



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announces a formal probe Tuesday over allegations President Donald Trump abused his presidential powers. ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

Toward impeaching

Pressed by fellow Democrats, Pelosi initiates formal inquiry into Trump's use of power

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St. Cloud Times

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2019 ■ SCTIMES.COM

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Council reaffirms vote on censuring Hontos



City Council member George Hontos told fellow council members that in their "haste to get (him)," they have "blatantly disregarded the First Amendment." DAVE SCHWARZ/ST. CLOUD TIMES FILE PHOTO

Jenny Berg St. Cloud Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

St. Cloud City Council members reconfirmed Monday a vote to censure George Hontos in response to questions on whether the vote by secret ballot violated Minnesota's open meeting law.

The council voted Sept. 9 to censure Hontos after he wrote a letter to the St. Cloud Times criticizing changes to the public comment procedure at council meetings.

Some members said writing the letter was a violation of the council's rules of conduct because they said it undermined a majority vote of the council.

Council member Dave Masters, who made the motion to censure Hontos, also cited what he called Hontos' repeated intimidating and disrespectful behavior.

Mark Anfinson, an attorney for the Minnesota Newspaper Association, said the law is clear that a public body cannot vote by secret ballot.

He cited a decision of the Minnesota Court of Appeals in which the Mankato Free Press sued the city of North Mankato after the city, among other

The council voted Sept. 9 to censure Hontos.

things, took a written straw vote to narrow the field of candidates for city administrator.

In its decision, the Court of Appeals wrote: "Secret voting denies the public an opportunity to observe the decision-making process, to know the council members' stance on issues, and to be fully informed about the council's actions."

Council President Jeff Goerger added the vote to confirm the censure to the agenda Monday.

Council members wrote their names on the same ballots used at the Sept. 9 meeting during the 4-2 vote by secret ballot. Council member Carol Lewis was absent Monday but identified her ballot before the meeting, according to city staff.

The ballots indicated Masters, Goerger, Paul Brandmire and Mike Conway voted "yes" to censure Hontos; Steve Laraway and Lewis voted

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New Searles owners eye opening in November

City Council unanimously backs establishment's liquor license bid

Jenny Berg St. Cloud Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Fifth Avenue is about to get a lot livelier. Owners of three downtown St. Cloud establishments recently submitted liquor license-related requests to the city, signaling the anticipated openings of Searles on Fifth Ave. and Brick & Bourbon Craft Bar & Eatery, as well as the completion of the expansion of The Veranda Lounge.

St. Cloud City Council unanimously approved Monday a liquor license request for Searles on Fifth Ave., which owners Michelle and Darin Agnew plan to open in the former D.B. Searle's.

The approval is contingent on proof of liquor liability insurance, a certificate of occupancy and approval from the health and fire departments.

The council also approved scheduling public hearings for Oct. 7 for an application for a liquor license for Brick & Bourbon and an application for the expansion of the liquor service area at The Veranda Lounge.

Michelle Agnew told the Times they plan to open Searles on Fifth Ave. by late October or early November.

D.B. Searle's closed in March 2018. The building, at 18 Fifth Ave. S., was built in 1886 and has housed a restaurant on and off since the late 1970s.

The new owners plan to employ about 90 employees, according to the application. The establishment is slated to have three permanent bars, with seating for 240 in the restaurant and 80 in the bar areas.

In the application, the owners state they plan to sell liquor outside on a patio if there is adequate

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Rally reaches 'multiple milestones'

Clairissa Baker St. Cloud Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

An annual rally to raise awareness and end violence and sexual assault against women, children and families will be celebrating multiple milestones.

Take Back the Night is an international rally that began in the 1970s, and is the first worldwide effort to combat violence against women, according to the organization's history.

The 37th annual rally will be held in St. Cloud Thursday in Barden Park from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Organizations involved in hosting the event are also celebrating milestones.

Take Back the Night has a long history in St. Cloud, according to Lee LaDue, gender violence prevention coordinator at St. Cloud State's Women's Center.

The first march in St. Cloud happened in 1982. Approximately 70 people attended. The first speaker was

Linda Edington of the St. Cloud Community Women's Center, followed by Nancy Bader of the St. Cloud Rape Crisis Center.

"Part of what I like about it is the consistency of the focus," LaDue said. "For the community level, I think just having something that continues to put that issue out into the public eye and create that awareness is important."

One in three Minnesota women are sexually assaulted, according to an event news release, and one in three women are physically battered by a male partner.

The march originally focused on "purely raising awareness on sexual violence," said Rebecca Kotz, trafficking program coordinator at the Central Minnesota Sexual Assault Center, but over the years has broadened to include all gender-based violence.

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