

Fayetteville City Council: Self interest or effective representation?

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Fayetteville has a couple of large projects planned and moving forward mostly in District 2 for the downtown revitalization. In particular, the city plans to develop a baseball stadium to house a minor league team associated with the Houston Astros. Additionally, the seven-story, dilapidated, eyesore, The Prince Charles Hotel, has been purchased and is being restored.

Several years ago The Prince Charles Hotel was purchased and was being rehabilitated by John Chen, a New York investor. Chen had begun restoration efforts and was at odds with the City of Fayetteville over some vinyl windows he installed on the **historic building**. Long story short he declared bankruptcy, and the building was purchased by a holding company (Prince Charles Holding) who is now in the process of restoration.

City Councilman Tyrone Williams loaned Chen \$100,000 for repairs to the building that were subsequently **discharged in the bankruptcy**. The details of what transpired next are still rather unclear. We don't know whom contacted whom, but we do know Williams felt he still somehow had a lien on the property, specifically a "cloud on the title."

Williams began recusing himself from votes involving the hotel and revitalization efforts in his district causing confusion. It wasn't long after that [news broke of an FBI investigation](#), an audio recording of Williams asking for \$15,000 to take care of the issue, and an attempted sting operation by the FBI.

Williams lawyered up quick, with a personal attorney and city attorney operating on tax payer dollars. This has sparked widespread controversy in his district and across the city [calling for his resignation](#). In the last City Council meeting during the public comment section, District 2 residents asked for his resignation and Jordan Jones of The Prince Charles Holding Company revealed he was in contact with Williams under the supervision and direction of the FBI.

The crucifixion of Williams continued when all of his colleagues spoke asking Williams to resign and subsequently voting that he should, but they can't make him. [So he didn't.](#)

As a Fayetteville resident, **I am horrified, but as a former political strategist, I am fascinated.** He's lost public support, he's lost the respect of his peers, and he's recusing himself from big votes that directly impact his district. On the other hand, there are no formal charges, he hasn't been arrested for anything and we don't even know if the FBI has concluded their investigation. So

maybe he thinks he can beat it and somehow bounce back in under 2 years before the next election.

The fact remains, District 2 needs representation now and any elected official has a duty to at least cast a vote. If you find yourself representing people and are presented with conflicts of interest at the same time, what's the point of remaining in office?

Right or wrong, guilty or innocent, that District 2 seat is reserved for a District 2 representative. If you can't represent it is time to get up, go home and allow someone to be the voice for District 2.