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CHARGES FILED AGAINST COUNCILMAN IAN THOMAS

Columbia City Councilman Ian Thomas was charged today with the Class C misdemeanor of an attempt to commit a prohibited act by a public official. A Class C misdemeanor is the lowest level misdemeanor offense under Missouri law. Councilman Thomas will exercise his right to be presumed innocent and defend himself in court.

The events have been reported on and are mostly undisputed. Developers reached out to Councilman Thomas and others in city government about their proposed housing development. Discussions took place about the inclusion of affordable housing in the project. Multiple parties were part of the talks, including the Columbia Community Development Office. The developer proposed contributing to the Columbia Community Land Trust as an alternative to changing their development plans. The Columbia Community Land Trust was established by the City of Columbia and others to encourage affordable housing development.

Councilman Thomas expressed support for the developer's proposal in an email to multiple parties within and outside of city government. The city's legal department raised concerns about the email discussion, and Councilman Thomas

immediately contacted the developers to rescind his support for the proposal. The developers agreed that they did not want to do anything that would present potential legal problems. The payment offer, legal opinion questioning the payment, and the recission of the proposal all took place within hours.

Councilman Thomas publically discussed his actions and sought guidance from the Missouri Ethics Commission. His conduct has been open and transparent before and after the legality of the payment was raised. There has been no suggestion that Ian acted to benefit himself personally. Councilman Thomas included many parties on the discussions and took corrective action when concerns where raised – he did not commit a crime.

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