

December 9, 2018

An open letter to the Midwest Burner Community

The Midwest Burners Board of Directors recognizes and understands that their actions must be transparent and open to the scrutiny of the community. It is important that the community understand the issues we face and address and how we come to the decisions that we do. The Board is tasked with representing a diverse community that often has complex and sometimes difficult relationships with each other. The Board strives to work together and with the community as intricately as possible in order to help strengthen it, evolve, and grow. However, like in many areas of life, sometimes conflict in our community arises and the Board is tasked with responding to that conflict.

When a conflict arises between members of our community we, have to weigh the importance of transparency with our respect for individual privacy as well as community safety. The Board is not a court of law and its members are not judges. However, sometimes it falls upon the Board to make decisions that directly impact a community member's ability to attend and participate in Midwest Burner activities. One of the methods that the Board employs for conflict resolution is the Principal's Office.

The Board uses the Principal's Office to help inform them about conflicts that have arisen in the community because the Board and its individual members are not equipped and should not be tasked with the investigation and/or resolution of such conflicts. The Board employs the use of the Principal's Office out of a desire to be informed and fair; to avoid accusations of impropriety; and out of respect for the privacy of our community members.

The Board takes accusations of discrimination or violence involving any community member very seriously. To the best of the Board's knowledge, there is currently no local law enforcement or federal criminal investigation into this incident or the Association.

The incident that the community is seeking more information occurred at HullabalU this year between the Vice-President and the EC Liaison, both Board members. As the Board President has a relationship with the EC Liaison, the President was recused from any discussion or voting on any decision the Board might make in regard to the incident.

The Board suspended both Officers due to their involvement in this incident, and tasked the Principal's Office with conducting an investigation.

Around this same time period, and prior to any report submitted to the Board by the Principal's Office, the Vice-President violated the trust of the Board violating the Association's agreement of conduct.

The Principal's Office presented their findings to the Board at a follow-up meeting. The board

took all accounts that were presented to it from all sources and voted to remove the Vice-President from the Board due to violation of his conduct agreement, and retain the EC Liaison as no legal charges were filed.

The community has raised concern whether the Board followed the voting procedure designated in the Association's Bylaws. Voting centers on two distinct concepts; the quorum needed to conduct the vote; and the general consensus required to pass the vote.

A quorum is the minimum number of Board members that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid. Our Bylaws state that four are needed to conduct a vote. Note that since this publication, and prior to its revision, the Board has increased to seven members. The intent of this statement in the Bylaws is to prevent a small number of officers from influencing the outcome of a vote of the body as a whole when assembled. When there are seven officers, four is the number required for a quorum. The Board Officers attending this vote, The President, Legal Officer, Secretary, Accountant, and Treasurer constitute a quorum, and that a vote can be taken.

Once a quorum is established, a vote can be taken. Passing that vote requires a consensus or general agreement. General agreements are characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Consensus need not imply unanimity.

If there is question whether abstentions affect the voting outcome, they do not. Voting members have the right to abstain and cannot be compelled to vote either for or against a proposal. For the example in this instance, three yes votes carries over three abstentions.

The Board has been accused of being silent or not replying timely to this issue. Indeed, the Board is ultimately answerable to the Community, but we must in diligence balance the need to be informed while respecting the privacy of those involved.

We do not find it appropriate to publicly discuss specific actions of the members at issue or in regard to anyone in this incident. Facebook is not an official means of communication with the Association. While no formal inquiries have been made to the Board, we apologize for not making a statement on an incident of this magnitude. We believe resolving conflict between our Community members requires interaction that cannot be resolved solely in a single forum, and that social media is inappropriate to resolve or discuss such personal and sensitive issues.

The Board, like the community it represents, is comprised of individuals who often have conflicting ideas, opinions, desires, and experiences. We strive to work past those conflicts and to resolve them the best as we can. Sadly, sometimes we cannot all work together or resolve those conflicts in a manner that all parties can agree to. It is difficult when conflict arises between board members, especially ones who had considered each other friends. The Board's

processes for resolving that conflict are imperfect, but represent our best attempts at being informed, impartial, and cognizant of how our decisions affect the community as a whole.

We hope that we have provided enough information to answer the questions that have caused concern. We encourages any individual with questions or concerns about this or any issue to contact us directly at Board@Midwestburners.org.

Midwest Burners Association,

Board of Directors