

Allegation of cussing latest in trash fight

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A manager for Upper Arlington's new private trash hauler has been asked to clean up his language.

Telling a resident where to go, in very vulgar terms, "is just not appropriate or helpful," the city's assistant city manager wrote in an e-mail on June 19 to Fred Collins, regional manager for Inland Service Corp. The e-mail said several residents had complained about Collins' language.

"For the record, it never happened," Collins said. He said he explained that to Assistant City Manager Joe Valentino, "and I'll leave it at that."

It's the latest skirmish in a battle over changes in Upper Arlington's trash service that have upset some residents and frustrated city and Inland officials.

In May, Inland's president offered to let Upper Arlington out of its month-old contract for trash hauling with no strings attached.

"Obviously, we would prefer to work through these issues, but if you desire, Inland Service Corporation would be amicable to a no-fault termination of this agreement," Inland President Robert A. Smith wrote to City Manager Virginia Barney on May 22.

City officials called Inland when they received the letter to ask if the company was serious and to let its officials know that Upper Arlington preferred working through problems, Valentino said.

Some residents remain upset that the city dismantled its Solid Waste Division and hired the private hauler, particularly because it was done by emergency legislation and went beyond the recommendations of a community task force.

The residents are working on an initiative petition drive to put the issue on the November ballot, organizer Michael Schadek said.

But Valentino and City Council members say residents' hostility has decreased substantially.

"We've turned the corner," Valentino said. "I wish we were a month ahead of where we are, but I'm happy with where we are. The city is not getting many calls at all."

Schadek said privatization opponents have about 600 more signatures than they need to place the issue on the November ballot and plan to turn them in this week.

State law prohibits reversal of the contract.

However, Schadek said, "If we win (in November), I don't believe city officials wouldn't follow the will of residents. If they turned their backs (on the vote), we would have to pursue all means, and that would include a recall (of council members).

"But I don't believe in my heart of hearts they would do that."

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