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St. George residents uneasy over child porn charges against mayor

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St. George residents uneasy over child porn charges against mayor

By Steve Birmingham [STLtoday.com](#) | Posted: Wednesday, October 31, 2007 12:00 am | Loading...

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Harold Goodman

St. George residents were shocked into silence when hearing their mayor of just more than two years had just been arrested for possession of child pornography.

Acting Mayor Heather Hediger read a prepared statement to the residents at the Oct. 25 Board of Aldermen meeting about Harold Goodman's arrest three days earlier on marijuana possession charges and his indefinite leave of absence.

Gasps of "Oh, no" were the only reaction when she also revealed Goodman had just been taken into custody one hour before the meeting began.

St. George resident Gayla Clark, of the 9800 block of Allendale Drive, said she was not satisfied with the information released to residents about Goodman.

"I have a real problem and I'd like to know if my daughter is included in any of his (Goodman's) pictures," Clark said. "I do not want kids in danger and now to find out — and I'm not saying that he did anything or has pictures of our kids — I don't know, but I'm scared."

"I about cried when I heard the acting mayor's announcement," Clark said. "I've watched the mayor on our streets in the summertime while my daughter and the other little girls went up and down between the pools on our street in their swim suits. He's around and he's been around. That's a big, big concern."

"At this point, I don't feel safe," Clark said. "If I wanted to sell my house, I couldn't. Who wants to move in with what's going on around here?"

Anna Todd, of the 9900 block of Bunker Hill Drive, said she feels safe in the city.

"It's terrible, it's not right, it's not good," Todd said of Goodman's arrest.

Acting mayor Hediger said Goodman turned in all his keys to city offices and all city-issued credit cards earlier in the day before his arrest.

She also said tried to assure the residents that Goodman was acting as a private citizen and the recent developments had nothing to do with the city.

"I really don't know anything else," Hediger said after the meeting. "I know what I was told and I wanted

the citizens to know we were handling the situation and we would do everything we could to cooperate with the St. Louis County Police.

Christina Wilson, daughter of Ward 2 Alderman Carmen Wilkerson, said Goodman's arrest makes her uneasy since she frequently brings her three young children from their Illinois home to visit their grandmother in St. George.

"I don't know Harold that well but from what I've heard he walks around the neighborhoods and interacts with the people," she said. "They've got to keep an eye out now."

Goodman, 64, of the 9000 block of Villaridge Court, was arrested about 6:30 p.m. Oct. 25 at his home by the St. Louis County Police Department.

Goodman was released from custody early Oct. 26, pending application at a later date for arrest warrants from the St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Media Relations Officer Tracy Panus said.

Investigators have said St. George residents had no reason to fear that images of neighborhood children were part of the evidence seized during an Oct. 22 raid at Goodman's apartment.

Police seized Goodman's computer, Panus said. The county police are cooperating in a continuing multiple-jurisdictional investigation that included various state and law enforcement agencies, she said.

Hediger said Goodman has been arrested just one hour before the 7:30 Board of Aldermen meeting at which Goodman's misdemeanor arrest was to be discussed.

Goodman was arrested Oct. 22 on the marijuana charge during a search of his home by police, armed with a search warrant.

The warrant remains sealed under an order issued by the St. Louis County Circuit Court and police declined to say why the house was searched.

Police Chief Scott Uhrig said he was contacted by St. Louis County Police about Goodman's impending arrest and was present to take him into custody.

"There shouldn't be any concerns by residents," Uhrig said. "Our officers have been advised to be very diligent in their patrols and I've placed certain restrictions on Mr. Goodman's residence so that if there are any kinds of calls for service at his building or address I'll be immediately notified."

"I want the community to know that we are being very diligent on watching what is going on so the community can feel that it is safe," Uhrig said.

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