
Fwd: Dave Whisnant

From Martino Thomas <martinothomasre@gmail.com>
Date Thu 8/27/2026 12:15 PM
To Matt Lonnerstater <Mlonnerstater@madisonheightsmi.gov>

**Best,
Martino Thomas**



Principal Broker
Summit Union Real Estate

586.718.6501
Martinothomasre@gmail.com

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Tonya Cole** <tonyacole1004@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Aug 26, 2026 at 10:15 AM
Subject: Dave Whisnant
To: Martino Thomas <martinothomasre@gmail.com>

To the City of Madison Heights and Members of the Appropriate Board or Commission:

My name is **Dave Whisnant**, and I have been a resident of Madison Heights for more than 30 years. I attended the meeting held on Tuesday, August 25, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. Over my many years living in this community, I have attended several city meetings, but I was genuinely disappointed by the tone and conduct displayed at this particular meeting.

I was especially disturbed by comments made about my neighbor, Tonya Cole, and by the characterization of her clients. My wife is one of Tonya's clients, and I strongly object to the offensive and unsupported suggestion that her clientele should be labeled as dangerous or inappropriate individuals.

In my opinion, the discussion became unnecessarily personal. The applause, congratulatory behavior, and public reactions following negative comments about Tonya did not reflect the level of

professionalism or respect that I believe should be expected during a public meeting. It appeared to me that longstanding personal conflicts between neighbors were being brought into a matter that should instead be evaluated fairly and objectively.

As a longtime resident of this neighborhood, I have seen Tonya contribute positively to the community in numerous ways. She has helped neighbors maintain their properties, including assisting with yard work when others were facing violations. She has helped neighbors during the winter, including clearing a driveway when someone was unable to leave for work. She has also rescued and assisted injured or sick animals on numerous occasions.

Tonya has invested time, effort, and resources into improving her home and continues to make improvements despite ongoing conflicts with certain neighbors. From my perspective, she has been a positive presence in our neighborhood and someone who has repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to help others.

I understand that Tonya has made mistakes in the past, and I am not suggesting that she should be excused from following the law or complying with City requirements. However, I believe it is equally important to recognize when someone is taking steps to correct past issues and work toward compliance. In my view, past mistakes should not permanently prevent a person from moving forward when they are making a genuine effort to do things properly.

I also believe that some residents may be reluctant to speak publicly because they are concerned about escalating existing neighborhood conflicts. However, I feel strongly that it is important for those of us who have had positive experiences with Tonya to speak up as well.

For more than 30 years, I have called Madison Heights home. Based on my personal observations and experience as Tonya Cole's neighbor, I respectfully ask the City to give her a fair and objective opportunity to operate her home-based business in compliance with all applicable rules and requirements.

I have full confidence in Tonya as my neighbor and in the people who visit her home as clients. My wife and I have not experienced any problems as a result of her business, and we do not believe it has negatively affected our neighborhood.

I respectfully ask that the City consider the voices of neighbors who support Tonya, as well as those who oppose her, and make its decision based on facts, fairness, and the applicable rules—not on personal conflicts or speculation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully and with my full support,

Dave Whisnant

Longtime Madison Heights Resident

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Tonya Cole and to provide a statement regarding her character, as well as additional context regarding concerns raised during the recent Planning Commission hearing.

I have known Tonya for nearly my entire life. We met in kindergarten when we were approximately four years old, and more than 30 years later, she remains one of the people closest to me. At this point, calling Tonya a friend does not fully describe our relationship. She is family to me, and I consider her a sister.

Because I have known Tonya through nearly every stage of her life, I have had the opportunity to see her character demonstrated over decades, through both difficult circumstances and significant accomplishments. I would describe Tonya as strong, independent, determined, caring, generous, responsible, and deeply committed to helping others.

Tonya had to become independent at an age when most young people are still able to rely heavily on their families. I watched her navigate circumstances that required a level of maturity and resilience far beyond what most teenagers are expected to possess. Rather than allowing those experiences to define or limit her future, Tonya worked hard to create stability for herself and ultimately built a successful career doing something she genuinely cares about.

That determination is evident in her work as a licensed massage therapist. Following completion of her massage therapy program at Dorsey College, Tonya was invited to return as an instructor. Teaching has become another way for her to help people improve their lives. She takes a hands-on and practical approach with her students and recognizes that people learn differently and often come to school with very different circumstances, responsibilities, and challenges.

