

**[Peter Johnson statement to FlaglerLive on FC3/City Council, July 18, 2025]**

I, Peter Johnson, since being appointed to the FC3 board, have found the Flagler County Cultural Council to be dysfunctional, secretive, and organizationally challenged in regards to management and approach. Some members of the board and staff are not acting in a manner that a proper non-profit board that manages tax dollars should. The Chair, Nancy Crouch, and Vice Chair, Jay Scherr, have shown a consistent pattern of conducting business outside of board meetings. This has been addressed and noted in the meetings prior to and after my arrival, including once brought up by Danielle Anderson in one of the first few board meetings I had attended.

On June 20th 2025, I arrived at the FC3 meeting early as instructed by Nancy in an email I received June 18th — stating we needed to be there on time to start sharp. I arrived at 10:31. The meeting was to start at 11. I proceeded up the stairs and entered the main room of the 3rd floor. The main door was unlocked, and I did not see anyone at the front desk, which was odd as the door is typically locked and you have to knock or wave at someone to enter, at which point usually a “receptionist” will greet you and let you in. I walked directly to the conference room that we normally conduct our meetings in and observed the glass front door closed with Nancy Crouch, Debra Morgan, and Jay Scherr sitting in close proximity to each other at the table, which appeared they were having a meeting. Nancy was speaking as Jay was on his computer and Debra was taking notes. I caught Jay’s attention from outside and he looked at me like a deer in headlights as I made a hand motion to see if he wanted me to come in or not, as it looked as if important business was being discussed. He looked at Nancy, who looked at Debra, who looked back at Jay, who then looked back at Nancy, who then proceeded to motion me into the room. I opened the door and said hi to everyone and quietly took a seat. Upon sitting at the far end of the table, Nancy turned back to me as Jay was talking and stated that they were “just discussing how to move forward with the Palm Coast grant process.” I proceeded to sit there in silence for approximately 6–7 minutes just listening as their conversation continued between the three of them.

They discussed not addressing the situation with Mayor Mike Norris and Reasa Pabst unless the city addressed it with them. How the board and staff should approach the future contract with the city for renewal. As well as numerous other topics related to the grant process that were supposed to be discussed on the agenda at the scheduled meeting I was there to attend (which had not started yet). Nancy then turned to me and asked what I thought about what was just discussed. I immediately asked the question “Why are we discussing this without the rest of the

board?” and stated that I thought it was “inappropriate to be discussing these matters without the rest of the board present or publicly” I then asked if we should even be discussing this at all as it pertains to Sunshine Law. Jay then interjected and stated that they were “going to fill the rest of the board in later.” To which I replied, “that is unacceptable as we are acting as an advisory board to the city dealing with tax dollars,” to which I was met with blank stares.

I then took the opportunity to highlight in detail the situations that are problematic for FC3’s viability. Including but not limited to conversations centered around constant discussions of spending thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, of taxpayer dollars on special events that are not within the guiding principles and strategic action plan of the organization. How I felt it was “bullshit” that Debra and I were left to present after I had offered to do the grant review presentation weeks prior and was told no, and then in the 11th hour I was the only board member left in attendance, as the grant executor had another meeting to attend, the vice chair was posting about his podcast, and the chair was stuck out of town on a croquet trip.

I discussed my struggles with lack of communication between all board members and staff, as well as communicated my disappointment in the participation of the chair and vice chair aside from regularly assigned meetings. I voiced my concerns of pre-meetings between members who discuss and preemptively make decisions and then decide to “fill in the board later,” which defeats the entire purpose of having a board and having board meetings. I reiterated, with emphasis on how we NEED a grant writer. Every agenda should say “Do we have a grant writer? until we do.” Let me point out that during the conversation, Debra accused me of having a “tone” and that I needed to, in other words, watch my tone. To which I replied that they “can all take my tone to the bank because when board members abandon their responsibilities and skirt around their duties and then host exclusive closed door gatherings it needs to be addressed - not brushed off and dismissed.” This was directed to everyone present, not just towards one person. I ended my dialogue by saying that’s how I feel, that’s the truth. Debra then proceeded to begin sniffing and tell us how she was “in a verbally abusive relationship for 22 years” and said “that she would never let a man” speak to her like that and proceeded to have what I can only term as a mental breakdown. She then stormed out of the room crying out loud hysterically sobbing tears, at which point I could clearly recognize she was going through something that had nothing to do with me, but because she got triggered she associated my critiques as directed at her, which baffled me because it was nothing personal and ironically I was actually defending our presentation — my thoughts were directed to the board as a whole as I stated earlier. She left the room and I just threw my hands up in disbelief because my truth was taken as a personal attack, and as a board member, my duty is to fulfill my role as an advisor with the best interest of FC3. Mind you, this is on the back of the last council meeting

where our own mayor questioned our integrity as a board and accused the TDC of just this type of influence. Nancy expressed herself with a sigh saying “Peter...” while I then proceeded to get up and walk away while saying, “I don’t know what you want me to do. This is the truth — everyone can go cry me a river,” as I proceeded to exit the building to wait for the meeting to start and in an attempt to de escalate the situation — as I had current plans to address this at the meeting, as this topic was on the agenda for the meeting that day.

