



Letter to the LCRCC Membership Jan. 22, 2025

We are moving our February (13) meeting to Noelridge Park Church (Cedar Rapids). Why are we doing this?

You will recall that at our January 9 meeting at Boulder Peak Intermediate (Marion) we had to deal with two incidents. Justin Wasson, who was “banned from membership in the LCRCC” came to our meeting. For those questioning the definition of “banned”, here is the Oxford Languages definition, “officially exclude (someone) from a place”, as in “banishment”; synonyms -expel, eject, evict, oust, remove, etc.

I confronted Justin and told him that he had to leave, or I would call the police. He ignored my request, and I made the call. The Marion police arrived but their protocol only allows them to remove a person if they are threatening, harming or causing a disturbance. We were meeting in a public facility.

The 2nd incident occurred while the police were conferring with Justin. When Bill Dahlsten decided to take pictures of the police interaction with Justin, Heidi Barnhart (Membership Chair) called him out, questioning what purpose those images would serve. She made a motion to have him removed. (Bylaws, Art. IX, Rules of Order, “By a motion and majority vote, a disruptive member may be called to leave the meeting.”) The motion was seconded, followed by discussion, and a majority vote to have Bill leave.

Neither offender removed themselves. Having unenforceable consequences is not much different from an “open border”. My concern is for the disrespect they have for the decision of the body, rendering those decisions moot.

So, to this end, the Executive committee has agreed upon and is taking the following actions:

- 1) We are moving the next central committee meeting (Feb 13) to Noelridge Park Church (1147 Clifton St NE, CR 52402). It is private property and affords us the leverage and authority to have law enforcement act on our behalf. We will be there for the foreseeable future as we explore further, compatible options.
- 2) Per Cedar Rapids Police Department (CRPD) protocol, two letters of trespass were filed with the department, one for Justin and one for Bill. Procedurally, the CRPD contacts the individuals making them aware of the filing and consequences for violation. I notified, by email, both Justin and Bill of these actions.
- 3) To be clear, Justin is banned from our membership meetings and activities pending Executive officer’s review and a vote of approval and re-instatement by the membership.

- 4) Actions taken regarding Bill are pre-emptive. (This is the 2nd time in less than a year that a majority has voted for his removal.) His membership status and participation is unchanged. Should future actions warrant removal, the mechanisms are in place.

As part of the research into our obligations and rights as a party committee, the following information was uncovered:

Under Iowa law, only governmental bodies are subject to Chapter 21, the open meetings chapter of the Iowa Code. Governmental bodies include most state agencies, city and county governments, and other government entities. The general rule is that only state and local governments are bound by open meeting rules. The local political chapter (a party central committee) ... does not fall under any of the definitions contained in Iowa Code 21.2(1) for governmental bodies. Merely being regulated by the government does not turn an entity into a governmental body. This means that a local chapter of a political party would not have to follow Chapter 21 for their internal matters, although they may still have their own rules and policies separate from Chapter 21.*

Furthermore, because the LCRCC is not a governmental body, members and attendees do not have an inherent right to record or take photographs of the meeting. Such recording activity would be subject to the rules and policies adopted by the committee.

For the Leadership,

Bernie Hayes
Chair, Linn Co Republicans

*(excerpted from email replies, Jan. 10 & 13, 2025, from Alexander Lee, JD, Agency Council, Iowa Public Information Board)