

Statement of Mayor Pro Tem Tennell Atkins Regarding Events of December 10

I want to set the record straight about the incident that occurred on Wednesday, December 10th, a little before 8:00 AM in the L1 parking garage at City Hall.

Around 7:50 AM I parked in my regular place and proceeded to the entrance I regularly use to get in the building. We had a city council meeting that day which was to begin at 9:00 and I had some calls to make and other things to do before the council meeting. When I got to the door, there was no security guard there to let me in. Looking through the glass door I saw two ladies who were obviously city employees because of their attire. After pushing the buzzer for several seconds, I knocked on the glass to get the attention of the two women but they seemed to disregard my request. I know they knew who I was and that I was entitled to be admitted to the building.

Finally they came and opened the door and I went in. I had a topcoat on and a briefcase and some files in my hands. I admit I was a little upset that they had not opened the door right away when they saw who I was. I asked them why they had not let me in right away when they saw me knocking on the door, and they said I needed to show them my badge. Well, I have never been denied access because I did not have my badge with me before and I told them so. Since it was a little before 8:00 there was no security guard there who would normally let me right in.

I suppose I raised my voice a bit but I did not use profanity nor did I touch, much less shake, either of the ladies. My conversation with them lasted no more than 30 seconds or so and I had my briefcase and files in my hands at all times.

I immediately went to my office on the 5th floor and asked the security guard who the security supervisor was and asked to have him come to my office. He did so and I explained that I was unable to get in the building a little before 8:00 and asked where the security guard was that would have immediately let me in so I wouldn't have needed to raise my voice to the two ladies. He left to go find out where the security guard was but I didn't hear back from him.

I was due to be in Washington the next day and had several things I needed to do before I left. I regret that the two ladies feel I was too aggressive in my comments, and that I "shook" one of them. I totally deny that I had any physical contact with either of them. Again, my hands were full with my briefcase and files at all times.

I later learned the security camera which would have verified my account of what happened was not working that morning. I am very sorry this incident happened and extend my sincerest apologies to both women for raising my voice at them.

Tennell Atkins