

Mr. Jeffrey Kusmierz, et al
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Village of Caledonia
Village Clerk, Village President
250 Maple Street SE
Caledonia, MI 49316

August 28, 2025

Re: Formal Ethics Complaint Against Caledonia Village Trustee Gerriane Schuler, as follows:

I am, with support of others, formally submitting these allegations and complaints to the Village Clerk:

Trustee Gerriane Schuler has violated multiple sections of the village code of ethics through her public reproach of Mr. Kusmierz during agenda item 14 of the July 14th, 2025, Village Council meeting, and other statements as evidenced by the discrepancies between the August 10th, 2025 provided transcript and the altered August 11th minutes of July 14, 2025 meeting presented for council approval. Her actions, including misleading and uncivil actions and statements, compromised and violated her ethical obligations as follows:

Section A (Ethics) : Schuler's conduct undermined the entire ethics framework by failing to uphold transparency and integrity, as well as violate her full Affirmation of Oath for her remarks that were selectively omitted and altered in the August 11th minutes of July 14, 2025 to obscure accountability.

Section A1 (Public Interest) : Schuler failed to act in the public interest by directing a personal reproach at a resident, prioritizing personal agenda over community welfare, as shown in the full transcript. Trustee Schuler did not allow the resident to answer her direct accusation and question, and instead attempted to suppress the resident's free speech by claiming, quote "...you don't have the right to say...", showing complete lack of respect for ethics and decorum and indifference for the public's opinion.

Section A2 (Comply with Law) : Her misleading statements about the true purpose of the council's trailhead parking plan to benefit few, non-resident private parties and commercial interests, as purposely omitted in the presented official minutes of July 14, 2025, violating the Open Meeting Act and legal standards of honest public communication required by law and village policy, and in direct violation of acting in the public (resident's) good.

Section A3 (Conduct of Members) : Schuler's uncivil tone and targeted remarks breached the expected professional conduct for council members during public meetings. Her pointed and direct attack of this resident in a public forum was totally uncalled for, and revealing of her callous lack of interest of the opposition opinions of residents.

Section A5 (Conduct at Public Meetings) : Her public reproach, fully captured in the August 10th transcript but sanitized in the August 11th minutes, violated standards for honesty and respectful and transparent discourse at meetings. Her pointed and direct attack of this resident in a public forum was totally uncalled for, and revealing of her callous lack of interest of the opposition opinions of residents.

Section A6 (Decisions Based on Merit) : Schuler's comments lacked merit-based reasoning, instead reflecting personal bias, as evident in the unedited transcript of her comments. Her pointed and direct attack of this resident in a public forum was totally uncalled for, and revealing of her callous, public disdain for this resident and complete lack of interest of the opposition opinions of residents.

Section A7 (Conflicts of Interest) : Her statements showed negative bias toward opposition residents and favoritism toward certain, non-resident Main Street business interests, indicating a direct conflict of interest, which was downplayed in the altered, inaccurate minutes presented.

Section A11 (Representation of Private Interests) : Schuler's remarks reveals her and the council's open advocacy for scant few, non-resident private business interests over significant resident opposition, violating this section and stipulations of the DNR Passport Grant.

Section A12 (Advocacy) : Schuler's advocacy of private interests and personal reproach of a resident during the meeting was inappropriate, as it targeted Mr. Kusmierz rather than addressing policy issues constructively, ethically and honestly, and further revealing her and the council's open advocacy for scant few, non-resident private business interests over significant resident opposition, violating this section and stipulations of the DNR Passport Grant.

Section A14 (Independence of Boards/Commissions) : Schuler's actions undermined the council's independence by aligning with selective attacks upon residents to control the narrative. Advocating the expenditure of village, township and state taxpayer funds for few private, non-resident business interests, in direct conflict with the stated opposition of a significant majority of resident voters, is in violation of ethics code.

Section A15 (Positive Workplace Environment) : Her public reproach of this resident created a hostile environment, discouraging open public participation, and inflicting distress upon a resident and attendees in direct violation of her Code of Ethics sworn affirmation.

Section B (Elected/Appointed Officials' Conduct) : Schuler's behavior failed to meet standards for professional interactions with colleagues and the public. Her reproach created a hostile environment, discouraging open public participation, and inflicting distress upon a resident and attendees in direct violation of her Code of Ethics sworn affirmation.

Section B1 (Conduct with Each Other in Public Meetings) : Her uncivil remarks breached the requirement for respectful dialogue. Her reproach created a hostile environment, discouraging open public participation, and inflicting distress upon a resident and attendees in direct violation of her Code of Ethics sworn affirmation.

Section B1B (Civility and Decorum in Debate) : Schuler's targeted reproach lacked civility, violating debate standards. Her reproach created a hostile environment, discouraging open public participation, and inflicting distress upon a resident and attendees in direct violation of her Code of Ethics sworn affirmation.

Section B1D (Effective Problem-Solving) : Her comments avoided constructive solutions, focusing instead on personal criticism, and bias favoring a few private businesses instead of the overall public good. Her reproach created a hostile environment, discouraging open public participation, and inflicting distress upon a resident and attendees in direct violation of her Code of Ethics sworn affirmation.

Section B1E (Avoid Distracting Behavior) : Her remarks were disruptive, diverting focus from agenda items to personal attacks, including her comments to limit this resident's right of free speech. Her reproach created a hostile environment, discouraging open public participation, and inflicting distress upon a resident and attendees in direct violation of her Code of Ethics sworn affirmation.

Section B2 (Conduct with A, B, C, D) : Schuler failed to uphold respectful conduct with residents, staff, and other officials, as outlined in subsections A through D. Her reproach created a hostile environment, discouraging open public participation, and inflicting distress upon a resident and attendees in direct violation of her Code of Ethics sworn affirmation.

Section C (Code of Ethics and Standards) : Her actions broadly violated the ethical standards set forth in this section by failing to uphold the principles of accountability, transparency, and respect required of all village officials. Schuler's public reproach of Mr. Kusmierz, as captured verbatim in the August 10th, 2025, transcript from the official video minutes, but omitted or sanitized by the Village Clerk in the August 11th minutes, demonstrates a deliberate attempt by The Village of Caledonia et al to obscure her unprofessional conduct, obscure the true intent of the parking lot, undermining the ethical foundation of the council's public duties.

Page 9 (Acknowledgment of Affirmation of Oath): Schuler fully compromised her affirmation of oath, as outlined on page 9 of the code of ethics, by failing to act with integrity, honesty, and dedication to the public good. Her targeted, injurious and misleading remarks during agenda item 14 on July 14th, 2025, fully documented in the transcript but altered in the minutes, contradict her sworn commitment to serve the community ethically and transparently.

Conclusion and Remedy: The actions of trustee Schuler to promote and advance private, non-resident businesses agenda for commercial parking raises serious questions of conflicts of interest and violation of ethics as well publicly attacking a village resident for expressing opinions while ignoring the majority public outcry, constitutes multiple egregious violations of her sworn oath of ethics.

These are the resulting actions of remedy after a thorough investigation:

1. Censure the trustee and remove the trustee from all committees and voting on any issues relating to the trail-head parking issue, amongst other consequences as required by law.
2. Reprimand trustee Schuler publicly, on record, with written and public apology to this resident and publicly to the village residents for each violation of ethics referenced.
3. Require trustee Schuler to attend Code of Ethics refresh training on the importance and strict adherence to the Village Code of Ethics and how to effectively, openly and honestly communicate to and with her constituent residents without resorting to personal public comments and/ or attacks.

Submitted and Signed this day August 28, 2025

Jeffrey Kusmierz, et al

Caledonia Village Resident