

From: Morgan, Mark
Sent: Tue, 30 Jun 2026 15:49:11 +0000
To: Woodruff, Dave
Subject: Fw: Demand for Retraction Correction and Apology

As per your request, this is the email chain between myself and the CEO of the Herald.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
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From: Morgan, Mark <mark.morgan@durangoco.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2026 11:56:53 AM
To: John Blais <jblais@bcimedia.com>
Subject: Re: Demand for Retraction Correction and Apology

Thank you.

Can you provide the email address Mr. Lewandowski used to communicate with your staff?

I can only find his LPEA email and would prefer not to communicate with him there.

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From: John Blais <jblais@bcimedia.com>
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2026 11:28:23
To: Morgan, Mark <mark.morgan@durangoco.gov>
Subject: Re: Demand for Retraction Correction and Apology

Mr. Morgan,

Joe Lewandowski is a freelance writer and not an employee of Ballantine Communications, Inc.

All email communications are archived and not deleted. I have forwarded your message to the Opinion staff in case other forms of communication need to be preserved.

Yours very truly,

John

.....
John Blais
Chief Executive Officer | Publisher
Ballantine Communications, Inc.

970-375-4601
jblais@bcimedia.com

On Fri, Jun 26, 2026 at 1:26 PM Morgan, Mark <mark.morgan@durangoco.gov> wrote:
Mr. Bias,

I would like to acknowledge and thank you for the retractions, corrections and apology made this past Wednesday.

Mr. Lewandowski has been unresponsive to separate efforts I have made to understand his motives and misrepresentations.

Please preserve all communications and drafts between Mr. Lewandowski and your staff. I may require the same if Mr. Lewandowski continues to avoid the informal accountability I am seeking from him.

Sincerely,

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
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Mark Morgan
City Attorney

Physical: 900 Main Avenue | Durango, CO 81301
Mailing: 949 E. 2nd Avenue | Durango, CO 81301
Office: (970) 375-5007
DurangoCO.gov



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From: John Blais <jblais@bcimedia.com>
Sent: Monday, 22 June 2026 16:50:36

To: Morgan, Mark <mark.morgan@durangoco.gov>
Subject: Re: Demand for Retraction Correction and Apology

Mr. Morgan,

Thank you for your candor, and your patience.

Today, we assembled an internal group to review this matter and agreed that the information in both articles contained egregious inaccuracies that need to be addressed.

We will retract both articles, overwriting the current digital content with statements admitting that the information published was wrong and apologizing for the errors. We will also publish an enhanced correction in the Wednesday edition.

Ellen is composing an editorial focusing on the errors in both articles, correcting the information, and also apologizing.

I apologize that this happened. We take journalistic ethics very seriously. Although I can see how this may have appeared to be malicious, we are very upset about this mistake and will tighten our editorial controls to prevent this from reoccurring.

Yours sincerely,

John

.....
John Blais
Chief Executive Officer | Publisher
Ballantine Communications, Inc.
970-375-4601
jblais@bcimedia.com

On Fri, Jun 19, 2026 at 6:15 PM Morgan, Mark <mark.morgan@durangoco.gov> wrote:
Mr. Blais,

The editor's note recently added to Mr. Lewandowski column in no way satisfies my demand and is itself inaccurate. I assume this is not the correction you referenced in your earlier email and the note will be corrected.

The claim in the editor's note that the information came to the Herald's attention after publishing is insulting, Christian Burney's articles clearly and accurately reported my advice to the council and the Herald was in possession of the declaratory judgement petition I filed where we took no position on the nature of the citizens ordinance. Further, Ms. Stien admitted to me in front of witnesses that she

knew it was inaccurate but let it "slip through the cracks". If Ms. Stien is responsible for this note she is only making things more difficult for herself and the Herald.

Sincerely,

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
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Mark Morgan

City Attorney

Physical: 900 Main Avenue | Durango, CO 81301
Mailing: 949 E. 2nd Avenue | Durango, CO 81301
Office: (970) 375-5007
DurangoCO.gov

From: John Blais <jblais@bcimedia.com>
Sent: Friday, 19 June 2026 15:52:54
To: Morgan, Mark <mark.morgan@durangoco.gov>
Subject: Re: Demand for Retraction Correction and Apology

External message - please be cautious when opening links or attachments in email.

Hi Mark,

We take this matter very seriously, and took action today by reviewing your demand letter and interviewing the employees named in the document.

As a first decision, we are publishing a correction to the "City Council silenced the voices of Durango residents" Opinion Column by columnist Joe Lewandowski, published June 17, 2026. The correction is being composed and will be added to the digital article on DurangoHerald.com. A correction will also be published in the next print edition on Monday, June 22.

Our review and investigation will continue as we address the other items.

Yours truly,

John

.....

John Blais
Chief Executive Officer | Publisher
Ballantine Communications, Inc.
970-375-4601
jblais@bcimedia.com

On Fri, Jun 19, 2026 at 9:27 AM John Blais <jblais@bcimedia.com> wrote:
Mr. Morgan,

Thank you for forwarding me this document. I will review it and prioritize investigating and addressing this matter.

Yours sincerely,

John

.....

John Blais
Chief Executive Officer | Publisher
Ballantine Communications, Inc.
970-375-4601
jblais@bcimedia.com

On Thu, Jun 18, 2026 at 6:43 PM Morgan, Mark <mark.morgan@durangoco.gov> wrote:
Mr. Bias,

Ellen Stien requested I foreward this demand to you.

Please address as soon as possible as the defamation of my profession reputation is ongoing.

Sincerely,

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
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Mark Morgan
City Attorney

Physical: 900 Main Avenue | Durango, CO 81301
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