

**Testimony Before Lake Park, FL Commission 8/20/2025: Public Comment on
Leadership Ethics and Morality**

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You may recall my recent concern about the personal safety of town elected representatives. It followed gun violence in Minnesota where legislators were murdered. I care about your wellbeing because we are all best served when you are whole. Similarly, I've been reflecting on the Marina matter and what challenges you have striving to do the right thing. I imagine there will be business and legal processes to endure. I am empathetic and wonder what is the key ingredient needed to achieve the right thing?

I feel like you are leaders with principled power. We elect representatives not only to pass local ordinances and direct the town, but to embody the values we wish to see in public life. Your moral character matters just as much as your political skill.

Moral character builds trust between the people and their government. Without trust, democracy weakens. A Mayor and Commissioners with integrity, honesty, and compassion, will always make decisions that serve the common good. Your courage to stand for what is right — especially when it is hard, like cleaning up the mess previous town administrations put us in — sets the tone for ethical local government.

The challenges are real. Political pressure and big money can tempt even well-intentioned leaders. Your struggle today is between unacceptable contractual agreements and public protection. And yet, it is precisely in these moments of difficulty that true moral character is revealed.

As a partner, Lake Park residents also play a vital role. We must elect leaders not just for their promises, but for their principles. To demand transparency and accountability, and to clearly voice our own concerns, are the safeguards of ethical governance. The quality of our leaders reflects the choices we make at the ballot box. Today I feel like we elected the right group and now have a Town Manager who is balanced and embraces resident engagement.

The strength of Lake Park is measured not only by its small town beauty and population diversity, but by the character of those who lead it. I believe we have chosen people who carry not only authority, but also conscience. Arm yourself with this knowledge, to go forward and do the public good.

Let us know how we can help. Thank you for your service!