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Holleman: Maplewood City Council proposes additional ethics laws

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By Joe Holleman

Political correspondent/columnist

An ethics complaint filed by a Maplewood City Council member against a member of the city's Plan and Zoning Commission may result in a new law for the St. Louis County suburb.

At a council meeting Tuesday, the council proposed a draft ordinance that would, for the first time, set out a process for handling ethics complaints made against people appointed to city boards.

While city ordinances outline a process for elected officials, there now is no such legislation for appointed members of city boards.

Events that led the council to this point began Dec. 12, when Councilwoman Chasity Mattox cast the only vote against hiring Amber Withycombe, an ally of Mayor Nikylan Knapper, as the new city manager.

Later that night, Brad Jackson wrote comments on a Maplewood community Facebook page which Mattox said were harassing and personally disparaging.

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Jackson was appointed by Knapper to both the planning board and the sustainability committee.

The page’s moderator took down Jackson’s post and then blocked him from the site. Mattox filed a complaint against Jackson on Dec. 13.

Jackson filed one against Mattox on Dec. 18. The council has dismissed the complaint against Mattox, saying it found “no verifiable evidence” of a violation.

On Tuesday, the council said it was hesitant to investigate Mattox’s complaint because harassment potentially is a criminal charge and a legislative body is not the appropriate agency to investigate it.

Knapper recommended that Mattox “go to the police” about the matter; Mattox said she would discuss the issue with her attorney.



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