

Detractors of Community Growth

Written by Kathleen McCarthy
Tuesday, 17 October 2000 18:00

- [199.95\\$ Red Giant Trapcode Suite 12 MAC cheap oem](#)
- [Buy Steinberg Cubase SX3 \(en\)](#)
- [Buy Disk Drill Pro 1.8 MAC \(en,pl,ru,es,sv,it,ja,de,fr\)](#)
- [Discount - Autodesk Alias Automotive 2014](#)
- [Buy Cheap Autodesk Alias Automotive 2014](#)
- [Download FileMaker Pro 12 Advanced MAC](#)
- [Buy GraphiSoft ArchiCAD 14 MAC \(en\)](#)
- [Download Xilisoft ISO Burner](#)
- [Buy Cheap Autodesk AutoCAD Design Suite Standard 2013 \(64-bit\)](#)
- [Buy OEM Frischluft Effects Pack](#)
- [29.95\\$ Infinite Skills - Learning Autodesk Inventor 2013 cheap oem](#)
- [Download Autodesk AutoCAD LT 2015 \(64-bit\)](#)

Today's news feature is about Davenport's proposed "west- end library," including where exactly to locate it. Much controversy surrounds the potential condemnation of a small parcel of farmland owned by an elderly couple, who have made it known to public officials that they don't want to sell their farm. A needs assessment was done in order to determine where to site the west branch, and the exact spot conveniently turned up smack dab in the middle of moderate to upscale residential development near Fairmount and Kimberly Roads. The criteria that defined the elderly couple's home as the "ideal" location for the west-branch library was fairly unscientific, therefore entirely open to change. The good folks at the library should rethink any attempt to condemn land belonging to an elderly couple for a branch library, especially one that is being pursued because of pressure from the public to put a library where it is needed versus desired at 53rd and Eastern Streets.

Condemnation of land belonging to our elderly is simply not acceptable, nor should it be a remote possibility according to our city's policy. And shame on this council for even considering such a proposition. This may be the perfect time to examine the real purpose of "executive sessions" as utilized by councils. The rules state executive sessions are strictly for the purpose of discussing real estate and pending litigation. It makes perfect sense in the context of trying to make sensitive decisions that might otherwise be compromised by public scrutiny (thereby not in the public's best interest), but that only applies in a limited context. As far as real estate is concerned, the rule assumes that the discussions must be kept private so as not to put the city at a competitive disadvantage. If owners of property knew their land was being considered for a public purpose, they may raise the price to exorbitant levels.

In the case of the library's possible site, the couple already knows the city is interested in their land. Beyond that, they also know the city is considering condemnation. No real negotiations have occurred because the elderly couple has taken their position—they are unwilling sellers. That should be the end of the story, and if it is not, then it most certainly should be discussion that occurs publicly and not behind closed doors like thieves in the night. It becomes an abuse of power when the situation no longer fits the parameters of the rules governing it. But this kind of behavior is becoming more the norm for this council than the exception.

The Sentry Insurance fiasco continues to boggle the mind in its blatant failure to achieve any

Detractors of Community Growth

Written by Kathleen McCarthy
Tuesday, 17 October 2000 18:00

public consensus. And why is that? In one camp, you have the cheerleaders such as Alderman McGivern and Davenport One president Dan Huber, who consider all development good development. These Boys Club wannabes never consider that maybe their process is the destructive component to attracting high-paying industry to our market. In fact, by utilizing TIF for Sentry, it could be argued that we are putting other insurance companies at a competitive disadvantage by subsidizing this particular operation. The use of TIF in this instance does not fit the “but, for” litmus test, which clearly states “but for the use of TIF, this development would not or could not occur.” The “but, for” criterion has been legislated in Missouri’s (and many other states for that matter) economic development policy as proof of its validity and wise governing. Furthermore, the claim of creating high-paying, living wage jobs of \$40,000 plus per year is merely an average, not a commitment to create 95 individual jobs, each at between \$18-\$21 per hour, per position. This is an important distinction and requires accountability, of which there is very little. In the end, business owners and leaders know when the rules have been bent or stretched to accommodate a few at the expense of the community, and this practice actually discourages business and breeds disrespect.

