

Most popular

1 Inside look at Crossgates

2 For sale: Old Alban

3 Snow hitting Capital

4 'Dilbert' creator's racist
! draws condemnation,
cellations

5 Former cop who shot
robber while with
prostitute wins in court



Subscribe

Sign In

Snow hitting Capital Region Monday night

Here are the latest snow total forecasts, totals

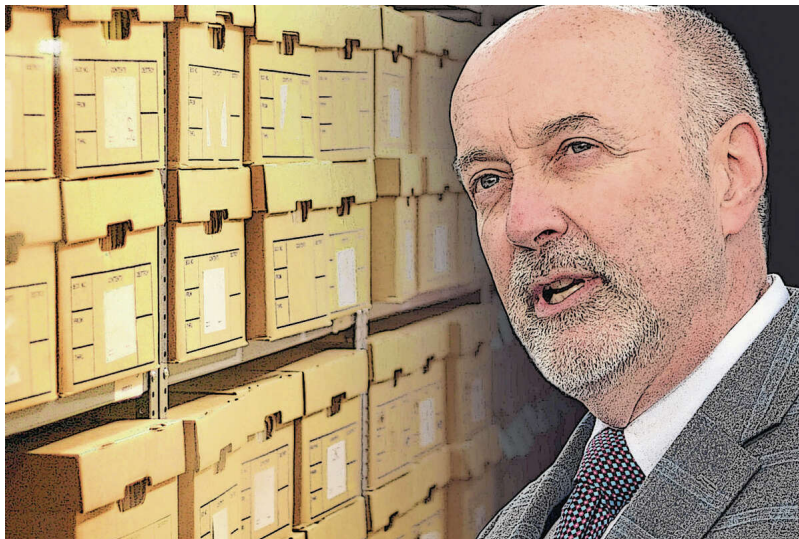
OPINION

Editorial: Troy's mayor still believes in secrecy

The refusal to turn over police disciplinary records suggests Patrick Madden hasn't learned lessons from his mishandling of the killing of Edson Thevenin.

Times Union Editorial Board

Feb. 24, 2023



1 of 3



Times Union photo illustration by Tyswan Stewart. Photos by Getty Images and Lori Van Buren / Times Union.

Let us remind Troy Mayor Patrick Madden that he was elected to be a representative of the city's residents — all of them — instead of an attorney for the Troy Police Benevolent Association.

Mr. Madden has long seemed confused about that. We'll point first and foremost to his incomprehensible response to the police killing of Edson Thevenin, an unarmed man who in 2016 was shot dead by Sgt. Randall French after fleeing a traffic stop. The mayor, a Democrat, collaborated with the police to reject and bury the damning findings of an internal police department investigation, which suggested Sgt. French violated department procedures and lied about the circumstances of the shooting, and secretly commissioned a second review.

The resulting report by an outside attorney, Michael Ranalli, rebutted some of the findings of the first investigation (surprise, surprise) but the public didn't learn anything about either report from Mr. Madden. While the findings of the internal investigation were eventually released by a judge, the mayor claimed — absurdly — that since the taxpayer-funded Ranalli review was attorney-client work product, he would keep it from the public until the resolution of the lawsuit brought by Mr. Thevenin's widow.

Presidents Day Sale - EXTENDED | ONLY 99¢!

ACT NOW



In that case, Mr. Madden forgot that his first obligation was to provide the truth about the shooting to the people of Troy. Instead, he seemed determined to protect the police department from embarrassing revelations. The entire mess remains a stain on Mr. Madden's time in office and one that will, in many respects, define his tenure when he leaves the role at the end of the year.

Unfortunately, Mr. Madden appears not to have learned anything: His administration's refusal to release disciplinary records requested by the New York Civil Liberties Union nearly three years ago shows that Troy's mayor remains inclined to secrecy and determined to shield police from scrutiny, instead of providing accountability and transparency to the public. Mr. Madden still doesn't understand whom he is supposed to be serving.

Remember that the public has the right to see those disciplinary records, including "open" and "unfounded" complaints against officers, thanks to a change in state law that, after the 2020 murder of George Floyd, repealed a 1976 statute that had previously allowed agencies to shield the personnel records of a broad range of public safety workers. And last week, a state Supreme Court justice [ordered Troy to turn them over](#), following an appellate court ruling granting the NYCLU the right to similar files from other cities, and also ordered the city to pay for some of the organization's court and legal costs.



SIGN UP FOR THE OBSERVATION DECK NEWSLETTER

Read the latest Times Union opinion, perspective and letters to the editor on Mondays by signing up for our Observation Deck newsletter.

That's a loss for the city's taxpayers, of course, and Mr. Madden's continued foot-dragging is a loss for city residents who want to improve policing and enhance public trust. The records, after all, will presumably show the public how law enforcement agencies handle disciplinary actions and whether investigations into allegations of police wrongdoing were thorough. They will also show whether officers guilty of wrongdoing were appropriately punished.

They will, in other words, serve an important public purpose, and Mr. Madden's apparent inability to see that, given his administration's continued inclination toward secrecy, raises a question: Will he ever learn?

Sign up for the Observation Deck newsletter

Get thoughtful takes from a broad range of thinkers, editorials and more.

Email

SIGN UP

By signing up, you agree to our [Terms of Use](#) and acknowledge that your information will be used as described in our [Privacy Policy](#).

Written By

[Times Union Editorial Board](#)

Editorials are the institutional view of the Times Union. They represent the consensus of the editorial board, whose members are [George Hearst](#), publisher; [Casey Seiler](#), editor; [Akum Norder](#), senior editor for opinion; [Jay Jochnowitz](#), editor at large; [Tena Tyler](#), senior editor for engagement; and [Chris Churchill](#), columnist and editorial writer. While the Times Union's news coverage frequently informs our editorials, the board's opinions have no bearing on that coverage.



[TOP](#) ^



ABOUT

- [Our Company](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [General Standards and Practices](#)
- [Privacy Notice](#)
- [Newspaper Delivery Safety Procedures](#)
- [Your California Privacy Rights](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Jobs at the Times Union](#)
- [Interest Based Ads](#)

CONTACT

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Celebrations](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [School Closings](#)
- [Online Store](#)
- [Events Calendar](#)
- [Puzzles Palace](#)

SERVICES

- [Subscriber Services](#)
- [Corporate Subscriptions](#)
- [Home Delivery](#)
- [Mobile App](#)
- [Become a Carrier](#)
- [Copyright and Reprint](#)
- [e-Edition](#)
- [Archives](#)

HEARST newspapers

©2023 The Hearst Corporation