

What's the rap against President Waldron's soft-gavel philosophy?

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 *Latest in a series of posts on City Government* 

What are “you” saying in answer to that question?

Gadfly loves your voices. Let's go to the tape:

- “One of the things that concerned me over the last several months is a breakdown in order and decorum . . . so much so that this has been recorded multiple times in the [press].”
- “While for the most part the meetings proceed normally, the departures are having a disproportionate negative impact on working relationships and Council's reputation.”
- “Council members have been unfairly challenged to choose between engaging at the risk of escalation or answer with silence.”
- “It's the responsibility of the president to assert control and to maintain decorum. And that hasn't happened.”
- “Council has to work together to get business done. Divisiveness and rancor follow when personal attacks are tolerated.”
- “Public confidence is also affected when this spills out into the public.”
- “The Council's reputation is at stake.”
- “It's very important to follow the rules and maintain respectful demeanor during meetings. This is the president's job.”
- “Subjective freedom of speech can involve personalities.”
- “This body suffered a tremendous deterioration in its image by the free allowance of subjective freedom of speech to allow members of Council to attack one another . . . unabated, creating a serious problem in terms of our opinion of them “
- “What needs to happen is strong powerful control of subjective freedom of speech to prevent that kind of character assassination. It's happened.”

- “It will be interesting if a slightly heavier gavel will make a difference in the Council climate.”
- “This is a shame . . . a big shame. . . . I’m very ashamed of a few of you, very ashamed.”
- “If you can’t work with each other, you shouldn’t be here. . . . to be a City Council person . . . and put people down in the paper . . . that is not the type of representation we need.”
- “Sometimes the softer hand doesn’t work, especially when you are attacking your own members.”
- “Listen to the concerns of everyone who has spoken out Listen to the fact that you have rules.”
- “It does not look good for this City if you are fighting amongst each other . . . and it’s in the paper.”
- “You also realize these recordings are on youtube. Everybody in the world can see them.”
- “Really think about your actions before doing them, because I have pride in my City.”
- “People have to realize that everybody is watching you. You are representing us.”
- “All I ask is that you respect each other.”

Can we distill the comments and agree that there are three main concerns with the soft-gavel style:

- There’s been a breakdown in decorum
- that impedes Council work
- and damages the City’s reputation

Now let’s look at President Waldron’s response.

to be continued . . .