I went by my car and Nancy came down with my pad-folio, computer, and cell phone (which I had left there because I had planned on returning for the regularly scheduled meeting at 11am (it was around 10:45-ish by this point), and she said, “You can’t be up there right now.” She said, “Debra is a mess and is upset. Clearly something you said triggered her,” to which I responded, “Nancy, how am I supposed to magically know what is going to trigger her?” At this point, other board members and elected officials started to show up and Danielle Anderson walked up to greet us and I informed her how Debra was bawling her eyes out crying, referring to her abusive previous relationship as a trigger, to which Danielle responded, “That’s not his fault. She needs to stop doing that.” Nancy said, “Doing what?” and Danielle responded, “Using that as an excuse when people say things she doesn’t like. She’s done that to Greg before.” (Which I assumed she was referring to fellow board member Greg Feldman) I explained again I didn’t know why she got so upset because I was explaining my dissatisfaction as a conversation to the whole group, not directed at Debra. Nancy then discussed about me going back to the meeting room, and Danielle and I both expressed how we wanted myself to attend the regularly scheduled meeting, and Nancy told me she would figure it out while I waited outside. She went inside and then a couple of minutes later Jay came out and informed me that I am not allowed in the meeting. I asked him why. He replied, “Because of your behavior.” I rebutted with, “What behavior? Did I threaten anyone? Did I violate any law? Did I curse at anyone directly? Did I call anyone any names?” Jay said, “No.” So I asked him then why I was kicked out and I am not allowed in the building. I told him that he is making a mistake and if he wanted me removed from a public meeting he could call the cops or take formal action with the board. After making a few phone calls and coming to the conclusion that not only was I wrongly kicked out, but there was no formal vote by the board nor any censure, I went up and requested to attend the meeting again, at the very least getting documentation of the reason for being denied access, as I knew Jay was incorrect for doing so. As a voting member on the board, that prevented me from fulfilling my duties and making the motions that I saw necessary to be discussed — one of them which would have been a motion to terminate the contract with the City of Palm Coast, for FC3 to stop handling the grant review process, as that was not the intent for FC3 to do city staff work. In the attached video after I said “have a good day,” I got in my car and left.

Shortly after on that same day I called Sean Moylan and left a message on his voicemail so I could clarify a few things regarding the board of FC3. I never received a phone call back from him. It wasn't until July 16th that I received correspondence from him in an email, which stated I was being trespassed from the Tourism and Development office at the airport. I emailed him back to call me, which he then proceeded to do.

Via phone, he informed me that I was being trespassed from the building because of a written statement Jay Scherr had made as the primary witness. I asked him why I was being trespassed for asking the board to clarify Sunshine requirements and was not asked to give a statement, and he stated that he did not know. I asked how a decision could be made without a statement from myself on the matter, and he stated that the TDC staff were the ones who gathered statements and he would be happy to forward them to me (which he did). I then asked him to clarify the Sunshine regulations as they pertain to FC3. He proceeded to tell me that it was his opinion that the organization is not covered under Sunshine. I stated that I disagreed. I conceded I was not a lawyer by any means but that I felt that under the definition and supporting case law as well as established opinions from the AG office, FC3, specifically pertaining to the grant process, met the criteria for coverage. He scoffed at the idea and said, "You're going to tell me about case law?" to which I replied that per the state's own info, advisory boards are covered when they meet certain criteria. He then told me that because the decisions were not made and could be rejected by the council, that it didn't count. Yet it clearly says that even boards making non-binding recommendations are still subject to Sunshine. I also explained that while the council could reject the decisions they were being voted on, it is tax dollars that we are dealing with, and I was advised by the grant executor Julia Trulio that we were "technically supposed to follow Sunshine." I then pivoted the conversation as to how to appeal the trespass decision. He explained the process to me, which I then asked who was responsible for enacting this, and he replied he did not know — either Heidi Petito or Jorge Salinas there was no signature) — and that I could appeal the decision to them by providing my own written statement.

I called Nancy Crouch the same day to ask her why she had not filled out a statement, but she did not answer. She later called me back and stated that she had Jay on the line. I told her I did not want to talk to Jay and was only interested in speaking with her. However, Jay remained on the line. Nancy then informed me that she and Jay had written a "joint statement," but she didn't know what Jay had done with it. Jay then said he had submitted it. (This is the statement I was sent by and followed up with Sean Moylan about—he confirmed he did not receive anything from Nancy.) Jay then spoke up and said that on Friday, they would be discussing my "behavior," but followed that up by informing me I would be arrested if I tried to attend the

meeting. He also reiterated it again by asking if I “fully understand” the trespass notice from the county. I objected and stated that I had absolutely no problem discussing anyone’s behavior—in fact, I welcomed the discussion. However, I made it clear that I did not agree with being excluded from the meeting, especially if I was unable to defend myself or speak about the issues at hand. Jay reiterated that I was not allowed to attend. I then suggested they look into the feasibility of holding the meeting at the government service buildings, but they declined. Nancy stated she wanted staff there. I asked about using Skype, and Jay told me I was not invited to the meeting and wished me a good day.

Please accept this letter as both my formal appeal (which is based solely on principle) and my resignation from the Board of Directors of the Flagler County Cultural Council (FC3) - effective immediately.

It is with deep disappointment that I step away, having lost faith, trust, and the will to continue investing time under the current leadership. In my view, what could be a valuable asset to the community is instead moving in a troubling direction — one marked by a lack of vision, clarity, and guidance.

Without meaningful course correction and intervention, I fear that FC3 will ultimately undermine its own potential and do more harm than good to the future of arts, history, and culture funding in our region.

Sincerely,

Peter Johnson