

## **“A GROSS MISUSE OF POWER: How Political Activists in North Tulsa Are Trying to Take Advantage of the Community”**

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Tulsa, OK – On May 3, the formation of an organization entitled “The Black Wall Street Chamber of Commerce” was announced. Unfortunately, it appears, it is more of a political ruse than an official organization that is ready to serve.

“I can clearly see the writing on the wall,” says Jerry Goodwin, candidate for City Council in District 1. “The minute I heard about this organization, I immediately thought, ‘Fake News’. We are beginning to see more and more of it on the political landscape, specifically geared toward north Tulsa. Unless, we acknowledge this, we will only continue to be berated with it. From faux protests to fake organizations that really stand in title alone, this is beginning to really concern me.”

“Adding insult to injury,” Goodwin says, “...is the use of the name ‘Black Wall Street’, which in its respective history should be held in high regard with high esteem and accredited to only our finest of institutions. Our ancestors were men and women of honor that worked hard to establish their businesses, and this ... evidenced by its foundational pillars. The use of the ‘Black Wall Street’ name is simply to add shine to an organization that needs to appear grandiose.”

At the heart of Goodwin's concern are the foundational pillars he considers red flags. He is asking African-American business owners and the community of north Tulsa to make sure they pay attention to the details. He describes the foundational pillars as the organization's board members, their collective ability to deliver and its core communications. Concerning the board, how many business owners are on the board? How long have they been in business? How many of the board members have worked in Economic Development and can tout successful achievements? How many understand the importance of infrastructure, community branding, teamwork, positive relationships and the weight of current actions (such as protesting District 1 tax dollars through new business and creating segregating zoning measures that may hurt north Tulsa more than help it)? We can look at the board and see that many of them are community activists without the education or experience to really serve in the capacity needed to ensure success for an organization that claims to aid in various business milestones. Concerning their ability, what services are they offering new members? A closer look at their website reveals, vague promises without actions plans or adequate vehicles of delivery. Finally, let's look at what they are communicating. They claim the reason they have found it necessary to form this organization is a result of the incompetence or inability of the Greenwood Chamber to serve them. How many are members of the Greenwood Chamber? We must note that several members of the board are past employees that may have ulterior motives for making such a statement. Furthermore, they have added the moniker of “Black Wall Street” to the organization name to give credibility or substance to efforts without merit. This is not only disrespectful to our north Tulsa heritage, it should be a badge of shame to those who thought it would be ok to stand before our community, unprepared to serve.

In conclusion, while this entity may exist, I am afraid it will not be able to do much work in the way of truly serving our African-American business owners or the north Tulsa community. As a member of this community, I demand this organization to form a leadership team that understands economic development, has the unquestionable ability to do what they promise and will not abuse the power they have as political activists to create yet another “Fake News” headline to get in front of an audience. What will they say, create or protest next week?