

May 29, 2021

Mr. Name Redacted
Hartland Township

Dear Mr. Name Redacted,

Thank you contacting me via your open letter, sent on May 28, 2021, to the Livingston County Board of Commissioners. I appreciate that you took the time to share your perspectives regarding the recent Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) appointment.

I opposed the reappointment of Mr. Williams because of his votes in support of the toxic racist ideology known as DEI. I was especially troubled by his vote to give \$6 million of taxpayer funds to a private entity to show additional support for "social justice"

The meeting minutes clearly show that Mr. Williams, voted for this wholly inappropriate expenditure. In my opinion, these taxpayer funds should have been used to expand recreational opportunities at the Metroparks rather than supporting this toxic ideology.

During my examination of the Metroparks website (www.metroparks.com) I observed their DEI program derisively refers to white people as "privileged" and advances the myth of "systemic racism." This ideology is dividing our country along racial lines and I strongly oppose its implementation.

Because of your analytical background I am confident you will appreciate the extra detail I'm providing, including endnotes and source links, regarding my research into Mr. Williams' voting record. I urge you to carefully review the endnotes as they provide the detail that I think you are looking for.

Here are the reasons for my opposition to reappointing Mr. Williams:

1. Mr. Williams voted to provide \$6 million to the Detroit Riverfront Conservancyⁱ, a private entity. This expenditure was presented to the HCMA Board as a means of showing additional support for "social justice."
 - a. This \$6 million expenditure was discussed during the September 10, 2020 HCMA Board Meeting.ⁱⁱ
 - b. Mr. Williams voted in favor of this \$6 million expenditure during the November 12, 2020 HCMA Board Meeting.ⁱⁱⁱ
2. Mr. Williams insisted that a public letter expressing support for "ongoing and meaningful diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and training" be delivered by the HCMA Board.^{iv} Mr. Williams' insistence that this letter be delivered by the HCMA Board clearly demonstrates his support for this initiative and training.
3. The Metroparks DEI program has had a negative impact on employee morale and engagement. One veteran employee wrote me saying "I'm insulted to be told all the worlds racial problems

are caused by me, my family and my ancestry.” In the eyes of this employee, Mr. Williams had not stood up against this DEI policy.’

If you have any questions regarding any of my research I would be happy to discuss them with you further.

With regards to assertions in your open letter, I’d like to briefly provide my point of view:

- Your open letter stated, “. . . you had a duty to correct the misconceptions being put forth by the public.” I respectfully disagree. I am not aware of the accuracy of each statement made by other citizens, whether they were for or against the appointment of Mr. Williams. If you know specific facts to be wrong it would be best for you to address them.
- Your open letter stated my research was “sloppy or reckless” and that I had a “conscious disregard for the truth.” Again, I respectfully disagree. My research was based on objectively verifiable facts captured in the written record of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority minutes. Any challenges to the accuracy of these minutes should be directed to the HCMA Board.
- Your open letter stated, “. . . it is your job to govern, not campaign.” It appears that our points of view differ on this subject. I view appointment process as one of the most important elements of governing. I do not view this as campaigning. It is vitally important to appoint citizens who share the values of our community and will spend taxpayer funds appropriately. Based upon the quantity of citizen comments and emails, I conclude that Livingston County citizens place a high priority on the HCMA Board appointment.

In closing I would like to say again, if you have any questions regarding my research or why I strongly oppose this racist ideology, I would be happy to have further discussions with you.

Best regards,

Wes Nakagiri
Commissioner, District 3
Livingston County Board of Commissioners

(Endnotes are included on pages 3 through 5)

ⁱ Screen shots from the LARA website showing the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy is a private entity (corporation)

Entity Name	ID Number	Old ID Number	Address
DETROIT RIVERFRONT CONSERVANCY, INC.	800892097	777372	HONIGMAN MILLER SCHWARTZ & COHN 2290 1ST NATL BLD 660 WOODWARD DETROIT, MI 48226 USA

Here is a link to Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). LARA is the source of my information.

<https://cofs.lara.state.mi.us/SearchApi/Search/Search>

ⁱⁱ At a regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority’s (HCMA) Board of Commissioners, held on Thursday, Sept. 10, 2020 at 1:00 p.m., Amy McMillan, Director of HCMA, provided the HCMA Board with the a statement related to HCMA’s DEI efforts. Her quote below is from the minutes of this meeting as she spoke to the HCMA Board (note: I added two yellow highlights for emphasis)

It is clear that the contribution to the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy was presented to the HCMA Board as a means to show more support for “social justice” because what Metroparks had done to this point was “not enough.”

“Since issuing our statement in support of social justice following the death of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many others, I have had many conversations with staff and Board members about how the Metroparks can become a true ally in the fight against racism; how we can truly embrace diversity; how we can engage diverse audiences in our decision-making; and how we can focus on inclusion and diversity in our parks so that all residents of southeast Michigan can benefit equitably from access to our resources.

