

Mayor Alfred Zammit  
Valletta Local Council  
33-35,  
Treasury Street,  
Valletta, VLT 1410

Dear Mr. Zammit,

I am writing in response to the following statement released by your Local Council;

*"Il-Kunsill Lokali tal-Belt Valletta (Citta' Umilissima) jagħmel riferenza għal aħbar riċenti rigward l-instalazzjoni ta' platform fi Triq il-Merkanti bejn Triq St. Kristoforu u Triq l-Arcisqof mis-sidien tal-lukanda Rosselli. Il-permess biex jitpoġġa dan il-platform la għie mitlub lil u wisq anqas approvat mill-istess Kunsill. Tali platform ma għandhux ikollha post f'dak l-ambjent. Wieħed qed jikkellem fuq Triq il-Merkanti faċċata ta' dak li kienet magħrufa qabel bħala l-Universita' l-antika ta' Malta u hdejn il-Knisja tal-Geżwiti. Jiġi ritenut li l-Belt Valletta għandha identita' partikolari totalment differenti minn kwalunkwe belt oħra f'Malta u għandha identita' partikolari mill-lat ta' ċivilta' u kultura. Hija ċ-ċentru Malti mill-lat ta' amministrazzjoni pubblika, kummerċjali, parlamentari u ġudizzjarju. Dik il-platform la għandha post u wisq anqas kellha titpoġġa fejn kienet intiża li ssir. L-aspett storiku u kulturali tal-Belt Valletta għandhu jiġi rispettat. Il-Kunsill Lokali qatt ma kien ser ikollu oġġezzjoni sabiex ikun hemm permess biex jitpoġġew numru raġjonevoli ta' sigġijiet u mwejjed, iżda għall-istruttura goffa u mhux flokha f'dak l-ambjent oltre' li ma tirrispettax sia l-estetika u sia l-pratticità da parti tar-residenti tal-Belt li jiffrekwentaw dawk in-naħiet. Li kieku l-istess Kunsill kien notifikat b'tali talba kieku mill-ewwel ma kien jagħti l-ebda kunsens u jopponi ruħu bil-qawwa kollha. Il-Kunsill Lokali tal-Belt Valletta jappella lill-Awtorità ta' l-Ippjanar sabiex tirrevoka tali permessi.."*

For starters I would like to express my deepest disappointment in the current mismanagement of the council; such disappointment did come as a surprise since I personally had never expected that such mismanagement could ever be repeated after the previous administration. Such disappointment escalated even further when the political party had my earliest support therefore the hurt grows even deeper. Even more so, when you as a mayor and as a local council should never silence or virtually block or dismiss any resident/citizen such as myself whenever we approach you with questions that require your answers.

The commercial over taken of Valletta has been slowly building up. Your first ever intent upon being elected was to convert Evans Building into yet another Hotel. This has placed us residents in a set back, as nowadays the departments that were hosted within Evans Building has now been moved outside of Valletta, why should departments be reduced from a Capital City?... Especially when some departments are being transferred into private offices, at the cost of the tax payers which contribute to further National Expenses, when in my understanding all departments were hosted within Governmental owned buildings at no additional expense.

Regarding the commercial over take of Valletta, you and the council have been completely silent with this regards. It's time to go from silent or from words into



action. I would like to ask for your clarity as to where your interests lay; the interest towards the residents should come first and always, yet there has been no such projects or efforts from your end that could enrich our lives, there has been no motivation to increase or strengthen the Valletta Community – on the contrary as every bit and every corner of Valletta is falling under the private sector, residential areas also have been over taken by the private sector at the detriment of us residents both during day time and night time. And if ever we seek for your assistance, or that of the local council we get dismissed or directed in the wrong direction just so we could have our complaints fail for waste of time or simply end up at the bottom of your priority list.

We residents have compromised far more than enough; we have tolerated establishments in occupying our public spaces with their chairs, tables, umbrellas, temporary/permanent structures... The line of balance has been abused and has been over stepped. It's not like you and your team were never aware of such things, so kindly understand that the above statement released by your Council has been an offense to us residents. As you are well aware, I had tried several times to communicate with your over the social platform, you ended up playing the victim rather than being diplomatic, and you even resorted into blocking me – a true, honest, humble, loyal mayor towards any of his residents/citizens would never make that shallow move. This similar arrogance, lack of action towards the extreme commercialism of public matters was always condemned by your/our political party – hence, further disappointment kept piling up as never have I expected for things to in the same wrong direction as those which you/we have condemned.

