

# American Post-Gazette

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is information that has been brought to our attention from a knowledgeable source regarding the ongoing drama and lawsuit surrounding what we believe to be the irresponsible ousting of Don Shooter from the State Legislature, spearheaded by then-Speaker of the House JD Mesnard and then-Representative Michelle Ugenti-Rita.

## MORE QUESTIONS IN THE SHOOTER DRAMA

Tara Zika is one individual who made outrageous claims of sexual harassment against former State Representative Don Shooter. Claims that were dubious, at best.

Zika would have you believe that despite being in the midst of a private conversation with State Senator Karen Fann in the lobby at a conference, when Zika, someone Shooter did not know, walked by. Zika claims Shooter interrupted his conversation with Fann and said to Zika in front of Fann "I'd take that ass for days." If that was not unbelievable enough, Zika alleged that when Shooter spotted her across the room, without interrupting his conversation, he began making gestures with his hand and mouth toward Zika, indicating oral sex. Remarkably, Zika alleged that though Fann was speaking privately and directly with Shooter, Fann did not notice Shooter making these obscene gestures. In fact, Zika claims Shooter made these gestures in front of a half dozen other witnesses; yet none have corroborated her statements. Notably, when Zika provided investigators with the names of three friends and colleagues whom she said she called that night to report the vulgar gestures, NOT ONE of them backed up her story.

So what really caused Zika to fly off of the handle? After walking past Shooter and two other individuals, she apparently felt self-conscious. Self-conscious enough to turn around and when she saw the three of them chuckling at something she did not hear but could see was said by Shooter, she was incensed. Zika confronted Shooter exclaiming "Don't ever say something like that again!". Shooter asked what he said to offend her, and she replied that she knew he said something. He told her it would never happen again and that he was sorry. He told others he had not intended to upset her with a remark that by all accounts, she did not hear though witnessed the tail end of.

According to what Zika told the independent investigator, the next day when she apologized to Shooter for her outburst, Shooter, responded that no apology was necessary and it was he who was sorry. (All of which makes no sense, like much of the entire Shooter ousting.)

When a female attendee told Zika that the confrontation was disproportionate to the circumstances – Zika's response is revealing. Zika told the attendee that recently, in her new job, at a work event with firefighters in a bar, she had been sexually harassed. Zika explained that the experience left her so bereft that she informed her employer she was sexually harassed and took several days off of work to recover. Zika neglected to mention that she had also recently settled her claims of sexual harassment against colleagues at her previous job. (So, apparently Zika is a serial victim.)

At that job, despite Zika's role as an independent contractor, she filed a complaint with the EEOC in Iowa who provided her a "Right-to-Sue" letter, as an employee. Zika used that letter to sue the insurance agency she was contracted with from September 2013 through September 2015 - as well as another firm, based in Texas and not involved in the Iowa insurance agency's management or day-to-day operations. An individual familiar with Zika's lawsuit against the Texas firm described it as analogous to alleging sexual harassment by a co-worker in a fast food restaurant and then suing the hamburger supplier.

When it comes to Zika's co-workers, it's fair to say she burned a lot of bridges. Her colleagues were flabbergasted and hurt by her stunning claims of a hostile work environment. She racked up a wake of destruction in her short career in other states. Former co-workers describe her as ambitious yet inconsistent, foul mouthed and loud. She allegedly gives as good as she gets and if her over the top response in perceiving Shooter may have made a comment about her is any indication, it appears she dishes it out far more than she gets.

Jim Sweeney, owner of one of the firms she sued, said, "Litigation is expensive and I had a business to run. I just wanted her as far away from our company, as quickly as possible. It isn't right when protections in law are misused to extort good faith actors. This seems to be a pattern with Zika."

Why didn't we learn any of this before now. Did no one ask? Is it that allegations are all you need these days? Maybe that is true in the short term, however, in the words of John Adams, "Facts are stubborn things."