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Ellsworth American Mail - Letter to the Editor

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Islander

Letter to the Editor

1 message

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Dear Editor,

The Maine Supreme Court on Thursday, July 20, 2017, decided against me as to whether the Bar Harbor Town Council was compelled to conduct a hearing on a potential violation of the Town Charter by Councilor Paul Paradis. The Court didn't reach the issue of whether Councilor Paradis had violated the Charter by secretly meeting with Angie Chamberlain, giving her instructions, and telling her to keep their meeting secret from then Town Manager, Dana Reed. Nor did it reach the issue of whether the Council should have convened an investigatory hearing. It only said that the Council alone had the power to decide to investigate Councilor Paradis and that it must, under the Charter, serve the dual role of prosecutor and judge for such an investigation.

The Council did a disservice to Councilor Paradis by not holding a hearing to air Ms. Chamberlain's charges. I read the Charter differently than the Court and undertook this case pro bono because I believe we are a government of laws and not men. I understood that this would be the toughest of the four pro bono claims I have brought against the Town for reasons a law school professor shared with me over 40 years ago: "Judges, as public officials, are solicitous of other public officials." That solicitousness is best evidenced by the Maine Supreme Court's conscious choice, in its decision, to never identify by name the Town Councilor whose conduct was at issue.

The first three pro bono cases I took against Bar Harbor resulted in a huge open-air substation not being built on Woodbury Avenue, a court order that the Town Council place before the voters citizens' initiatives designed to prohibit future electrical substations in residential neighborhoods, and a court order that initiatives that drew the support of 58% of the voters were binding on the Town. Despite those three successes, I am ever mindful that I will inevitably lose some cases.

Sincerely,

Art Greif

Bar Harbor, Maine