I have seen Tonya invest additional time and energy in students who need a different approach to succeed. If a student is struggling because of the way they learn or because their circumstances are unconventional, her instinct is not to write them off. She looks for ways to help them succeed. She believes strongly that people should be given opportunities to better themselves and, when she is in a position to help provide that opportunity, she does.

That belief in helping others extends well beyond her professional life. Tonya is one of the most dependable people I know. When someone she cares about needs help, she is the person who will rearrange her day, show up, and figure out what needs to be done. I have personally watched her give generously to friends in need, sometimes quite literally giving people clothing and other belongings of her own because someone else needed them more.

I have also witnessed the way Tonya treats people in her neighborhood. She has shoveled snow for elderly neighbors, picked up groceries for people who needed assistance, helped neighbors locate lost belongings, and stepped in to help with everyday needs simply because she was able to do so. She does these things without looking for recognition or expecting anything in return. That generosity is simply part of who Tonya is.

I also believe Tonya takes considerable pride in being a licensed massage therapist. She has invested years into developing her skills, maintaining her professional credentials, teaching others, and building relationships with her clients. Her career is not something she treats casually. Massage therapy has allowed her to create an independent life for herself while doing work centered around helping other people, which is very much consistent with the person I have always known her to be.

I understand that the City is considering issues involving Tonya's property and her request to operate her massage therapy practice from her home. I am not submitting this statement to dispute documented zoning or permitting matters, excuse mistakes that may have been made in navigating those requirements, or suggest that Tonya should be held to a different standard than any other resident or business owner. Those matters should be evaluated on their facts.

At the same time, I was deeply concerned by several of the public comments made during the Planning Commission hearing and believe additional context is important.

I fully understand and respect that neighboring residents have the right to express concerns regarding a proposed special land use. However, several comments went significantly beyond concerns regarding traffic, parking, hours of operation, or other traditional land-use considerations. Speakers made references to kidnapping, sex trafficking, pedophilia, inappropriate behavior, and the supposed nature of Tonya's clientele based, in part, on adult men being seen at her property.

Those are extraordinarily serious implications to make about a licensed professional without evidence connecting Tonya, her clients, or her massage therapy practice to such conduct. Tonya's profession should not, by itself, be treated as suspicious or inappropriate, nor should the presence of an adult male at a woman's home be treated as evidence of criminal or immoral activity.

I am also concerned about allegations that Tonya continued performing massage therapy from her home after she stopped operating there. I have direct knowledge that Tonya stopped performing massages from her residence and instead traveled to her clients to continue working. The fact that individuals continued to visit her home does not establish that those individuals were massage clients. Tonya is a homeowner who has friends, family members, and other personal guests like any other resident.

That distinction is especially important because I have personally witnessed the level of attention certain neighbors direct toward Tonya's property and the people who visit her. I have observed neighbors sitting outside watching guests arrive and depart, recording or documenting vehicle license plates, and yelling while Tonya's guests are present. I have personally experienced this behavior while visiting her home.

From my perspective, this goes well beyond an ordinary disagreement between neighbors and has created an intrusive environment in which Tonya, her guests, and activity at her home are closely monitored. While I understand that residents may document conduct they genuinely

believe violates a city ordinance, there is a meaningful difference between documenting a potential violation and repeatedly monitoring the personal visitors of a neighboring homeowner.

This pattern also concerns me because it creates the possibility that ordinary personal visits are being interpreted as business activity. If every person entering or leaving Tonya's home is presumed to be a massage client, the observation itself becomes the basis for an allegation, even when there may be no independent evidence that a massage or other business activity occurred.

I was particularly troubled by the extent to which speculation and highly prejudicial statements were able to become intertwined with legitimate zoning concerns during the public hearing. I recognize that a public hearing exists so residents can be heard, and I am not suggesting that anyone should have been prevented from speaking. My concern is that there should be a clear distinction between documented facts, firsthand observations, assumptions, hearsay, and speculation when those statements are considered as part of a governmental decision-making process.

There is a substantial difference between evaluating whether a home occupation creates excessive traffic, noise, parking concerns, late hours, or other measurable neighborhood impacts and allowing unsupported references to sex trafficking, pedophilia, kidnapping, or the perceived morality of a massage therapist's clientele to shape the way an applicant is viewed.

