

2/21/2022

To:

Office of the Merced City Manager and City Clerk

678 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street

Merced, CA 95340

Dear Mayor, City Council Members, City Manager, and City Attorney,

The behavior of several members of our City Council during the discussion of Item J1 (Redistricting) during the Council Meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 was reprehensible.

Commentary by members of the council ranged from uniformed and complete falsehoods regarding the ethnic makeup up the redistricting advisory committee to public affronts to the committee-persons themselves by stating that they council "*settled*" for the members of the committee during the selection process.

Councilmember Ornelas complained about how difficult it is to get participation from the public.

Is it really any wonder that people are hesitant to participate when your volunteer efforts are insulted by the very council that **unanimously approved your appointment?**

Later we were told that a group of concerned homeowners in the downtown districts had regularly attended and participated during the committee meetings. Supposedly, their regular attendance and participation steered the process.

Without skipping a breath those same council members congratulated a paid lobbyist and gave them an open platform outside the public comment period to continue a tirade about how public comment did not align with *their agenda*.

It seems that these paid lobbyists have allied themselves with certain members of our Council. Unfortunately for them, the Advisory Committee and the majority of the citizens of Merced have determined their agenda is **NOT MERCED'S AGENDA**.

No amount of canned voicemails will change the truth that what has been said is both a moral assault on the character of our citizens and illegal under the City Charter and it's Code of Conduct.

Several of you owe an apology to the redistricting advisory committee and to the citizens of Merced who made their voices overwhelmingly heard during the redistricting public comments.

And tell your lobbyist friends to take their agenda and go back to wherever they call home. Merced can't be bought.

Sincerely,



**Eric Hamm**  
President  
Merced Boosters