

Karl Baker Opens Mouth and Inserts Foot

Desert Hot Springs, CA – To groans from the audience, Mayor Pro Tem **Karl Baker** again used a racial slur at last Tuesday night's city council meeting – repeating the exact same slur that prompted a letter from an attorney for Mission Springs Water District demanding that Baker "cease and desist racial harassment" of Water District employees.

Karl Baker gleefully uttered the most recent slur at the end of the regularly scheduled council meeting while questioning Police Chief Patrick Williams on an unrelated matter. Baker concluded his questioning of the Chief when he told Williams...

("Yob" is a racial slur with a Spanish phonetic pronunciation for the English word "job.")

Tuesday night's incident came on the same day The Desert Sun published an article on the council member's bad behavior and raised the question, "whatever happened to public officials' civility." The story also suggested the city adopt an ethics policy, something several other Coachella Valley cities already have.

The Desert Sun article named Baker along with former Desert Hot Springs mayor Alex Bias and council members from Coachella and Indian Wells as examples of "bad behavior" that experts quoted in the article said were "rare and unacceptable."

In the Mission Springs Water District incident, Baker's comments were the subject of extensive media coverage that quoted a letter by Susan E. Rusnak, attorney for the Water District which stated Baker used an "affected Latino accent" in an aggressive and threatening manner in an argument with a Hispanic clerk.

In another recent and unrelated incident: in the city of Coachella charges were filed by the police department involving a local councilman. Trouble erupted in Indian Wells when a local councilman created a public ruckus with bellicose behavior witnessed by many. These events are currently being reviewed by outside attorneys.

The Desert Hot Springs city council to date has not initiated an investigation, and they have remained silent on the issue, referring to Baker's racial slur incidents as a private matter not involving the city. Mayor Yvonne Parks said she doesn't consider the racial slurs offensive and will ignore the objections raised by the water district and the public.

"I use the word "Yob" all the time – everyone does," said Parks about the racial slur. "It's not offensive. You're just trying to make a mountain out of a molehill."

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[Dean Gray](#)

Publisher and one of the writers for the Desert Star Weekly, the California desert's #1 and only alternative independent weekly newspaper. Dean started in the newspaper business at age nine, delivering the weekly Shopping News in Long Beach, California. He wrote, published and sold ads for his first independent newspapers in 1969 while in high school and has been writing ever since. Art Kunkin, then publisher of the LA Free Press and now of Joshua Tree, was then and remains now his inspiration and a weekly



columnist in the Star. While Dean's "cactus thorns" can be sharp and pointed, he has a passion for art, music, good food and healthy living. See www.desertstarweekly.com/who-we-are for more.

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