

City of Spring Lake Park Staff Report



Agenda Date	Status
July 6, 2026	Work Session
Requestor	Agenda Section
Nelson	Discussion
Agenda Item:	
Statement of Values Complaint – Councilmember Dircks	
Executive Summary	
<p>The City received a Statement of Values complaint from Mayor Nelson regarding a statement allegedly made by Councilmember Dircks to resident Perry Korzenowski. The statement attributed to Councilmember Dircks was that Mayor Nelson had threatened to shoot Councilmember Wendling. Mayor Nelson denied making any such threat, and Councilmember Wendling also denied that such a threat was made. The complaint alleges that Councilmember Dircks’ statement violated the City’s Statement of Values, specifically the values related to ethics, professionalism, effective communication, and forward-thinking conduct.</p> <p>Councilmember Dircks has acknowledged that she made the statement. In her written response, she stated that she heard the information from someone else and did not question its accuracy based on her past experiences and observations of Mayor Nelson’s conduct. She further acknowledged that the statement violated the Statement of Values and apologized to the entire Council, stating that she will work to choose her words more carefully in the future.</p>	
Background	
<p>On May 24, 2026, the City received a signed and notarized letter from resident Perry Korzenowski regarding a conversation he had with Councilmember Dircks while he was delivering mail on 83rd Avenue. According to Mr. Korzenowski, Councilmember Dircks discussed local politics, recent votes, and matters involving Mayor Nelson. Mr. Korzenowski stated that Councilmember Dircks told him that Councilmember Wendling would never vote against Mayor Nelson because Mayor Nelson had threatened to shoot him.</p> <p>Mayor Nelson subsequently submitted a formal complaint under the City’s Statement of Values Policy. In his complaint, Mayor Nelson stated that the allegation was false, that he</p>	

had never threatened to shoot Councilmember Wendling or anyone else, and that Councilmember Wendling denied that any such threat had been made. Mayor Nelson stated that accusing another elected official of making a violent threat is a serious matter and that, if the statement was made knowingly or without knowing whether it was true, it fell short of the standards established by the Statement of Values.

Consistent with the policy, the City Administrator conducted an initial review to determine whether the complaint has sufficient merit to proceed. As part of this review, Councilmember Dircks was asked to respond to the complaint. In her response, Councilmember Dircks acknowledged making the statement. She indicated that she was discussing local politics and recent votes on her property, that she heard the information from someone else, and that she did not question the veracity of the statement based on her concerns about Mayor Nelson's past conduct. Councilmember Dircks did not dispute Mr. Korzenowski's account that she made the statement.

The Statement of Values provides for informal resolution process. Councilmember Dircks does not dispute making the statement and that her statement fell short of the conduct called for in the Statement of Values. In her written response, she apologized to the City Council.

Board/Commission Review

N/A

Financial Impact

There is no direct financial impact associated with this item. Additional costs could be incurred if the Council directs further investigation, outside legal review, mediation, or facilitated training.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council accept Councilmember Dircks' apology and close the matter with no further formal action. This approach is consistent with the City Council's resolution of the prior Statement of Values complaint involving Mayor Nelson, where the Council chose to focus on corrective communication practices rather than formal discipline.

Attachments

1. Statement of Values Complaint from Mayor Nelson
2. Letter from Perry Korzenowski
3. Written Response from Councilmember Dircks