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via USPS and email

Representative Nathan Ballentine
District 71 – Lexington & Richland Co.
320B Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Richland County Recreation Commission – Delegation Issue

Dear Nathan:

As you know my law office represents five former top managers of the Recreation Commission in lawsuits that have been filed against Mr. Brown, commission members, and two other managers at the Commission. These lawsuits will be decided on the evidence and we believe that we are likely to prevail in the final analysis regardless of what happens at the Commission as a result of present inquiries and investigations.

This letter addresses my concerns over and above these lawsuits with the operation of the Commission under its present Director, James Brown III and the apparent relationship between Mr. Brown and at least three members of the board appointed by the delegation as it continues forward with its mission for the citizens of our county and their recreational needs.

I am sure that you are aware of reports in The Nerve which have indicated possible cash bribes between Mr. Brown and a member of the board and there are numerous reports of extensive use of public resources for private use in terms of work for the board members and Mr. Brown and his family which have not been refuted to this time. An atmosphere of fear and intimidation exists and apparently the two persons chosen by Mr. Brown to carry out the duties of our former clients, Tara Dickerson and David Stringer, are having a very tough time carrying out the operations of the agency and protecting Mr. Brown at the same time.

Mr. Brown and the agency are reported to be under investigation by the FBI, SLED, Richland County Sheriff's Office and perhaps others. A recent internal investigation of the charge of sexual harassment by Mr. Brown took place as the result of an employee grievance. This investigation resulted in a report which may have supported those allegations but the board refuses to release it or even to allow its own members to have copies.

If much of the evidence is to be believed, Brown's treatment and actions toward females in the workplace make Donald Trump and Bill Clinton look like Sir Galahad and Sir Walter Raleigh. Threats and intimidation of employees who have given evidence in that investigation or

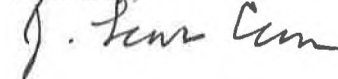
who may be called upon by the FBI or SLED have allegedly been made by Mr. Brown and others which amounts to an obstruction to the judicial process and interference with the sexual harassment law. All of this information and more has been shared with SLED and hopefully these agencies are continuing to follow the leads and evidence to reach a determination and make a report in this case. That is entirely up to them and we all will await their decision.

Thank you for your call for the investigations and I hope you and the other delegation members will persist in bringing this matter to a speedy and just conclusion. It is plain that many members of the delegation want to wait until after the election is over and to delay any decision that they may make about the oversight of this commission until later. Senator Lourie has suggested that appropriate legislation and legal action be taken to relieve the delegation of the oversight of the actions of the board and personnel of the agency and this may well be a positive suggestion. However, this will take many months or a year to pursue and complete and the problems at this agency simply will not wait this long. It is clear to me that those charged with abuse of their offices and violation of law should be suspended or relieved of their duties at least during the time an investigation takes place so that they will no longer be in position to influence the outcomes and if they are guilty will be removed from their positions. It would seem that if Mr. Brown and the others believe that they should be cleared of these allegations, they would want that to come sooner rather than later. They should not be there during the deliberative process however. Hens can't lay eggs as long as the fox remains in the hen house.

I believe that is urgent for the delegation to take action even before the June 14th election whether or not it is a wise move for them with their constituents. The delegation and its members cannot escape their responsibility when they appointed and retained the members of this board, nor can the Governor through some technical legal excuse, since she had to sign and approve each board member when they were appointed by the delegation. Furthermore, the voters are aware of the delegation's knowledge of these severe problems and issues. They do not appreciate their efforts to kick the can down the road or, even worse, to try to pass on their own responsibilities to another oversight body. Every member of this delegation has access to the facts of this matter and there is no reason why they all should not push to have these issues immediately resolved. This is an important agency that receives millions of dollars in tax payers funds which supplies the recreational needs of all of our citizens particularly our young people and all who enjoy our parks, pools and facilities throughout our county even in the extreme rural areas.

Be guided accordingly.

Sincerely,



J. Lewis Cromer

JLC/mmy