

Dear Zack Richardson and Elizabeth Thomas,

My name is Kevin Van Ostenbridge. Obviously, we are familiar with one another by now. Zach, we have spoken several times in the course of your political activism. You have been to my home and my office in recent months. I am writing you today to clear up the events of September 22, 2022.

I feel that it is important for you to understand my experience living near your vacant property over the past 5+ years. Until recent weeks, I routinely saw the vacant lot in an unkept condition, used as an illegal dumping site, and occasionally occupied as a homeless camp. Like many residents in my neighborhood, I used to walk my dog down to your vacant commercial lot and let him off the leash to run along the edge of the drainage ditch that borders your lot to the south. The grass nearest the ditch is a county right-of-way and is typically mowed and clear of debris. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the improvements you have started making to the property these last few weeks. I think all of my neighbors are pleased to see the cleanup efforts as well.

On September 22 while walking my dog on your vacant lot, I saw what appeared to be a recently illegally dumped potted plant. The plant was located on the southern edge of your lot near the large drainage ditch. Since there is no irrigation on the property, I assumed the plant had been left there to die. I returned later and took the plant home where I watered it. In doing this, I may have caused either of you personal or emotional harm. That was never my intention. The next morning you came to my home and told me the plant belonged to you. I apologized for the misunderstanding, and without hesitation, the plant was returned to your vacant lot where it ultimately died of neglect several days later. I feel that any harm caused was made whole when I returned the plant to you 14 hours after I brought it home. As I reflect on the situation today, I realize now that I should have simply called the city and made a code enforcement complaint against your property instead of taking the plant home. I also realize that one should not assume that things are as they appear. I am sure we are all glad to be putting this behind us and as we do, I wish you both nothing but the best.



Kevin Van Ostenbridge