

From: [Alison Middleton](#)
To: [Carolyn Rentenbach](#); [Chet Janik](#); [Debra Rushton](#); [Laurel Evans](#); [Melinda Lautner](#); [Patricia Soutas-Little](#); [Tony Ansoerge](#); [Ty Wessell](#); [Will Bunek](#)
Cc: [Leelanau County Clerk](#)
Subject: FW: Comments for Board of Commissioners Meeting on 8-11-20
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 8:47:14 AM

For Executive meeting.

From: Geradine Simkins <geradines@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 8:12 AM
To: clerk@co.leelanau.mi.us
Cc: Tony Ansoerge <tansorge@co.leelanau.mi.us>; Debra Rushton <drushton@co.leelanau.mi.us>; Ty Wessell <twessell@co.leelanau.mi.us>; Patricia Soutas-Little <psoutaslittle@co.leelanau.mi.us>; Carolyn Rentenbach <crentenbach@co.leelanau.mi.us>; Fred Heltenen <pesto-boy@hotmail.com>; Melinda Lautner <mlautner@co.leelanau.mi.us>; Will Bunek <wbunek@co.leelanau.mi.us>; Geradine Simkins Gmail <geradines@gmail.com>
Subject: Comments for Board of Commissioners Meeting on 8-11-20

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for your service to the people of Leelanau County. Last week we wrote you to request the resignation of Mr. Thomas Eckerle as a member of the Leelanau County Road Commission. Thankfully, Mr. Eckerle resigned on Friday. Racist language and behavior exhibited in our public officials cannot be tolerated.

As you review the Leelanau County Road Commission at your meeting today, and discuss the appointment of a member to step into the seat vacated by Mr. Eckerle, please consider appointing someone whose presence will help repair the damage caused by Mr. Eckerle, and who is skilled in and committed to anti-racism work.

Also, if it is not utilized already, please consider that all public and elected officials of Leelanau County be required to take "implicit bias training" to help them understand and minimize the role of unconscious bias. This kind of training teaches people how to recognize and manage their own biases. The work of dismantling structural racism in our public institutions is the responsibility of each of us. And now is the time to actively address it and make necessary changes.

Again, thank you for your service to the people of our County.
Sincerely, Geradine Simkins & Fred Heltenen

On Fri, Aug 7, 2020 at 5:41 PM Geradine Simkins <geradines@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Leelanau Board of Commissioners, First of all, thank you for your service to the people of Leelanau County.

I am writing to you as a voting citizen of Leelanau County asking you to request that Mr. Thomas Eckerle resign as a member of the Leelanau County Road Commission. A growing consensus of citizenry, public servants, and elected officials are also calling for Mr. Eckerle's resignation.

- Four of his colleagues on the Road Commission have called for his resignation, stating that he jeopardizes the work of the Road Commission.
- State Rep. Jack O'Malley spoke with Mr. Eckerle, and then asked him to resign because he is not fit for office.
- Governor Whitmer has asked him to resign, saying "There is no place for hate and racism in Michigan."
- And the citizens of Leelanau County are formulating a petition asking for his resignation.

Mr. Eckerle's outrageous language and behavior have sparked an outcry in our county. He has also made state and national news because of his racist language and irresponsible behavior. While he is out of line and hateful, he continues to assert he has a right to carry on in this manner. As a public official, his attitude and behavior are patently unacceptable.

You have the power to cut to the chase. Please act decisively and swiftly. On behalf of the People, please ask him to step down. If he refuses, please call upon the Governor to remove him from office.

Thank you again for your service to the people of Leelanau County.

Sincerely,
Geradine Simkins & Fred Heltenen
275 Cemetery Road
Maple City, MI 49664

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Geradine Simkins, APRN, CNM, MSN

* [Principal, Birthways Consulting, LLC](#)

* Author/Editor, *Into These Hands, Wisdom From Midwives* &

* Author, *The Midwife Matrix, Reclaiming Our Bodies, Our Births, Our Lives*

* Former President, Foundation for the Advancement of Midwifery

* Former Executive Director, Midwives Alliance of North America

* Expert Consultant & Co-Designer, *Healthy Native Babies Project*
National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development

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