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Senior's standoff with Town to continue

LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

Derrick Williams, the Georgetown senior banned indefinitely last month from all Town-owned facilities, could be allowed back in if he agrees to a couple of conditions, but Williams says he won't because he believes it would be an admission of guilt.

Williams says he won't sign off on the Town's conditions— (1) to be respectful of staff and visitors at all Town facilities and in council and committee meetings and (2) any comments he makes to or about councillors in those facilities be of a non-threatening nature— because "then I'm admitting guilt (based) on hearsay."

Williams, 70, is referring to the "remark of a serious, threatening nature" he is alleged to have made at the Civic Centre Tuesday, Sept. 5 directed at a female councillor. The remark was alleged to have been heard by a third party and was one of the reasons the Town implemented the ban against Williams.

Williams stresses he didn't make the remark, and Halton Police did not lay charges, determining the alleged comment was not of a criminal nature.

Williams received a letter from the Town last Friday stating it "has given further consideration of the indefinite nature" of the ban against him and based on the two conditions will provide him access to all Town properties except for the Civic Centre effective December 26, 2006, and if his conduct is "satisfactory," he will be allowed into the Civic Centre April 26, 2007.

"They could do this to anyone in our community on hearsay and ban them from all facilities," says Williams, who has consulted with his lawyer.

Since the ban was put in place Oct. 27 Williams has not been able to attend council

meetings, something he has done regularly for several years, or watch his grandchildren's hockey games in local arenas. If he doesn't sign the Town agreement, the ban will remain in place indefinitely.

"I will miss seeing my grandchildren playing hockey, but I would rather stand up for my rights, and in the future, my grandchildren's rights."

Williams says he will take legal action against the Town for the "slander" of his name and reputation.

"The only way I won't take legal action is if they settle and compensate me for what I've gone through," said Williams.

Town CAO Dennis Perlin said when the Town first notified Williams of the ban, it was not meant to be permanent.

"We thought he would give us a call, ask what this was about...and (there would be) some discussion of how we might resolve the ban," said Perlin, who added he left a message on Williams' answering machine at the time.

But he said Williams never called back.

So the Town decided to send the second letter outlining access conditions and also inviting Williams to call Perlin or the Town's Director of Recreation and Parks, Terry Alyman, if he had questions.

"The purpose of the commitment was to try to make sure he understood these are serious issues," said Perlin.

He said the length of the bans are in keeping with the Town's zero tolerance and workplace discrimination harassment policies.

Perlin said the Town respects citizen's rights to the democratic process, but there is also a responsibility for citizens to treat others in a fair way.

(Lisa Tallyn can be reached at ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)



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