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Milton councilman under fire for privately meeting with election poll workers



NORTH FULTON COUNTY

By **Adrianne Murchison**

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A Milton councilman, who is running for reelection, is under harsh criticism for allegedly trying to hide a private meeting with two poll workers who live in his precinct.

Councilman Rick Mohrig met with the Milton poll workers, a married couple who have since resigned, at their home Sept. 7, according to the city manager Steve Krokoff.

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Mohrig has said his email was hacked when an invite for a meeting with the poll workers was sent from his email address to Krokoff, fellow council members and other officials on Sept. 5. And he told his colleagues that he didn't know anything about the meeting.



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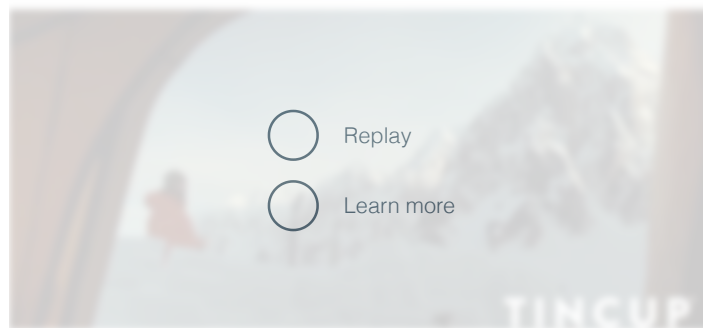
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Krokoff said the Milton IT department and a third party network security provider found that neither Mohrig's email address nor the city's computer system were hacked.

"There is nothing inherently wrong" with the meeting, but the councilman's efforts to hide it raises questions and concerns, Krokoff said.

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Krokoff is Milton's elections superintendent. The city is managing the set-up of the November municipal election for the first time, instead of Fulton County. Mohrig is running for reelection against candidate Phillip Cranmer.

The police and city council are looking into possible false allegations by Mohrig that his email was hacked, Mayor Peyton Jamison said.

The political action committee Milton Families First is accusing Mohrig of trying to "influence the outcome of his own election."

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Mohrig declined to comment to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution “while there is an active police investigation.” The councilman has served on City Council since 2013. He was previously elected to serve a term on City Council after Milton was incorporated in 2006.

Krokoff believes Mohrig sent the email invite to other officials unintentionally by using a city template populated with the names.

Emails obtained by the AJC show Mohrig repeating to Krokoff and council members that he did not send the email invite.

“Someone may have hacked my email,” Mohrig wrote on Sept. 6. “This was not from me, nor do I have any idea what the meeting invite is about.”

The councilman did not respond to questions from Councilwoman Carol Cookerly in the email chain asking if he in fact met with the poll workers.

Krokoff told the AJC that Mohrig met with the poll workers on the date and time of the invite — Sept. 7. The city manager, a former police chief in the Albany, N.Y. police department, says he surveilled the poll workers’ subdivision entrance on that date and the time of the proposed meeting, and saw Mohrig turn into the community.

“I have no information that there was anything inherently wrong with the meeting,” Krokoff said. “What kind of raised my suspicions is that (the meeting) wasn’t acknowledge in the subsequent emails.”

Krokoff added that he does not know the now-former poll workers personally, but he believes they are “upstanding, civic-minded citizens.”

Jamison said that while Mohrig’s meeting with the poll workers isn’t a crime, elected officials are expected to hold high ethical standards.

“Any appearance of wrongdoing can undermine the integrity that voters have in the voting process,” the mayor said.

During public comment at a Milton City Council meeting on Sept. 18, Adam Hollingsworth, president of Milton Families First, accused Mohrig of attempting to meddle in the upcoming election and called for him to step down from his position.

The organization supports Mohrig’s opponent. Hollingsworth said on Monday that he believes Mohrig has made himself a priority over Milton residents’ needs.

“Milton voters deserve better and that starts with electing fresh, new leadership in Phil Cranmer this November,” he said.

About the Author



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