

Donohue decries riots, fears broad-brush criticism

By **BILL BARLOW**
Special to the Star and Wave

The nation watched in shock Jan. 6 as rioters outside the Capitol overwhelmed police and smashed their way into the building, rampaging through the halls and delaying the official certification of President-elect Joe Biden's win.

Thousands thronged to Washington from around the country that day, urged on by President Donald Trump's baseless claims that the election was stolen and galvanized by his vow to never concede as he called on supporters to march to the Capitol.

When it was over, five people were dead, including Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, a veteran originally from New Jersey. Two pipe bombs were found, one each at the headquarters of the Republican National Committee and the Democratic National Committee.

Among those watching was Michael Donohue, chairman of the Cape May County Republican organization, a former Superior Court judge and until January the Cape May County Administrator. He said he was angry and disturbed.

"I've condemned what happened at the Capitol. Those weren't patriots; they were thugs. It was disgusting. It was wrong at every level," he said.

He described the president as tone deaf and said the gathering in Washington was a mistake from the start.

At the same time, he

fears the riot, which some participants described as a rebellion, will be cause for silencing Republican voices and denigrating all Republican ideas.

"I have this fear that this is going to be used to paint every Republican with a very broad brush," he said in an interview Monday, Jan. 11. "This is frightening stuff and I think we all have to take a deep breath. You cannot condemn wholesale 71 million people because of the actions of a misguided, immature and violent few. It's not everybody."

In a Facebook posting shortly after the insurrection, Donohue appealed to people on the left to declare publicly that Republicans are entitled to their beliefs and to protection from persecution. In doing so, he compared the Jan. 6 riot to one of the turning points in Nazi history.

"Dear Libprog Friends," it begins, using a portmanteau of liberal and progressive that is common on conservative Twitter feeds but appears to be more closely associated with "library programing" in wider circles.

"So, now that you've had your Reichstag fire, will you stand and cheer as the Democrat-controlled U.S. government outlaws the Republican Party and begins to prosecute Americans based on their political views?" it continues. "Will you stand and cheer as Americans are led away in shackles to political prisons because they deviated from your groupthink?"

In 1933, an arson attack burned the home of the German parliament, the Reichstag, shortly after Adolph Hitler was sworn in as chancellor.

Nazis claimed the fire was part of a plot by Communists to overthrow the government, using it as a pretext to suspend most civil liberties in Germany and setting the board for Hitler to assert dictatorial powers.

Donohue later backed off from the statement, saying in the interview that it was a poor analogy.

"I'm not comparing Democrats to Nazis," he said, adding that Republicans have often been compared to the most notorious totalitarian state in history, with many comparing Trump to Hitler.

Donohue has since removed the post from Facebook as well. The comments underneath were getting out of control, he said, with a growing rancor between supporters and critics of the president.

"People were going crazy, dropping the 'F-bomb' and all sorts of stuff," he said.

At least one left-leaning commentator offered support for free speech, but more suggested the question itself was hypocritical, calling for tolerance of opposing views only after losing the Senate and White House.

"So, no, then," wrote one of the Republicans on the thread.

The broad brush seems to paint both ways. For instance, many conserva-

tives condemned all Black Lives Matter protesters last summer, blithely conflating the thousands across the country exercising their constitutional right to assembly with those who burned police cars, damaged buildings or committed acts of violence.

Challenged to explain how the Democratic frustration with the Right differs from Republican demonization of the Left, Donohue said "we could all do better."

He called for leaders of both camps to step back from the edge and use more measured language. At the same time, he continued to express his own frustrations.

"The Left and Big Tech throw in with ruthless, murderous Iranian dictator. This post calling for the death of a broad swath of American elected officials is OK to post and self-righteous hypocrites on the Left," he wrote under a screenshot of a tweet from the English-language account connected to Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader. The comment was made on Donohue's publicly accessible page.

Twitter removed a tweet from the Khamenei-connected account the same day that Trump was removed from the platform, and reportedly blocked new posts from the account. Still, many see a double standard, around the country and locally.

"Hey twitter if I call for the death to America and Israel can I keep my ac-

count? Hey facebook If I post instructions on how to build a bomb or cover up a rape can I keep my account active???

Well of course you can. It's only Donald Trump who is a threat to these double standard fools. Let's not forget that facebook started as a network for rating fellow students at Harvard," reads a comment from Jody Levchuk, an Ocean City Councilman.

In a statement posted Jan. 8, Twitter said it took the extraordinary step of suspending a sitting world leader due to the risk of incitement to further violence. Trump had previously been banned from Facebook and since then multiple other social media sites have done the same, while Amazon has pulled the plug on the right-leaning social media site Parler, which was of-

fine as of Monday. As COVID-19 has limited access to the public sphere in the real world, Donohue argued, conservatives find themselves shut out from the digital world as well.

"We have a new public square in this digital age and do we really want to leave it to these billionaire tech guys to determine which speech is acceptable?" he said.

If anything, Donohue

said, he has become more concerned with the potential for crackdowns on conservative voices, a concern he shared both through Facebook and on his weekly radio show. He said he hears rhetoric that all Trump supporters are to blame.

He cited the comment from Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton during her race with Trump in 2016, in which she said half of his supporters could be put into a "basket of deplorables."

"They're racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic — you name it. And unfortunately, there are people like that. And he has lifted them up. He has given voice to their websites that used to only have 11,000 people — now have 11 million," she said.

"That set the tone for the past four years," Donohue said.

He added that he had been frustrated with Trump on several issues, especially his prolific and ill-considered tweeting. But he also believes Trump has accomplished a great deal for the economy, in the Middle East and on other priorities.

Now, he said, opponents of the president will want the Jan. 6 events to become the whole of his legacy.

City advisory boards to have term limits, sunset clause

By **JACK FICHTER**
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Terms of advisory committee members will not be unlimited in the future and committees may also have a sunset clause to coincide with their mission.

During a virtual meeting Jan. 5, Mayor Zack Mullock said at one time the city-imposed term limits on members of city advisory committees. He suggested term limits return.

"I do think it's important that the council each year at reorganization reappoint those members," Mullock said. "Otherwise, as it stands now, we have kind of terms in perpetuity."

He said such a policy for advisory committee members would follow the same procedure as other city boards and commissions.

Advisory committee members would be appointed on an annual basis. Councilman Chris Bezaire said any time a committee is formed, it should have a purpose and an estimated timeframe for its mission.

He said if a project of a committee is forecast to take three years to accomplish, the committee could be formed for that period of time. Bezaire said he would not be in favor of a time limit for individual committee members.

Mullock said he concurred with Bezaire.

"I also think it's a bit awkward if there's a discussion between council and that committee, if you feel like the committee is kind of finished its role and

maybe they feel differently but I think ultimately council should have that decision in reorganization each year..." he said.

In other discussion, Mullock said council was planning on forming a Municipal Taxation and Revenue Advisory Committee

(MTRAC) at its Jan. 19 meeting. He said MTRAC would be important as the city goes through its annual budget process.

Several members of the community have volunteered to serve on the committee, Mullock said. Those interested in serv-

ing on the committee may contact the city clerk, he said.

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DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
13	7:52	8:19	1:12	2:07
14	8:39	9:07	2:02	2:55
15	9:24	9:53	2:51	3:40
16	10:09	10:40	3:39	4:25
17	10:53	11:26	4:27	5:09
18	11:37		5:17	5:52
19	12:14	12:24	6:09	6:35
20	1:05	1:14	7:05	7:20

MOON PHASES
New moon, Jan. 13 • first quarter, Jan. 20

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