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Sent: Friday, April 26, 2024 2:42 PM
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Subject: Request For In Person Meeting Regarding the Equestrian Center - [Questionable]

Hi Nick,

I wanted to thank you for taking a few minutes to talk to me after the board meeting. I would like to have more conversations about rescinding the rate hike at the equestrian center.

First, I want to be very clear that I only speak for myself. I'm not writing to you representing anyone or any group. I want to talk to the board person-to-person. I also think there is a lot of cross-talk between what is being said or not said, which leaves us very much in the dark and unsure of what to infer from the few things being shared or publicly stated by you and your board members.

There was tremendous concern expressed by both Michele and another board member that misinformation or untruths are being stated as facts. I share this concern. On that theme, I would like to address that one board member stated that we are just affluent people and private owners and that the center should be available to others. To my shock, she named a particular race that should have access after calling us "affluent" as if people of that race aren't or can't be affluent. Perhaps in an imperfect way that statement didn't come out as she intended since to me it sounded racist. And we have every race imaginable currently at the EQC.

We are not a bunch of rich people playing polo. As I told you, the reason I even got involved with horses at all is because of my older daughter who has autism. When my daughter was 5, she had the receptive and expressive language of a 3-year-old. This level of language delay led to other behaviors like screaming, grabbing and most frighteningly, running away. I cannot fully describe the level of desperation of knowing that your young child lacks such basic skills as talking and communicating and not knowing how to help them. But we took her to the Shea Center in San Juan where she did one day a week in clinic and one day a week on a horse. And she was all caught up in a year and a half. She made three and a half years' worth of gains in a year and a half because of equine therapy. And this is after we tried *everything*. My younger daughter, Claire, got sick of watching her sister ride and eventually got lessons next door at Sycamore. I'm passionate about horses because they helped my daughter when nothing else worked. The whole realm of possibilities for the rest of her life is bigger and broader because of people who know how to use horses to help kids like her. Thus, I'm completely insulted that my

concerns are written off because of the incorrect assumption that I'm just some wealthy person. This sort of mistaken stereotype is not only inaccurate, but it also dismisses the struggles of those of us who work very hard to be with the animals we love. Many years ago, I put off buying a dishwasher and hand washed dishes so my daughter, Claire, could attend the Sabo riding camps. Claire buys almost everything she needs second hand. Some of her friends sell or trade clothes when they grow out of them through social media. If something must be new, like for safety reasons, a helmet, we save up for it. If we want to not have misinformation going back and forth, I would like to request that we stop being mischaracterized as a bunch of affluent people. And I would like the board to publicly acknowledge that the facility is used by people of all economic classes. You asked us to trust you, yet the equestrian community is spoken about in such contemptuous terms by your group. Clearing this up would really remove a lot of roadblocks.

So, let's talk about the path forward. I would like to have more in-person meetings where the stakeholders can talk with the board members. The smaller meeting with Tanya and Michele was extremely helpful.

Every trainer there is doing great things for the public. We shouldn't be financially punished, and you shouldn't be focused on putting out of business all of the women trainers and educators there just because you don't want to work with the current free and low-cost programming they provide.

There are immediate urgent needs that must be addressed. Lopez Works needs to be given a 30-day notice because of their high costs and the unsafe and lousy job they're doing. If anyone is getting a "public gift of funds", it's Lopez Works. The exorbitant contract that you signed with them has proven to cost too much in taxpayer money, put the EQC in the red, and at this point is clearly fiscally irresponsible. There is no reason to keep this completely financially irresponsible contract. Fire them. If you want to keep Lopez works, you should ask them to work with the current rates. If they can do that then you also need to address the issues with the arenas, the shavings, and the hay. The arenas are not being properly maintained as we've demonstrated with the rocks and shards of metal being found in there. Horses are getting sores and injuries from lack of shavings. The flakes of hay are not dense enough and some horses have lost 100 pounds and many struggle to keep weight on them. It's not Lopez Work's fault that they are in over their head, it's your fault for putting them there. The insufficient management of the animals you've been charged with caring for (by the nature of your role as Chairman for the OC Fair board) is cruel. I know you probably don't understand that, but I feel the need to speak on their behalf and make you aware of the repercussions your policies and decisions have on the health of the horses at the EQC. Any plans you have to bring in other horses should be put on hold until the health and care of the horses currently there are addressed. And I also want to say that since you are aware of these issues now, from where I sit, doing nothing makes you negligent at this point if someone, horse or rider, gets hurt.

I personally know that these problems are very real but they're not insurmountable. I feel like we must work together toward that end, and the communication has not been good. Nick, you said I should put my energy toward the person making the decision. Who is that? **IT IS YOU.** At the end of the meeting, other board members made it clear they only advised, and you made the decisions. Please let me know how to meet with you.

Carol Graves