



Jan. 15, 2015

Dear City Council Colleagues & Community,

What an honor it has been to serve on council with each of you throughout 2015 and into the first month of 2016. Last year, there were many tough decisions made. The year quickly took shape with the highly publicized Menards zoning case and was followed by decisions on economic issues involving CIDs, tax abatements, and zoning cases, along with other unexpected surprises.

Meetings in zone 1 began the long process of tackling poverty, infrastructure, and crime concerns in the north side of Springfield and countless hours were spent reviewing standing committee agendas, the backgrounds of various issues before council, and responding to constituent inquiries. The most enjoyable moment for me was traveling to Huntsville, Alabama for the Chamber's Community Leadership trip where area leaders networked and learned about a city of similar size. Without a doubt, the job of councilman and councilwoman is a time-consuming but important task.

While meeting these demands has been my pleasure, the combined responsibilities of work, school, and council often rack up between 80-100 hours per week, which has taken a serious toll on my health. As a country boy, the extreme polarization in city politics was unexpected and has contributed to my decision to pursue a different calling in life, preferably where I can continue to help people in a less publicized manner. This experience has re-shaped my career aspirations and I now know that politics in its modern hyper-polarized form—on both the right and the left—is not within that goal.

Living in the country again is in the near future, along with a renewed focus on my health and education with fewer obligations. After months of minimal sleep and long days, my body is finally telling me that something has to give.

I also want to apologize to anyone in the community who was ever offended by some of the tough decisions that I have had to make. Hindsight is 20/20, or so they say, but rest assured that every decision that I have ever made was an attempt to represent the constituents that contacted me. In the spirit of reuniting the community, which I stated as an initial goal after taking office, I do also hope that my resignation will serve a dual purpose by saving the time, money, and energy of those who sought to recall me and allow our city to heal and move forward towards solving several key issues in the New Year.

One's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or sexual orientation were never factors in my policy-making and I hope that was never misconstrued. It is often said



that "sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me," however, words do have a profound impact on one's health, which I can attest to. As a public figure, if I have ever spoken regarding policy in a manner that hurt you or anyone in the community, that was not my intention and I do sincerely apologize. I wish nothing short of health, wealth, and happiness for each member of this community—both those on the right and on the left.

Because of these factors, I have decided to make the tough decision to resign on Friday, January 15th, 2016. It has been a sincere pleasure and honor to serve with each of you. This experience has shaped the way that I view politics and politicians, giving me a greater appreciation for our public servants and a newfound reluctance to criticize others who are tasked with making tough, public decisions.

I also want to thank city staff for their professionalism in presenting information to council, from the City Manager—Mr. Burris—to every department head, along with each member of council for your input over the months. Thank you to every citizen of Springfield for keeping the debate lively, which is vitally important to democracy.

When we cross paths in public, I hope that we can all exchange pleasantries despite our occasional differences.

Thank you for understanding.

Best regards,

Justin Burnett
Zone 2 Councilman