On the other hand, if using TIF to secure Sentry in Davenport is so good for the community, then prove it. Don’t just posture about it. Alderman McGivern is perceived as insincere when posturing before the camera about the benefits of the Sentry deal, but never articulates what the benefits are, or if they outweigh the city’s costs, nor does he demonstrate any in-depth knowledge or homework about the issue. And Mr. Huber clearly needs to get a new cheer with which to express himself. The old one isn’t selling because it is too one-sided and lacking in a fundamental understanding of the serious issues that underpin the community’s objections to actions like TIF for land deals.

But all hope is not lost. There is an ideal opportunity right now to demonstrate a willingness to review our policy relative to the use of TIF, and to implement reform. There have been many cities that have already done the groundwork for such reform, and Davenport can take advantage of such resources. QC Interfaith, whose stated mission is to protect against urban sprawl and the misuse of TIF, recently presented city staff and the council with a written challenge to enact and enforce critically needed land use reform within the City of Davenport. So far, most of the aldermen have signed the agreement. Let’s pass it on to the business leadership, as well, and create a synergy of land use reform that complements the update of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) that is currently in the works. This effort would mean the coming together of the public, the government sector and the business leadership for a common goal—managed growth and development that makes sense now and for the future that will enhance the quality of life in Davenport and the entire QC area.

Meanwhile, those “same old faces” that McGivern objects to, the faces who have the courage to appear at every council meeting on behalf of the public and make their positions heard, are willing to be convinced that they are wrong on these development issues. Just prove it. Come out into the light of day with these projects, examine and debate them publicly, and let them stand on their own merit. If development proposals and projects can do so, the public would likely endorse them. Consensus is hard enough to achieve with all the information on the table, but to expect anything less than objection, suspicion and protest when the information is not forthcoming is foolhardy. Yet it is the way in which most leadership behaves in Davenport,

Detractors of Community Growth

Written by Kathleen McCarthy
Tuesday, 17 October 2000 18:00

including the City, Davenport One, Scott County and the Davenport School District. For Alderman Sherwood to claim that there are those who regularly participate in the process who simply don't want change is a complete disservice to his constituents. And if he is bold enough to challenge the "misconstruction of information to the community by the press," then let it be incumbent upon him to construct it correctly, an effort he obviously avoids.

The real problem for most of the politicians and city leadership is that the public knows too much at this point. First, they know city officials are not telling them the complete truth. When asked for evidentiary support that the Quad Cities were truly at risk of losing Sentry jobs, staff and city leadership could not deliver. The Sentry deal is a land deal, not the salvation of jobs. It doesn't merit TIF incentives even though it "fits" the parameters of the city's current policy for providing such economic tools. In fact, it violates the spirit of TIF and that is what the council should be held accountable for. Citizens know that their elected aldermen aren't collectively strong enough or smart enough to fully investigate such complex matters as TIF to prevent such violations. They also know that city staff and leadership only have to convince a handful of council members to get their way, and that public support is not considered a necessary component. The public is keenly aware that the aldermen they elected have routinely disappointed them on issues that they were specifically elected on. Alderman Sherwood has become unrecognizable on the council. On many occasions, his behavior has been considered adversarial toward the public, as has Aldermen McGivern's and Moritz's, especially when it comes to providing information to the public. Mayor Yerington appears to be the only remaining voice advocating for the people with a common sense approach. Aldermen Hean and Ambrose make noble attempts, but they are overwhelmed and, at times, even threatened. In the future, it will be especially important to pay particular attention to their various ward issues to see how the other aldermen respond, in order to ascertain whether these reported threats have any validity.