Commissioner asked to resign after racist remarks

LEAVENWORTH, Kan. (AP) — A white area county commissioner who told a black city planner that he belongs to "the master race" as he rejected her proposed development plan is coming under pressure from fellow commissioners to resign.

Leavenworth County Commissioner Louis Klemp cited the master race — the Nazi ideology of Aryan supremacy — at a board meeting Tuesday while responding to a presentation by Triveece Penelton and a colleague on road development options in Tonganoxie, just west of Kansas City.

"I don't want you to think I'm picking on you because we're part of the master race," [Klemp told Penelton](#) . He then said he didn't like any of the land use options that she had presented to the commission.

Commissioners Robert Holland and Doug Smith called on Klemp to resign before his term ends Jan. 15. The Republican Party appointed Klemp to the commission in October 2017 to fill a vacancy created by a resignation.

"In the best interest of the county, he should resign," Smith told The Leavenworth Times for a story published Thursday.

"I was shocked. I was in disbelief," Holland said. "He should resign. I don't care if he's got two days left, he should resign."

Klemp told KSHB-TV off camera that his comment was a joke. A message left at his home Thursday was not immediately returned.

Klemp, who once ran for governor, has come under criticism in the past for making controversial comments.

Last December, while the commission was discussing holiday schedules, Klemp suggested Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Confederate Army in the Civil War, should be honored.

"Not everybody does them all because we have Robert E. Lee...Oh God Robert E. Lee...wonderful part of history," Klemp said.

He also said George Washington probably wouldn't get his own holiday because he was a slave owner.

"It bothers me that if we're going to have Martin Luther King Day, why don't we

have a George Washington?" he said. "I think George was a pretty important guy."

Associated Press