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President Gonzalez,

This letter is to inform you that Black Lives Matter Seattle-King County today transmitted a letter to the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC). A copy is attached for your convenience.

As you know, beginning in June 2020, BLMSKC has written to you and other Councilmembers to document and express our and other community members' concerns about the conduct of Council, including (1) conduct while present in community and public, including social media, (2) conduct in Council meetings, and (3) decisions and votes by the Council that directly impact (i) police accountability (ii) the BLM movement, BLM activists and organizers, and (iii) Black and IPOC efforts to see Seattle authentically divest from policing and reinvest in community.

On July 1, 2020 BLMSKC received a written response from your office in a letter signed by you and other Councilmembers. It read, in part:

*“Please allow us to begin by acknowledging and accepting responsibility for the poor behavior of our Councilmember colleagues, ourselves, and any other member of the Legislative Department that has harmed your membership, leadership, or members of the community at-large. In no way is it acceptable for any employee of the Seattle City Council to further perpetuate the racism and anti-Blackness that has left in its wake generations of trauma and individual and collective damage to Seattle’s Black community. This active, anti-Blackness is inherent in all levels of federal, state, county and city government and the City of Seattle, including the City Council, is certainly no exception...”*



The July 1 letter from Council to BLMSKC also states:

*“Last week, Council President González publicly committed to supporting a budget that defunds the Seattle Police Department and reallocates funds towards investments that improve the lives of Seattle’s Black community. Councilmembers Herbold and Sawant have also taken public positions on defunding the Seattle Police Department. We look forward to being held accountable to this commitment by Black Lives Matter Seattle King County and other leaders within the Black community.*

*“We know that words, from non-black politicians like us, are not enough. We know that we have to continue to take tangible steps that are community informed and that correct the wrongs of the racist institution we now represent as Council President and as councilmembers. Our hope is that you will allow us the opportunity to earn your trust...”*

We appreciate the apparent accountability and awareness outlined in the letter, and while we acknowledge we had a promising initial meeting with your office, concerns regarding the conduct of the Council, both with individual members and the collective, continue to arise for BLMSKC, Black activists and allies, and the public at large.

While making no allegations, the letter to SEEC asks for an investigation into specific recent incidents and actions by Councilmembers.

#BLM and #Defund are not political points politicians can cloak themselves in to hide the many ways they uphold white supremacy. #BLM and #Defund are Black-led, community driven solutions to saving and transforming Black lives now, and for generations.

This is about the City Council meeting all of the needs of the Black community, which all Black advocates and activists are fighting for. We need elected officials with integrity, who will help guide a process to create long term solutions to end police brutality, and invest in community first.



Council has failed to propose a responsible divestment pathway or plan, putting the cart squarely before the horse. Further, Council has failed to come close to meeting community demands equitably, and the questions outlined in the letter to the SEEC will help everyone understand what is preventing Council from doing that.

Given Council's written commitment to accountability for themselves, we trust that Council will cooperate with the SEEC process and be mindful to not take this as another opportunity to inflame tensions, and instead show Seattle's commitment to a transparent and participatory democratic process.

Sincerely,

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