

# The mayor, pickleball and the hoity-toity

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In the April 13 Examiner, Lois Tuffin accused Councillor Keith Riel of throwing weekly tantrums at council meetings.



She writes, “I’m tired of the yelling and the over-the-top performances. They diminish the dignity that is supposed to come with the role.”

Tuffin ignored a more insidious threat to dignity at city council, demonstrated by Mayor Jeff Leal’s conduct regarding the planned Bonnerworth redevelopment. I’m not referring to the mayor’s threat to “carve” Councillor Bierk “like a turkey.” I’m referring to his creation of the myth of the “hoity-toity.”

Speaking about Bonnerworth at the April 2 general committee meeting, the mayor stated there was a narrative circulating that pickleball is a sport for the elites, the country-club class, the “hoity-toity.” This narrative was created by the mayor. Those questioning the wisdom of the Bonnerworth proposal have not described the pickleball community as elite or hoity-toity. The mayor’s strategy appears designed to distract from the important, unresolved questions about Bonnerworth. He created a false narrative and attributes it, by implication, to those opposing the Bonnerworth plan. He turned the debate away from legitimate, substantive concerns to focus instead on an easily refuted non-issue.

The mayor stayed the course at the April 8 council meeting. He lobbed leading questions about pickleball as a hoity-toity sport to two speakers advocating for the Bonnerworth redevelopment.

The mayor could have asked meaningful questions of representatives on both sides of the debate, and encouraged others to do the same. He could have thoughtfully led the discussion and we all would have learned through the process. The mayor could have been a leader; instead, he chose sarcasm, and obfuscation.

I’ll take Coun. Riel’s transparent hyperbole over Mayor Leal’s manipulative divisiveness any day. Perhaps Tuffin, “who weighs every word with care,” might extend that care to deeper reflection as to who is really diminishing the dignity of their role on city council.

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