (District 5)
Councilmember Kshama Sawant (District 3)
Mike Fong, Mayor's Chief of Staff
Fred Podesta, Mayor's Director of Operations
Anthony Auriemma, Council Relations Liaison