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To: My Fellow Oak Hill Residents
From: Dr. Bill Kraus

First, I would like to sincerely thank all of you for your most wonderful friendship and support these past five years while serving as your City Manager. But, I feel it's important to share with you some very serious problems facing the City of Oak Hill that could potentially destroy all that you and I have worked to build. Therefore, I feel it is my ethical duty to make you aware of what is going on at our city hall because it threatens the city we all love.

The complex saga began approximately eight months ago when I took the lead at City Hall to fight the "Bredesen Bunker" at the Executive Residence on South Curtiswood Lane. The primary purpose for having a city government since 1952 has been and continues to be to protect the single-family residential quality and nature of Oak Hill. Generally, over the years, we all have been successful in this protective effort...until the "bunker". Unfortunately, we lost that battle and the personal recriminations against me for taking on that fight have been significant, to put it mildly.

As the "bunker" battle died down, except for the on-going negative impact on the neighbors of South Curtiswood, the problems that I would like to share with you began to become evident to a number of us in the "city family".

- Four months ago, the current mayor, on his own, hired a longtime Nashville political operative to become part of the city staff and made the decision to pay him \$60,000 a year. (That's the same as what Oak Hill pays our City Attorney and City Engineer COMBINED!) Yet, this individual did not have any apparent or specific duties to carry out. On top of that, the Board of Commissioners had voted against his hiring at a regular meeting earlier this spring. But the mayor ignored this and went ahead and overspent what is allowed by law to pay this individual for highly questionable services. When I shared my grave concerns with the mayor about what he was doing, he responded, "Trust me."
- Because of the mayor's increasingly bizarre behavior and questionable conduct, prompted by what appeared to many to be a power play, when it came time for the city election, it was my strong belief that we needed to keep the incumbent in place for appropriate balance. I felt we needed to retain a Board of Commissioners that would work to build this community and would vote to continue the beneficial programs we had started. I did not want a Commission torn apart by divisiveness and a willingness to conduct business behind closed doors, which, sadly, I've seen become a reality here in the last few days.

- To achieve that, and as a private citizen of Oak Hill, and NOT as City Manager,
 - My wife and I donated \$200 to the incumbent candidate;
 - I sent out cards to a small group of people who I know, urging them to vote, again as an Oak Hill resident and not as the City Manager.

But, before I did either of these things, I first went to the City Attorney and asked him if, legally, there was a problem. His response was, “Not to my knowledge.” I trusted his advice.

- But on June 16th, the Mayor ordered me to his house where he and the City Attorney told me that I had violated a little known state statute that forbids the City Manager from assisting a candidate for the Board of Commissioners. The Mayor then told me that I had to either resign or retire immediately. Keep in mind, that the Mayor was acting alone, and as I later learned, without the knowledge or consent of the other two commissioners - Commissioner Ray Throckmorton and former commissioner Tommy Jacobs.

I agreed to retire though, despite being advised by five well-known and renowned attorneys in town who all agreed that forcing me to leave my position for this sort of violation was totally unnecessary.

- Within hours, the Mayor then began a deliberate housecleaning of select appointees, by removing several Oak Hill residents from the city’s volunteer advisory commissions and boards, without cause or explanation.
- But perhaps the most surprising and puzzling action by the Mayor came at the June 19th Commission meeting, right after I had submitted my forced letter of retirement and the Mayor and the other Commissioners had publicly praised my accomplishments, skills, and knowledge. That’s when the Mayor suddenly, and behind closed doors, urged me to stay on with the City of Oak Hill as the “Consulting Manager.” He wanted me essentially to perform the same duties that I had been doing with a 25% cut in pay. I later learned that he had, again on his own, persuaded the city’s engineering firm to hire me for this position with the understanding that the city would reimburse the firm for my salary. Many, upon learning of this arranged plan by the Mayor, believe it was arranged to “keep me quiet.” I tend to agree.

But I cannot keep quiet. This city, you the citizens, and all that we’ve achieved together mean too much to me.

To be blunt, what I am revealing here is just the tip of the iceberg in this political crisis. And it pains me to see this happening, not only to our city, but to what I had considered to be a highly successful working relationship with the Mayor. We were in the trenches together throughout the “Bredesen Bunker” battle. But recently something in him has changed and his commitment and dedication no longer seems to be to bettering our city but rather carrying out a personal agenda.

We have too many big issues currently facing Oak Hill to let this bring our city down. These include the development of a “partnership” with the Land Trust for Tennessee to preserve the 65-acre Glen Leven Estate; the building of the long-awaited sound barriers along I-65; the creation of a new level of police services for neighborhood patrol; traffic control and the institution of “traffic calming” initiatives throughout Oak Hill.

The future of this beautiful community lies in your hands.

If you value, as I do, what we have built together and truly treasure the city of Oak Hill as we have known it, I urge you to seek answers from your city’s elected leaders.

- Call the Board of Commissioners and voice your concerns:
 - Mayor Tommy Alsup - 300-5319
 - Ray Throckmorton - 298-1492
 - Austin McMullen - 972-0375

- Attend a special meeting of the Oak Hill Board of Commissioners next week. (Call City Hall, at 371-8291, for the specific time and day.)

Thank you for your time and interest. Most importantly, thank you for caring about the future of our great city.