

May 11, 2006

As employees, of the City of Lake Worth Code Enforcement Division, we find it necessary to file a formal complaint against our supervisor, Mr. Armand Harnois, as defined under Section 2 - Hostile Working Environment: Harassment, speech or conduct that is “severe or pervasive” enough to create a “hostile or abusive” work environment.

Events, both recent and past, have placed us in this position; forcing us to proceed in order to maintain the morale, integrity and efficiency of the City of Lake Worth Code Enforcement Division; not to mention, the mental and physical well being of the code enforcement staff.

Each complaint will be followed by a sample to substantiate our charge of the hostile work environment we are being subjected to under the present supervisor. Attachments will detail “individual” incidents to support our complaints.

Under the supervision of Mr. Harnois, we have been verbally intimidated to a point where the morale of the entire department is dangerously low. It is our feeling that the necessary managerial skills are not understood by our supervisor. The term delegation of responsibility does not exist in his vocabulary.

Mr. Harnois undermines the credibility of the code inspectors by his constant interruption of case presentations at the Special Magistrate hearings. In many instances; changing predetermined recommendations, as discussed, at the “pre-hearing” case preparation meetings with the city attorney, enforcement officer and Mr. Harnois. This sheds a negative perception to the participants and observers, at the hearings, as to the competence of the inspector and is disorienting to the hearings.

If you have attended one of these hearing’s and observed how often Mr. Harnois springs from his chair, moving aside the inspector who is presenting his/her case, to probe through the case file documents, leaving them in disarray. At the same time disrupting the flow of the presentation and leaving the inspector to appear incompetent and unprepared. The upstaging of his inspectors only creates disorientation at the hearing.

His inability to reward good work; focusing only on things he thinks were done incorrectly or inadequately, by his standards (which tend to change quite often). In many cases he does not investigate all the facts before verbally intimidating, any one of us, only to find out after all the facts are known, that it was not as it seemed. Our attempts to refute alleged infractions fall on a deaf ear. No apologies, for his unsubstantiated or unfounded infractions, are offered and are just dismissed as if they did not occur.

Review the human resource files of the code enforcement staff. Look for the initial probation review, which was never done; or “any” other positive/negative documentation, from our supervisor, regarding staff performance.

<http://www.lakeworthfl.net>

He fails to respect the feelings of others when he criticizes code personnel in front of other people.

A recent outburst occurred; when telling an inspector to “shut up” could be heard by the majority of the staff and others including; Rachel Bach, CRA Executive Director and a prospective employee who was interviewing for an enforcement officer position, in our supervisor’s office.

In a previous incident; an employee questioned a directive, given by our supervisor, and was told to get a job elsewhere if he didn’t like it.

Mr. Harnois has a “MY” attitude about the entire department. Instead of promoting team effort; we are made aware that this is “MY” department and things will be done “MY” way, regardless as to whether a task could be completed in more efficient way.

With an upcoming remodeling project; in the reception area at the entrance of the office, the head carpenter from the Building Maintenance Department and the clerk who works in this location, wanted to make a suggestion to make the transition easier and more effective. Without giving either employee a chance to make their suggestion, our supervisor stated “that this was going to be done his way and that it was not up for discussion”.

Mr. Harnois has shown little supervisory skills and tends to use intimidation or jokes to hide his inability to lead others. The purpose of this complaint is to summarize the predominant grievances. Individual complaints are attached allowing for more detail. We will also be including names of other individuals to substantiate our complaint.

We all enjoy the work we do and are fully aware of the exterior stress (resident population) that we encounter on a daily basis; but, having to deal with the internal stress is the most difficult to rationalize and understand. We should; with the proper supervision, work as a team without having to endure the added pressure we are receiving, from the very person that should be uniting and supporting us, as the professionals that we have worked so hard to become.

If additional information is necessary; we will individually submit in writing or by interview, details of grievances, to us personally, or to fellow workers that we have witnessed.

Respectfully,