

Spafford meeting again a hostile circus

To the editor:

Public profanity and verbal abuse is disorderly conduct. I was one of many sickened when, in the middle of the public proceedings at Spafford's January meeting, Councilor Jeffrey Ireland suddenly turned on a woman and yelled, "Eat sh-t!" Ireland's mother immediately awarded his abuse by attempting to lead a standing ovation for him. Presiding officer, Supervisor Gordon Ireland did nothing to censor the profanity and belligerence. This is just one example of habitual efforts to create a hostile and threatening environment, to intimidate those that are not a part of their clan. Our new county legislator, Jim Rhinehart, was in the audience - what would their behavior have been like, if he hadn't been there?

Many question what Jeffrey

Ireland's role is on the Spafford Town Board. Except for seconding motions and matching his vote to his father's, he has little to contribute to the meetings or discussions except to verbally abuse those who have a different perspective from his father's.

Other cohorts in the audience suggested burning down the Grange Hall (the two Ireland's unsuccessfully voted to deny a restoration grant for that community center building last month) and verbally attacked fellow residents based on their "fancy people" street addresses. The meeting was out of order most of the night. What did Supervisor Gordon Ireland, the board's presiding officer, do while this hostile circus played out? He certainly didn't censor any of the abusive behavior nor did his people need to be recognized to speak, they just yelled out their abuse at will.

In spite of the chaos that ensued during this meeting, an army of citizens attempted to stoically ignore the nonsense, and patiently stood one by one to offer their assistance to the Town: to form a committee to begin preliminary work towards a Master Plan, to draft written policy to resolve

ongoing problems with inadequate record keeping/public records accessibility, to develop a written policy for appointments/reappointments, to continue working towards lake access for residents, to donate personal funds to assist community projects and to form a committee to preserve historic buildings for community use.

Spafford desperately needs a Town Board with leadership skills, professionalism and the talent to work towards consensus in the community. We need town leaders who listen respectfully to citizens and are committed to represent all facets of the community. We look forward to emphasizing common agendas, instead of exasperating differences and instilling fear of diversity. We seek leaders with the courage and insight to preserve all that is good from our past, while also nurturing new ideas and opportunities. What a change good leadership would make in Spafford! How we look forward to election day November 2005!

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