

Tom DuBois, Mayor  
Ed Shikada, City Manager  
City of Palo Alto  
250 Hamilton Ave.  
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Mayor DuBois, Mr. Shikada and Members of the City Council:

On December 7, 2020, Downtown Streets Team (DST) board chair Owen Byrd appeared before the City Council to urge approval of a three-year contract renewal between the City and DST.

At that meeting, Mr. Byrd made incorrect statements of fact and asserted that reporting by the Palo Alto Weekly relating to allegations of sexual harassment against DST were in error. In response to direct questions from then-Vice Mayor DuBois, Mr. Byrd told the City Council and the public that there was no civil or criminal matter, therefore, giving the impression that no administrative ruling that sexual harassment by senior DST executives had occurred, as the Palo Alto Weekly reported in January, 2020.

These statements were wrong. Mr. Byrd and the board of Downtown Streets Team wish to retract these statements, correct the record and apologize to the City Council, city staff, the Palo Alto Weekly and the public.

Mr. Byrd's statement that the Weekly "got it wrong" was incorrect when he was asked about the reporting on how an Administrative Law Judge had ruled on November 17, 2017. As the Weekly correctly reported, the judge made such a finding, as did the two-person panel that reviewed the final employee appeal of the Unemployment Insurance Compensation Board. The written decisions are enclosed.

Downtown Streets Team and Mr. Byrd deeply regret Mr. Byrd's inaccurate answer to Vice Mayor DuBois' questions and for impugning the accuracy of the Palo Alto Weekly's reporting. We also regret any damage to the Weekly's reputation that may have resulted from Mr. Byrd's statement. To be clear, we do not believe the Palo Alto Weekly was inaccurate in any of its reporting on DST and the claims of sexual harassment by a former employee. It got nothing "wrong."

A member of our board of directors will be appearing during public comments at your next meeting in order to read this statement publicly. We hope this letter and that public statement will adequately correct the record.

Sincerely,  
*Owen Byrd, Board Chair*  
*Eileen Richardson, President & CEO*  
*And the full DST board of directors*

Cc: William Johnson, Publisher, Palo Alto Weekly  
Jocelyn Dong, Editor, Palo Alto Weekly  
Sue Dremann, Staff Writer, Palo Alto Weekly

Molly Stump, Palo Alto City Attorney

Attachment: Decisions of the California Unemployment Insurance Compensation Board dated November 17, 2017 and January 16, 2018