We have spent the past two years putting the building blocks in place to address racism, diversity, equity and inclusion internally and externally within the Metroparks.

While we are proud of these efforts and the leadership role we are playing in bringing issues of racism, diversity, equity and inclusion to the forefront of discussions within the public parks community in the state of Michigan, we know this is not enough.

It is not enough until we have eliminated every barrier to access to quality outdoor recreation experiences for every resident of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and Livingston County.

It is not enough until we have eliminated every barrier to access to quality environmental education for every student in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and Livingston County.

It is not enough until we have educated ourselves on how to eliminate racism in any way that visitors may experience in our parks.

And it is not enough until we have put into action all that we have learned.

So, whenever we bring a program, plan, project, report, or partnership that includes as its goals improving access, inclusion, diversity, and equity to the Board for approval, acknowledgment, or support, if you vote “yes,” I hope you will also remind us that there is more work to do by adding “but that is not enough” to

your “yes” vote.

Today, I am asking you to vote “yes, but that is not enough” on a new initiative to develop a speakers series that will bring local, regional, and national level leaders to future Board meetings to speak on issues of racism, inclusion, diversity, access, and equity. As part of this program, we would also seek to make the speaker available for interactive discussions with staff as well as a presentation open to the public, with a particular emphasis on school-aged children where possible. We envision the first part of the series would take place remotely but hope circumstances will permit in-person presentations when safe to do so.

If supported by the Board, we will reach out to Board members, staff at all levels, and existing partners to identify speakers of interest, which we will bring back to the Board in October, along with a proposed budget for the program.

Beginning in October, we will also provide a monthly update to the Board on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and activities throughout the Metroparks.

And, in October, we will bring the proposed pilot (five-year) partnership agreement with the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy to the Board for its approval.

While I hope you will agree that these initiatives are a good first effort and will support them with your vote, when doing so, I hope you will remind us there is more work to do by adding, “but this is not enough” to your vote.

I am listening. I promise you.”

Link to minutes:

https://www.metroparks.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/09-10-2020_Meeting-Minutes.pdf?x91894

See pages 5 and 6 of minutes

ⁱⁱⁱ A regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority’s Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, Nov. 12, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. It was at this meeting that Mr. Williams voted to approve contributing \$6 million of taxpayer funds to a private entity to show more support for social justice. An excerpt of these meeting minutes is shown below. (Note: I added the yellow highlighting for emphasis).

Motion by Commissioner Parker, support from Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners (1) approve the partnership agreement with the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy for a period of five years with an option to renew; (2) approve contributing funding to the Conservancy in amount of \$6 million; and (3) approve the \$6 million in funding be set aside in the Unassigned Fund Balance pursuant to an agreed upon annual budget as recommended by Director Amy McMillan and staff.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Voting yes: Quadrozzi, Rea, Williams, Parker, Heise, Marans, McCarthy

Voting no: None

Absent: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Source

Link to minutes:

https://www.metroparks.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/11-12-2020_Meeting-Minutes.pdf?x91894

See page 8 of these minutes

^{iv} A special meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority’s Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. An excerpt from these minutes show Mr. Williams insisted that a public letter in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives come from the HCMA Board. The HCMA Board ultimately approved having this public letter come from HCMA Board and Staff. (note: I added the yellow highlighting for emphasis)

“Commissioner Williams wants to make sure the letter is sent out on behalf of the Board. Ms. McMillan said the letter would be from the Board and staff.

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support from Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners approved endorsing the open letter as presented.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Voting yes: Quadrozzi, Rea, Williams, McCarthy, Heise, Marans Voting no: Parker

Absent: None

Motion carried.”

Link to meeting minutes

https://www.metroparks.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/06-11-2020_Meeting-Minutes.pdf?x91894

See pages 4 and 5 of these minutes

^v Here is the text of an email I received from a long time Metropark employee. Some information has been redacted to protect the identity of the employee.

Chairman Nakigiri

Thank you for speaking out and questioning the necessity of the expensive and overreaching Metroparks DEI program. While director McMillian states that the intention is to create a “diverse, inclusive and equitable organization”, what is happening is employee engagement and overall work satisfaction is dismal. Employees in the field see their numbers decrease, and watch as administration cost and staffing skyrocket, and then see nearly half a million dollars spent on training (or as some refer to it as “indoctrination”) that has no impact on their work. As an employee I’m insulted to be told all the worlds racial problems are caused by me, my family and my ancestry. Especially by someone hired at over \$100,00 a year, with no park experience and and assistant. DEI department now also has direct influence hiring and promotions. DEI does not make anyone a more productive worker.If you can encourage Mr. Williams to stand up to the current policy, many people would be greatly appreciative. And thank you again for taking a stand.