

MORRIS COUNTY

# Parsippany residents demand council fire town clerk after domestic abuse allegations

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A group of township residents are calling for the firing of Parsippany's municipal clerk after he was placed under court supervision stemming from an arrest on domestic violence charges.

Nearly 50 people have signed a Change.org petition demanding that the township oust Khaled Madin over allegations that he beat and choked his wife, Monica Madin, Parsippany's municipal prosecutor and his partner in a Morristown law firm.

Khaled Madin, 37, entered a court program for first-time offenders in June after being charged with owning a prohibited weapon. He was also barred from owning firearms and ordered to complete mandatory counseling for domestic abusers while under yearlong supervision by the state's probation office.

"A known abuser has no place in any position of authority in government. The \$120,000 a year we pay him doesn't compare with the cost to our town's conscience if he remains," the petition states.

"We believe that rehabilitation is a constructive goal that should be used more often. However, this does not mean violent criminals should be free from consequences, especially if no remorse is shown and they only submit to a program under court order."

Keith Kazmark, the township's business administrator, said Friday that his office reviewed the allegations against Khaled Madin in consultation with legal counsel and determined there was "no jurisdiction for the township to take any type of disciplinary or employment action based on the circumstances."

Township Council President Michael dePierro has said the clerk will face no disciplinary action over the case and described it as a “marital problem that was worked out between a husband and a wife.”

Khaled Madin was arrested in February after allegedly breaking into his wife’s Parsippany apartment. Madin then attacked his wife, pulling her hair, spitting in her face and throwing her against the floor, walls and furniture, according to court documents. Monica Madin also told police that her husband had choked her until she passed out during a prior argument in July 2019.

Monica Madin had multiple injuries when she was interviewed by police in February, according to court documents, including a swollen lip and hip, a swollen and bruised elbow and multiple scratches and bruises on her neck. A child was present during the alleged assault, police said.

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Assault charges were dropped in a deal Khaled Madin negotiated with prosecutors, and he agreed to forfeit the handgun police seized during his arrest as well as his firearms purchaser ID. An illegal 15-round, .40-caliber magazine recovered from the scene of the alleged assault was ordered to be destroyed.

Adam McGovern, a community activist who created the Change.org petition, said he was troubled by the council's failure to censure Khaled Madin or take any other action to register disapproval. He described dePierro’s attitude as “prehistoric” during a council meeting last week and said he was compelled to draw more attention to the issue.

“I didn't like the idea that such egregious behavior by a public official might fly under the radar and didn’t feel it should pass without comment,” McGovern said. “My fellow Parsippany residents and voters should know both what he did and what our elected officials had to say about it.”

Khaled Madin, who helps run council meetings as clerk, showed no emotion as residents called for his ouster last week, based on a video recording of the meeting. He and his wife could not be reached for comment on Monday.

Cori Menkin Herbig, a recent council candidate, called on the governing body to investigate the allegations and terminate Khaled Madin if they are found to be true.

“Parsippany taxpayers should not be paying the salary of a man who brutally beat their wife in front of their daughter,” she said. “I’m particularly surprised and disturbed by the failure of women on this council to speak out against both Mr. Madin’s actions and Mr. diPierro’s comments. For a man in a position of power to say that an act of violence against a woman is a matter to be worked out between a husband and wife perpetuates the system of misogyny, violence and oppression against women that has been in place for far too long.”

DePierro remains supportive of Khaled Madin. At the meeting, he said the information he received about the alleged assault, “contrary to the sensationalism,” is that it was a “domestic squabble.”

“They are still together, they are working it out, it’s their personal business and I kind of object to Adam McGovern ... and anyone else who has signed that petition to try to be judge, jury and executioner in an issue that they don’t have all the information,” he said.

Other council members adopted similar positions.

“I don’t know what happened, I’m reading different articles, whether they are truthful or not,” said Loretta Gragnani, the council’s vice president. “Mr. Madin has my support.”

When reached for comment on Monday, Gragnani said she could not say anything on the matter because Madin has not received a Rice notice, a notification from the governing body that it is going to discuss an individual's employment at a council meeting. Council members have to therefore curtail what they say, she said.

Councilman Paul Carifi told the three residents who spoke up about the petition at the council meeting that they should “not believe everything you read in the newspaper.”

“I’m sure the three of you have heard of fake news,” he said. “Facts get turned upside down, and you just need to remember that.”

He could not be reached for comment on Monday.

Emily Peterson and Janice McCarthy said they do not believe they are in a position as council members to pass judgement on someone’s employment.

“That is not the role of the council as I understand it,” Peterson said.

The council does, in fact, have power over the township clerk position because it is the one municipal office that works directly for the governing body, said Kazmark, the township administrator.

Khaled Madin was appointed as Parsippany's clerk by a nearly unanimous council vote in 2016. DePierro cast the sole dissenting vote against the appointment, arguing that the township passed over several certified municipal clerks to hire Madin despite his lack of certifications and experience, according to an account at the time in the Parsippany Life newspaper.

McGovern said the council's dismissal of his petition and residents' concerns about Khaled Madin's alleged behavior demonstrated the divide between Parsippany's residents and their representatives.

"The fact that not one council person addressed or even acknowledged the damages and seriousness of domestic abuse and instead just chose to circle the wagons around actions which are indefensible, and got aggressive about that, was quite a disappointment," he said. "It's the kind of thing that I hope voters will remember."

*Svetlana Shkolnikova covers local news and Superior Court in Morris County for NorthJersey.com. For unlimited access to the most important news from criminal trials to local lawsuits and insightful analysis, please subscribe or activate your digital account today.*

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