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Councilman Larry Hill explains why he did not disclose his code enforcement case to the Council prior to voting on the 30-day moratorium on code enforcement fines proposed by Councilman Maceo Mahoney

## Council takes no action on 30-day moratorium

By MICHAEL BOWEN  
Publisher

The special called meeting of the Washington City Council regarding the 30-day moratorium on code enforcement fines saw little action short of discussion and adjournment.

City attorney Adam Nelson stated that in his opinion, and having reviewed the records and city laws, he does not see any conflict of interest regarding Councilman Larry Hill's current code enforcement case and his voting in favor of the moratorium. Nelson reasoned that since the imposition of the fine took place before the moratorium, Hill's case would not be impacted.

He explained that presently, the property, at 213 Lexington Avenue, is in violation of building code sections 304.1, 304.2, and 10.1, and that failure to bring the property into compliance by April 19 will result in a fine for fifteen days.

Nelson added that ultimately, he nor the city council can decide how the moratorium affects Hill's case. That determination, according to Nelson, is up to the Municipal Judge.

He further added that whether the case required disclosure is up to the council to decide.

When asked for comment by the mayor, Councilman Hill stated that he is appalled that the City Administrator and the Code Enforcement Director provided information to this newspaper before discussing the matter with him. Hill added that if he had thought of a possible conflict of interest, he would have disclosed the matter. "If I had thought about it, I didn't even know the law that Adam read to us, but if I had thought about this, I would never have imposed this seat, this city council seat, and the constituents that put me in office over \$420. I am not that cheap," Hill said.

Hill added, "As I shared with all the council members, I apologize, not because I am saying I am guilty, I apologize because I consider you guys colleagues. If I see you doing something wrong, or even kind of maybe in question, I will pull your coat tail. You may not like it, but I will try to get a text to you or something. But man, I am telling you, I am really appalled at this, and then to read the paper. So, there are some questions that I do have. I want to see where this is going to go. I want to know who sent this to the newspapers. I know our City Administrator has the right to speak on behalf of the city with the mayor, the mayor our chief executive of the city, but also, I see remarks in the paper by our code enforcement officer, and gentlemen, that's not right."

"I think what brought this up was the motion for the moratorium," Mayor William deGolian stated. "If it could affect a councilmember one way or the other, maybe that should have been disclosed, and I think that the fact that it wasn't disclosed raised the question in people's minds, 'Was this done in a way to benefit a Councilmember?'" deGolian added, "I think there was a misunderstanding about this. I think this is good, I'm glad we cleared this up. Let me just say this. To the extent there is a perception, right or wrong, that a moratorium on paying the fines was going to benefit a member of the city council, we need to clear that up, and I think we have here."

Councilman Charles Wagner proposed rescinding the 30-day moratorium. "I think we are missing the point here. I don't know if there is a conflict of interest. The lawyer has told us that he don't think it affects Larry's case. I am not sure about that. That would go back to the judge. The judge is going to have to make the decision whether that moratorium impacts Larry. With that said, I think this

city body, if we don't rescind the motion that was made, we are sending the wrong message to the public. This voting body did not know Councilman Hill was involved or what was behind there. We may have voted differently had we known that," Wagner said. "If I was before a judge and got fined, I would disclose that immediately at the meeting. Now, whose to say Councilman Hill, just didn't occur to him at that time, that's fine. But he ought to recognize we're sending a message out here to the public that we condone not telling the public the true facts. I don't want to appear that I'm hiding something here as a city councilman."

"I don't think Larry Hill was trying to hide anything. I think it just didn't occur to him," deGolian said. He added that the moratorium will expire April 12, before Hill's deadline April 19.

After further discussion, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Adjournment was approved 5-1, with all in favor except for councilman Wagner.



Jeff Lukich trains for his competition

## Local runner to race in Boston Marathon

Submitted by  
Mary Beth Lukich

Local runner and triathlete Jeff Lukich will be racing the 126 running of the Boston Marathon on April 18.

Local residents may have seen Lukich running around town, on the track at the Rec Department, or out at the High School as he does all of his training locally.

The Boston Marathon, first run in 1897, is arguably the most prestigious marathon in the world. And is one of a handful of marathons that require runners to race a qualifying time on another certified marathon course to gain entry. Lukich qualified for Boston at the Skidaway Island Marathon in March 2021 with a

time over 5 minutes faster than the qualifying time for his age group. This will be Lukich's first time racing the Boston Marathon and he is extremely excited to be able to race with 30,000 runners from around the world, in the historic city of Boston.

Boston will be Lukich's first race of the 2022 season, and he is tentatively scheduled to race Ironman Barcelona, Spain, in October of this year.

Lukich retired after a 30-year career with the State of Georgia in 2018, and now does some part-time consulting work. He has also coached triathletes, ultra-runners, and cyclists since 2011 with his coaching company, Drive Multisport. He coaches athletes across the U.S. and internationally.



Director Stan Coe (front center) instructs Belle (right, played by Shannon Bentley) during a scene while Gaston (left, played by Douglas Pullen) and the ensemble listens. Ensemble members include (l-r) Trevor Forrest, Jacob Posey, Robert Scruggs, Nancy Aburto, Rylee Labor, Serenity Labor, Lindsey Pruitt, Wyatt Labor, Laurin Wilkerson, Lucy Matthews, Jandi Matthews, and Rhonda Lamb.

## WLT's Beauty & The Beast to Perform Beginning of May

Submitted by  
JASON LEBLANC

The Washington Little Theater's spring musical *Beauty and The Beast* will perform May 6, 7, 8, and 13, 14, 15. The production is led by veteran director Dr. Stan Coe, with Shannon Bentley starring as Belle and Joey Pruitt as The Beast. Scott Brown, Jason LeBlanc, April Morrison, Laurin Wilkerson, Wyatt Labor, Douglas Pullen, Tyreako Bailey, and

over 40 other volunteers comprise the variety of housewares and villagers that fill out the cast to bring this beloved story to life.

The classic story tells of Belle, a young woman in a provincial town, and the Beast, who is really a young prince trapped under the spell of an enchantress. If the Beast can learn to love and be loved, the curse will end and he will be transformed into his former self. But time is running out. If the Beast does not learn

his lesson soon, he and his household will be doomed for all eternity.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for youth. The new youth price has replaced the previous 'kids' level and now includes all children 18 years of age and younger. Tickets at the door are \$2 more. Patrons are encouraged to order their tickets via the theater's website (WashingtonLittleTheater.org) soon as the show is expected to sell out.

## Candidates qualify for May primary election

By JOAN BOWEN  
Managing Editor

Five candidates have qualified to have their names on the ballot for the upcoming May Primary.

Sam Moore will run unopposed for the position of Chairman of the County Board of Commissioners. Commissioners Charles Jackson, of District 3, and Clem Slaton, of District 4, will both run unopposed.

The Board of Education will not see any changes as Horace Jordon, of District 1, and David Chafin, of District 2, both will run unopposed.

The last day to apply for an absentee ballot is May 16. The last day to register and be eligible to vote in the General Primary is April 25.