

COMMON GROUND UNDERGROUND: Day 6 (updated March 9)

The new narrative from Mayor Pam Triolo, William Waters, Community Sustainability, and the City Commissioners.

There is a thought today in our culture that, if you say something enough, it must be true. Changing the narrative of a story or flooding the media with misinformation does not make it true. Maybe the thought is that if you bury the truth with false information and false talking points, the truth will be silenced.

Truth is a sword that cuts through human self-delusion, snapping us back into reality. Truth is a sword that cuts both ways. In difficult times each of us must examine our own hearts first to avoid becoming self-righteous and prideful.

Last night Mayor Pam Triolo, while being interviewed by Chuck Weber of CBS 12, that this was just a big misunderstanding.

What has been misunderstood?

December 2014: Demand letters are sent to churches in the city of Lake Worth to obtain a business license.

January 2015: Commissioner Andy Amoroso to Pastor Mike Olive, "You better not have a church down there; that better not be a church."

February 8: Undercover code enforcement agent comes in dressed in a black hoodie secretly video taping "what looks like a ministry in progress and what looks like are bibles because one had a cross on it." He states in his narrative that 'this is for future court proceedings.'

February 15: A business card is handed to a staff person (not the Lead Pastor) and told you have one week to stop having services at the Coffee Bar.

Mid February: Common Grounds Coffee Bar landlord receives a certified letter stating the problem of the church meeting there must be resolved or face up to \$500 per day fines, risk of lien and face the magistrate.

February 18th: Email to City Manager, Mr. Michael Bornstein-

"I'm a part of a local church plant that has been meeting in the Common Ground Coffee Bar on 12 S. J Street."

"We have been greatly confused and disturbed by the recent actions of Code Enforcement asking us to cease and desist. We were hoping that we might be able to have a conversation and figure out how we can resolve the issues."

Feb 23rd: Received a phone call and the **earliest available appointment the city could provide was 4/12**. Accepted the appointment. (March 5: received an updated calendar request via email **adding additional attendees from the city**.)

March 1: Common Ground Church has its 'last' service at the Coffee Bar.

March 2: First communication letter to Pastor Mike Olive is released to the media and snail mailed to the Coffee Bar.

March 2: Pastor Mike Olive is slammed by national media for not working with the city to help resolve what has become a "safety matter "

March 2: The city reframes the argument and it now becomes a 'safety issue', which is never mentioned in the original case report.

March 3: Pastor Mike Olive receives phone calls from national and local media questioning why he will not comply with the letter for the safety of his congregants.

March 3: Pastor Mike Olive explains that has never received a letter from the City.

March 4: A national media source sends a copy of letter from the City.

March 5: Letter from the city, reframing this "misunderstanding "as a safety concern is received stating that all we have to do is a safety inspection like everyone else.
Note: no safety concerns where ever mentioned in the original case report

March 6: Pastor Mike Olive, upon receiving the request, pays the \$160 for a "safety inspection" to the city and schedules an inspection for March 9th (first available time). Note: The Common Grounds Coffee Bar already has a business license, and use and occupancy certificate from the city.

March 7: Mayor Pam Triolo says, "This is all a misunderstanding."

What has been misunderstood?

The Code Enforcement office and Department for Community Sustainability have attempted to bully and intimidate Common Ground Church, Common Grounds Coffee Bar and the property owners of our building. I suspect that there are many in the City who have suffered greatly at their hands as well.

Common Ground Church loves the City of Lake Worth. We are not mad at the city. We are here to see a positive change come to our City.

The Truth is Jesus. It always comes back to the cross. Those two men on the cross next to Jesus represent humanity. Both guilty before God. One obstinate; one repentive.

There is no misunderstanding. This is about Christians living with the light on, unashamed, living and loving Jesus in public. The Truth can never be silenced.

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