

From: "Whitney, Nichelle Shantai" <whitneyn@iu.edu>

Date: April 20, 2021 at 9:01:00 PM EDT

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Cc: "Elem, Christina" <celem@iu.edu>, Sean Starowitz <starowis@bloomington.in.gov>

Subject: Resignation as President, Baneker Advisory Council

Good Evening Everyone: I write to inform you that I am resigning from BCCAC effective immediately. I have a long, proven history of support for the community including the Baneker Center; and I value transparency, accountability and equity in each of my service roles. My resignation comes in response to the decisions of Erik Pearson, Sean Starowitz, and Raheem Elmore that occurred in today's Council meeting. Key information was withheld prior to this meeting, and their presentation of the details during tonight's call was misleading and lacked integrity. What I learned later was this was a cover-up for someone else. Morally, I cannot stand for/with what happened in tonight's meeting, and I believe stepping away from such obligations will give opportunity for BCCAC to blossom.

To provide greater context, I had several conversations with Erik and a conversation with Raheem. Each conversation with Erik was extensive, timely, and what I presumed to be transparent. The plan to vote for additional input from other artists in light of Raheem's extensive grievances, agitated behavior, and lack of remorse, and the lack of availability for the artists until June 5, was a shared agreement. Raheem verbally agreed to the separation of duties, and even negotiated the severance happening after he received funding from The Guarden. I was very clear that I would bring the recommendation for severance to the Council for a vote. Regardless of the vote, The Guarden still planned to compensate Raheem for his work because we had no idea that he had felt underappreciated and undervalued in his role with the mural. The call between Raheem and myself ended with The Guarden offering to cover the expenses for intellectual contribution and manual labor, for which he says belonged primarily to him. These grievances nor expenses were ever brought to the Council, and it was only mentioned to me by Raheem in our 1:1 call. It was an act of good faith, love, and compassion for supporting Black and Indigenous people that I made this sacrifice to rectify Raheem's concerns.

When I inquired about Christina Elem's contributions, he reiterated that Christina lacked the confidence to create a design and she only worked on the "B" of the first mural while the rest of the work was his. This is not true as Christina has been a phenomenal contributor to this work, and she assisted volunteers on the execution of the work "Black." Today at 5:25 p.m., just 5 minutes prior to the start of the meeting, I received the attached message from Sean. This was the first time in the last 24 hours that I had heard anything about 1) Raheem's desire to keep working with the project, and 2) his accountability of unsupervised work that jeopardized the

integrity of the public art mural. Erik and I had a conversation, and based on the email decided that it was best to at least give Raheem the chance to clarify the situation and offer the apology directly to BCCAC. We all see how the meeting played out, so I won't recap this.

I trust BCCAC members fully, and I believe the best vote was made based on the information that we all had. I did not learn of the other conversations nor the directives given to Raheem by another person until after tonight's BCCAC meeting. While I can appreciate that miscommunications happen, this lack of transparency and tactful deception has hindered my ability to trust the integrity of such leadership and partnerships.

I hope that moving forward, you all are able to show up as your authentic selves in this space without fear of harm by colleagues. As we watch the world grapple with the conviction of Derek Chauvin, and we hear the countless allies and organizations profess the work of anti-racism, I hope that you hold near what happened in tonight's meeting as an example of what not to do. Black lives still matter.

With all the love and best wishes,

Nichelle

Nichelle Whitney