



Derry Harper Esq., CIG
Inspector General

February 13, 2020

Honorable Latoya Cantrell
Mayor, City of New Orleans
1300 Perdido Street, 2nd Floor
New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

Re: New Orleans Department of Safety and Permits

Dear Mayor Cantrell:

Thank you for taking the time on February 11, 2020, to meet with me and Office of the Inspector General staff to discuss our concerns regarding the City retaining outside counsel to investigate bribery and misconduct issues in the Safety and Permits Department.

Despite your assurances the primary objectives of the City's outside counsel's review is to identify operational deficiencies, institute compliance measures, and establish best practices, we believe there is a high risk the scope of work agreed to will interfere with the years long criminal investigation which has already resulted in the indictment of one former employee of that Department. Of equal concern is the fact the City's contract with the Morgan Lewis law firm specifically references the collapse of the Hard Rock construction site.

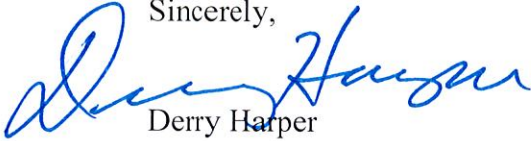
In a letter dated January 28, 2020, my office asked the New Orleans City Council to consider the potential any investigation they approve will interfere with or impair the pending or future investigations by the OIG and our federal or state partners. We agreed the need to improve the delivery of services by the Safety and Permits Department is, and should be, a high priority for your administration. Yet, the potential risk to impairing the pending criminal investigations must be addressed.

During our meeting, we proposed several options and agreed further discussion with the City Attorney, the Chief Administrative Officer, and your outside counsel is necessary. We agreed to schedule this follow up meeting as soon as practical. In the meantime, we ask that, prior to initiating any investigative activity related to this matter, the City notify the OIG.

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I look forward to continuing a productive dialogue to ensure both your efforts and this investigation can co-exist without undue harm to either effort.

Sincerely,



Derry Harper
Inspector General

cc: City Attorney Sunni LeBeouf
Chief Administrative Office Gilbert Montano