I hope that distinction is carefully considered as Tonya's application moves forward.

I also want to be clear that I am not suggesting Tonya has handled every aspect of this situation perfectly. Like anyone, she can make mistakes or misunderstand what is required of her. However, a mistake is not the totality of someone's character. Tonya is capable of accepting responsibility, correcting course, and moving forward when expectations and requirements are clearly established.

Professionally, I have spent my career working in Human Resources, where a significant part of my role involves evaluating conduct, accountability, performance, and how individuals respond when expectations are established or concerns arise. I understand the importance of compliance and accountability, particularly when someone holds a position of trust. I would not offer this statement lightly simply because Tonya is someone I love. My personal relationship with her gives me more than three decades of firsthand experience upon which to base what I am saying.

Throughout those decades, I have consistently known Tonya to be resilient, hardworking, generous, resourceful, and committed to improving both her own circumstances and the circumstances of people around her. She has built a successful life despite having to become self-sufficient far earlier than most people. She has turned her professional success into an opportunity to teach others. She is the person friends and neighbors know they can call when they need someone to show up.

I recognize that the City must make its decision based on the applicable requirements and the information properly before it. I respectfully ask, however, that Tonya be evaluated based on documented facts and her actual conduct, and that appropriate weight be given to the distinction between substantiated concerns and allegations arising from speculation, assumptions, or an ongoing conflict between neighbors.

I also ask that Tonya be viewed as the whole person I have known for more than 30 years: a hardworking professional, a devoted friend, a generous neighbor, an educator, and someone who has spent much of her life finding ways to help other people succeed.

I wholeheartedly support Tonya and respectfully ask that her longstanding character, professional accomplishments, commitment to helping others, and willingness to comply with clearly established requirements be taken into consideration.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amber Parker, SHRM-CP

01/27/2020
To Whom it may concern,

I met Tanya Cole several weeks ago when I had an injured cat on my front porch. She had seen him earlier when he almost got hit by a car. She then came back after I got home from work and introduced herself and asked me if she could take the cat to get him some medical help. She spent all evening calling different Emergency Vets to find one that had an opening to take him.

Since she didn't have any luck that evening she came back in the morning to get him with the idea that she would

take him to the Vet and wait all day
if necessary until the doctor could
see him. Unfortunately the Cat passed
away on my front Porch so she then
took him with her and gave him a
proper burial!

A person without good Character
would never go through all that to
help an injured animal.

I find her to be a dependable,
reliable, trustworthy Person!

Sincerely,
Christina Sullivan

Letter in Support of Tonya Cole from her neighbor Mona

From Martino Thomas <martinothomasre@gmail.com>

Date Thu 8/27/2026 12:14 PM

To Matt Lonnerstater <Mlonnerstater@madisonheightsmi.gov>

Hello,

My name is Romona Whisnant and I own the home directly across the street from Tonya Cole. Back in 2021, I asked Tonya if she could work on my sciatic nerve that I have had continuous issues with for over 10 years. My pain was so severe that I was starting to think of ways to harm myself because I knew that I couldn't continue to live this way. No amount of shots or medications my doctors have given me were actually taking away my pain until I met Tonya.

Tonya gave me free massages until my pain was healed! I have even acted on her behalf as a demo for her students at Dorsey during Covid! I have NEVER had to go back to my doctor regarding my sciatica! I have had no issues with anyone coming to her home, whether it is clients or her family and friends.

A few things I would also like to address here as a long time resident of Madison height and as someone who has sat in on the 8/25/2026 meeting that took place at 5:30 pm.

- Every neighbor that has spoken against Tonya has, as they have already admitted to you on record, been harassing her for over 5 years.
- One of the men who spoke didn't live in our neighborhood and admitted he doesn't come down our street in fear for his kids life because her clients are all pedofiles. I am a client of hers and I am not, nor have I ever been a pedofile!
- One of the letters being read was written by a woman who I know for a fact has asked Tonya for services and she actually went to helped them set up cameras at their house and brought her mother a birthday gift.
- Another one of the guys who spoke about her doing massages late has been stalking her social media, harassing her and then coming down to her property with his unleashed dog as a scare tactic to get her to move which have resulting in police activity at his home.
- Zach and Kim DeRocher have had the police called to their home on multiple occasions for setting off illegal fireworks into the street and putting an hose through Tonya fence and dumping illegal substances into her yard amongst other things. I was also one of the many neighbors there when Tonya had to call the police department to come tresspass Kim and Zach DeRocher from her property because they are constantly entering her property while she's home or while she is gone. Zach and Kim had concerns about Tonya's cameras that she put up to counteract their cameras. Zach and Kim have also called the fire department and the code violations in resulting in Tonya digging up her own property to show proof that she did indeed have a foundation for her shed. Zach has continued to work on car engines out of his garage as well as grow marijuana out of his home that I have proof of along with my other

