

## (8/8/09): Mayor and Council Busted Scripting Council Meetings; Can You Say "Special Prosecutor"?

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Cincinnati NAACP

The Cincinnati Mayor and Council used a script to direct the questions and answers at the Thursday Emergency City Council Meeting. The script instructed Council Members to ask questions and respond to the answers in a certain ways. The Cincinnati NAACP has been concerned about the extremely short, sometimes 15 minute-long, General Council Meetings for four years because of the lack of open debate. "This is what City Hall calls Democracy? The Mayor and Council have scripted out more than the Thursday meeting. This is a pattern of behavior and should be fully investigated," said Smitherman, president of the Cincinnati NAACP branch. The elected officials have justified the short Council Meetings as a result of the individuals getting along so well. The Cincinnati NAACP and Cincinnati citizens now know that this was not true.

It is against the law for five members of Council to meet and coordinate a meeting. "The sunshine rule looks like it was violated and that laws were broken," Smitherman says. The Fraternal Order of Police President's concern that the Mayor and City Council have not operated in good faith seems to be on target. "I have always thought that City Council and Democratic candidates have been pressured into taking positions or face retribution from the Democratic leadership," Smitherman says. For example, the Mayor, Council Members, and Democratic Candidates for the November election have lined up behind the streetcar while a super majority of citizens are against a streetcar. However, the people of Cincinnati now have the smoking gun (the script) and should demand a full investigation into this practice.

City Council has been operating with no transparency and this lack of trust is why the Cincinnati NAACP continues to petition government. Cincinnati is a City of laws. "Those who have broken the law should be prosecuted. Those found guilty should go to jail," declared Smitherman.