

City of Live Oak
Press Release
The Waiving of Attorney/Client Privilege and the
Release of Workplace Investigation
March 17, 2021

The City Council of the City of Live Oak announces that it has released attorney-client confidentiality over a workplace investigation concerning Councilmember J.R. Thiara. The Council made the decision to release confidentiality during a special session held on March 17, 2021.

The investigation was conducted in early 2019, a few months after Thiara took office. The investigation began after complaints were made that Thiara had acted abusively toward others and engaged in erratic behavior.

An attorney at an outside law firm, Roseville-based Cole Huber LLP, was retained to conduct the investigation. The investigator interviewed members of the City Council, several employees, contractors who have transacted business with Live Oak, and others. The investigator made many attempts to request an interview of Councilmember Thiara, but he declined each time to respond.

Among other things, the outside attorney found that Councilmember Thiara had yelled and used profanity many times toward those with whom he had interacted in person or over the telephone. Some relayed that Thiara had used racial epithets, including one situation in which he used the “N” word while speaking to a Latino individual. Others relayed an incident in which Councilmember Thiara came to a City staff meeting uninvited and appeared to be under the influence.

Overall, the outside attorney found that Councilmember Thiara had repeatedly engaged in bullying and abusive and threatening behavior toward others. The attorney recommended that the City take action to protect its employees and other individuals who might have to interact with Councilmember Thiara.

The City of Live Oak is committed to providing a workplace and environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and dedicated to public service. The City Council authorized release over Councilmember Thiara’s investigation file to assure its employees and the public of its seriousness in carrying out these commitments.

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