neighbors. Kim is violent, aggressive and ran out of her house to attack a delivery driver last September. Their kids set off fire crackers in the street, leaving the trash and ride their bikes on lawns

- Stoner, a long time resident complained about undercover cops sitting in front of her house that she, herself admitted, to calling to catch Tonya doing whatever. Stoner has a history of calling anonymous violations in on all her neighbors and has had her car set on fire in her own driveway by a previous neighbor because she would not leave him alone!
- I understand she has gotten previous violations for operation a business and was told to stop but just like my neighbors said "she received violations and fines" that were paid and taken care of per the city attorney. Holding that against her forever isn't very "progressive" of the city of Madison heights. That's our slogan right?

I would like to reiterate once again that I am a long time resident of Groveland st. In Madison heights and I know for a fact that my neighbors have been harassing Tonya as well as the previous home owner! Once again, I am a client of Tonya's, a neighbor and most importantly NOT a pedophile! Let her have her home business my husband and I have no issues with it.

(This is from her neighbor Mona)

Best,
Martino Thomas



Principal Broker
Summit Union Real Estate

586.718.6501

Martinothomasre@gmail.com

COURT REFERENCE LETTER

Carol Parker
9475 Rustic Circle
48386
(734) 637-1374

Date: August 25 2026

To Whom This May Concern,

My name is Carol Parker, and I am proud to offer my recommendation of Tonya cole. I have personally known Tonya cole for 30 years as my friend.

Throughout my relationship with Tonya cole, I have experienced a responsible and thoughtful individual who consistently strives to be a model member of the community. In addition, Tonya cole is a diligent worker, a devoted family person, and an individual of strong moral character and judgment.

I am thus confident in my belief that, moving forward, Tonya cole will continue to work toward the betterment of our community and seek to rectify any mistakes they may have made in the past. It is my sincere hope that the court will take this letter into consideration in its decision making.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should require any further information.

Sincerely,



Signature: _____ **Date:** August 25 2026

Printed: Carol Parker

To Whom It May Concern,

We are pleased to write this character reference on behalf of **Tonya Cole**, whom we have had the privilege of knowing for nearly **30 years**.

Throughout our longstanding friendship, Tonya has consistently demonstrated exceptional character, integrity, and professionalism. She is intelligent, thoughtful, compassionate, dependable, and genuinely caring in all of her interactions with others. Over the years, we have come to know her as someone who is honest, respectful, and always willing to support those around her.

In addition to being a dear friend, Tonya has provided massage therapy services for our children, who participate in competitive travel soccer. Our children always enjoy their visits with her and look forward to their appointments. Tonya has a remarkable ability to make them feel comfortable and cared for while providing effective treatment that helps them recover and perform at their best. She is patient, encouraging, and genuinely invested in their well-being, which is evident in the positive relationship she has built with them over the years.

Tonya's kindness extends beyond her professional work. Whenever she visits our home, she is incredibly sweet and affectionate with our pets, treating them with the same warmth and care that she shows to people. Her thoughtful nature is evident in both large and small interactions, and it is one of the many reasons she is so valued by our family.

What stands out most about Tonya is her genuine concern for others. She approaches every situation with warmth, professionalism, and a positive attitude. She has a natural ability to make people feel comfortable, respected, and appreciated. Whether interacting with friends, family, clients, children, or animals, she consistently demonstrates empathy, kindness, and strong moral character.

We wholeheartedly recommend Tonya and can attest to her outstanding reputation, unwavering integrity, and commitment to helping others. We are grateful to have known her for so many years and are confident that she will continue to make a positive impact on the lives of those around her.

Please feel free to contact us if any additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

Ashley Herrejon

Gilberto "Eddie" Herrejon

Ashleyherrejon1190@gmail.com

734-637-1377