

Good Morning Everyone,

After the events at the St. Joe Republican Party meeting at Enzo's in Mishawaka on Saturday, I need to explain to you what happened, how my family and I have been constantly attacked by Amy Drake, and what moving forward looks like. I would also like to let each of you know that I have included you, many other stakeholders in the party, and some of my supporters in this email.

On Friday evening, at the Mishawaka Food Pantry event, I had informed Jackie Horvath (St. Joe County Republican Party chair) that I would probably not be attending the Republican Party meeting on Saturday morning. My family was getting together at my mother's house (age 82) to help her get ready for winter. I am the oldest son, and, among my other responsibilities, I take my responsibilities to my elderly parents very seriously. Just as I am an American before I am a Republican, family should always come before our political party.

Saturday morning I dressed in my work clothes and headed to mom's. We started our day and soon 9:50 rolled around. I began to think about the victories we had experienced Tuesday night and decided to join the party meeting at Enzo's for twenty minutes to a half hour just to congratulate the winners. I arrived at Enzo's, opened the door, and the first two words I heard were "Dan Schaetzle". For a half second I was a little confused because I expected to be walking in on a celebration of our great victories as we rode on the coattails of President Trump. Instead, Amy Drake was attacking me with lies of omission and blatant untruths.

For example, she stated that I do not support her abatement ordinance. What she did not tell you is that she has led the other three Republican council members to exclude me from any discussions on this ordinance or anything else for that matter over the course of the last year. Six months ago, when the abatement ordinance failed, I made clear what I would need to vote for an abatement ordinance. No discussion with me has taken place since and my concerns have not been addressed.

While she mixed in the truth that I did not support Loris Zappia (due to him allegedly beating up his brother recently and having problems paying his taxes), she lied when she said I did not support Randy Figg after the primaries. Once Randy won the primary by beating Chris Verash (my friend and fellow teacher), I did tell people I know in Randy's district to vote for him because he is the Republican.

She lied when she stated that I was going to media sources other than Real News Michiana to expose her behavior. That hasn't happened. I have written opinion pieces for RNM, and I stand by those articles as 100 percent true. She also lied when she stated and has stated over and over that I haven't been willing to meet with the Republicans on the Council. In fact, a year ago, they kicked me out of our monthly meetings and refused to meet with me because I shared information that I thought was very important with our party chair and other elected Republicans. I did not share information with Democrats. The one time in the last year that they did agree to meet with me quickly turned into an hour long attack on me and Mike Misch. That meeting was led by Joe Layne. I have the commissioners as witnesses to this.

So those were the lies I heard from this incredibly mean, hateful, vindictive, and power hungry woman as she bashed me instead of celebrating our great victories. It was more than I could quietly bear. I reacted by calling her a liar three or four times as she spoke. As this was going on, Joe Layne stood up from the table at the front of the room and shouted at me to be quiet and even threatened that I would be forced to leave. That was not my best moment, but I hope you will understand once you read how Drake and her minions' have attacked me and my family.

When she finished, I said, "It's my turn now" and walked to the front of the room. I asked that I get the extra minute that I have always gotten to talk about Penn Republican Club. Sheryl Dawes tursley said, "No". I began to speak, first pointing out to Ashley Leader that the school board candidates she backed lost because she supported a man who has no business being on the Penn School Board. He had been forced to resign as a vice-principal many years ago due to sexual conduct with his secretary in his office. People know it and wouldn't vote for him. His presence on the ticket killed the other candidates that she linked him with.

I then turned to the attacks I have taken from Drake and only got through a couple of them (I will discuss below) before I was told that my time was up. I was determined to continue, so I said, "I am going to finish". Joe Layne told me to sit down. I said again that I was going to finish. Joe jumped out of his chair, around the table, and grabbed the mike out of my hands. I again said that I was going to finish. Just as I started to turn back toward the majority in the room to do so, Joe forcefully lunged his open hands into my lower chest. He recoiled as I fell back a step, and I said, "You're going to get physical with me?" I thought he was going to strike me again, but Todd Brown had jumped to the

front and put his arm between the two of us. I again said that I was going to finish and turned to continue talking.

I tried to explain how the July letter crafted by Drake and signed by Jackie Horvath concerning my views and actions on solar in St. Joe County was chalked full of lies, but I was so stunned by what had just happened, I am sure my message wasn't very coherent. As Derek Deter and Todd Brown helped me make my way to the door, I reminded the crowd that I am still, even after all that has happened, willing to sit down with whomever the other four Republicans want to be president of the council and try to work out a way for me to vote for them. I also twice said, "Things will be different next year. They will not be the same." Ladies and gentlemen, they will be different. One way or another I will use my power as a councilman to be sure this oligarchy controlled by Drake will not control the County Council for the next two years.

Once outside, Candace and Todd Brown, two dear people, stood with me. I thank them for having the courage to do so considering the fact that my attacker, Drake, and their allies would certainly take note of it. I then went to my truck, took out the yard signs we had placed at the salon and our home for Republican candidates, and set them outside Enzo's. I drove back to my mother's home and tried to help the best that I could. I contemplated filing a police report for several hours and sought counsel from several individuals I deeply respect. I did file the report later in the evening and also had begun to feel some lower back pain from the jolt I received when Layne struck me. Last night, I was unable to sleep because of the pain. This afternoon I was convinced that I needed to go to the emergency room to get checked out, get pain medication, and begin the process towards therapy.

What got us to this point? Within weeks of taking office in January of 2023, it became clear to me that there was a grudge against me by Amy and Mark Root. I later found out that they were very upset about a conversation I had had with Zack Potts in May of 2022 and the fact that I had shared part of that conversation with multiple people. In that conversation, Zack had stated that he wanted me to be president of the Council if Mark Root wasn't interested. You all know how much I respected Zack, and I was proud that he would have that kind of confidence in me. So, I shared that information with some people. That was probably not the best choice given how Mark and especially Amy have responded.

I continued to try and work with my Republican Council mates through the Spring and

Summer of 2023, and we had some solid accomplishments. Still there were problems. In a caucus, I had stated that we should find a way to cut taxes. Within a couple of weeks, with the help of Jamie O'Brien, Drake announced she had a bill to cut property taxes. I learned then that I would have to insist that Jamie work with me as well as anyone else interested if I were to have input. In that same pattern, Drake later presented a new abatement ordinance without any input from other council members. This one I could not vote for and in our November, 2022 caucus meeting, I called for more collaboration in creating ordinances.

That was when I was told by Drake, in not so many words, to shut up and vote the way I was told. She stated that she had attorney client privilege with Jamie O'Brien and she didn't have to work with any other councilmembers. Her final words were, "I am sick of you talking about collaboration!" She got up and stomped out of Republican Headquarters. From that point on I was persona-non-grata with Drake, Thomas, Root and Figg. I was only allowed to attend caucuses called by the commissioners, and there have only been a couple of those.

In the meantime, Drake and her minions have done everything they could to hurt me politically and even have gone after my family. Here are just a few instances.

1. Starting last year and continuing this year, Drake and Ashley Leader have convinced clients of my wife to leave her business. They along with their minions have attacked my wife and her business with vile gossip. We have recovered most of the business lost, and my wife is doing as well as ever, but this tells you what Drake and Leader will try and do to a business if the owners aren't willing to fall in line behind what they want.

2. This last January, Drake worked with Mark Root to remove me from the Capital Planning Committee. Mark sent me an email just minutes after the first January meeting was over stating that he was removing me because I voted against the leadership team for 2024. I did vote against the leadership team because th