The local council always had enough power/sovereignty/jurisdiction over anything that happens within its own locality. The fact that the Local Council keeps washing its hands leaves a bitter taste to say the least, as otherwise it leaves the constant questioning in the minds of us residents; why is the Local Council there for? Why do we elect a mayor, which has no power to do what is right, is it just for show, just for the title, just for salary convention? I do not feel that you are representing us residents, and sincerely I feel that you never did. Any appearance of solidarity which you have shown during a resident's lowest moments seems to have turned into an opportune moment for you; a form of a sympathy vote mechanism.

Despite the attempt of a brush off from the local council with the above statement released, still doesn't absolve you, as a mayor, to provide us residents with the full knowledge of who, what, how, when such abuses have been allowed to happen in the locality under your jurisdiction. So kindly, rectify this injustice by providing full transparency and for those involved to shoulder responsibility. I refuse to believe that the Local Council had no idea of what was happening, especially since many have spoken against the Hotel Rosselli occupying parking spaces by placing heavy pots on three parking spaces found in front it, the Local Council ended up supporting the Hotel by removing all parking spaces found in front of the Rosselli Hotel. If the local council wants to truly be genuine and respectful towards us resident, then I appeal for the council to restore all parking spaces in Merchant Street, and it should also implement the ideology that a business should cater for the community, and not having the community cater for the business.

In terms of regulations, the Local Council should issue and enforce such measurements and restrictions to avoid any abuse by the private sector. Such regulations, or granting of permits should be based on the following;  
\* No establishment can occupy public spaces unless ambulances/ wheel chair space/ public accessibility/ fire engines/ civil protection/ police can pass through the area/street in question without any difficulties...

\* Permits can be revoked if the establishment or its daily occupancy causes any inconvenience or disturbances to the residents both during day time and night time....

\* Permits can be only given for such chairs/tables based on the 10-20% of the establishments inner hosting parameters, meaning, if the owner that has purchased or rented an establishment for business and usually there were 20 tables, then he/she/they are only allowed to occupy the area with 10% of that... Or simply go for a one policy for all; allow only four tables per establishment – after all ownership is intended for the private property and not ownership of public land/areas. This way it secures that there will be enough clients for all the other business, instead of having the typical egoist approach to gobble every client for him/her....

\* Permits should be revoked if the establishment obstructs cultural/history landmarks such as fountains, monuments, which does obstruct these from being enjoyed by the tourists and the public itself...

\* Permits should be revoked if ever an establishment breaks any EHD/OHSA regulations, if found of using permanent structures, or if it obstructs any public services...

\* Establishments should always carry a copy or the original permit at hand; this reduces any time wasting for the police offices that truly have been trying to do their job towards us residents....

\* Residential areas should be respected by keeping them as residential areas. Only essential businesses should be allowed. Repercussions and detriment to us resident could easily be avoided by creating and enforcing boundaries. After all, it is use residents that have elected you. The full loyalty of a mayor / council should be solely towards us. No loyalty from the council, means no support from us residents. I do believe that the situation has reached the breaking point of our patience, understanding and time to preserve what is left of our beloved city which unfortunately the private sector along with your silent blessing doesn't value it at all since it seems as if our city is up for sale... Regeneration does not mean giving majority to the private sector, neither does it mean having our council giving into that sector either.

A Shifting or Transferring parking space from one location to another doesn't mean you have achieved an increase of parkings – it only creates a tactic illusion. The way this subject was recently handled by your administration has cause several issues rather than solving them, it has resulted into discouraging the relatives of residents from visiting them in Valletta due to parking spaces being reduced in most areas of the city, parking spaces and areas occupied by establishments in residential areas, cars not being allowed to pass for picking up their relatives and so much more. It's a fact that most establishments have over taken a large part of Valletta and its streets/areas, as we have seen via several evidences.

So kindly, re-evaluate your priorities.