

January 18, 2015

CITIZENS HAVE A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN TOWN COUNCIL

Here are some recent examples of fiscally irresponsible deals that squandered taxpayer money or are proposed:

1. \$100,000 loss in land sale
2. \$70,000 (open ended) to consultants for the UDO
18 months of staff time and volunteer hours
3. \$100,000 proposed partnership with the Methodist Church
to build them a parking lot
4. A contractor requests \$125,000 for a second entrance

Have I got your attention?

#1 The town had bought property at 176 Reems Creek Road for the fire department. It was recently sold at a \$100,000 loss!

#2 Then there's the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Nothing in life is static. Change is inevitable but we can't let something that will devastate and irreparably change our town pass. The lapses by the town in developing the UDO are egregious. Jay Schauer, a citizen, compiled a phenomenal "The History of the Weaverville Unified Development Ordinance." "A major legislative initiative Undertaken Without Public Involvement." Go to <http://jayschauer.com/udo> on the internet and read it. It's unbelievable! Jay passed out copies to each council member. Doug Dearth didn't have the courtesy to accept it and shook his head no. He refused a copy. He continues to pressure the council for passage of the UDO. Citizens want the present ordinances updated and want the UDO aborted. The town attorney said the town can't take parts of the present ordinances and parts of the UDO and make a whole.

#3 Are you aware of another harebrained idea? Boaz stated on Dec. 9th the town would partner with the Methodist Church to build a \$100,000 parking lot with 38 shared spaces for the town. Townspeople have said they won't use it. It's below grade and too far from the business district. A draft contract (not marked as such) is posted on the town website. Note there is no mention of maintenance. The church would repay the town \$438 a month for 20 years! Meanwhile, the Reeves Street residents would suffer the consequences. It appears town officials never investigated other options except buying two houses (not for sale) and demolishing them. What kind of solution is that and did they have eminent domain in mind? Doug Dearth said, "it will happen with the church and I think partnering with the project would be preferable." Based on what, Doug? IS IT EVEN LEGAL FOR THE TOWN TO USE TAXPAYER MONEY TO BUILD A CHURCH PARKING LOT??? The church does not have the money to build so they should do like everyone else. Borrow the money or get it from their parishioners.

#4. A contractor wants to build Maple Trace, a subdivision in Reems Creek. He wants \$125,000 of our tax money for a second entrance! Wouldn't that set a precedent? They didn't say no but deferred a vote!

The Community Center at Lake Louise was discussed at length. The heating and air conditioning is in bad shape. Instead of bandaids for this or that part of the building, why not replace the mechanics? \$125,000 would go a long way. Raising the rental fees was also discussed. Additionally, the sound system at Town Hall has problems more often than not. Why not replace the system or FIX IT? That's what we pay our taxes for, not to bail out a contractor.

Because of two federal holidays the town meetings for Jan. and Feb. have been moved from the regular 3rd Monday to the 4th Monday for both months. Come on Jan. 26th and Feb. 23rd at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall. It's extremely important that you let them know how you feel. Will our taxes go up to pay for these blunders? Agendas are posted on the town website and also on the town hall door the Wed. before all meetings. To refresh your memory, before the meetings begin you can sign up to 'comment' for 3 minutes ON ANY SUBJECT. If you wish to speak for 10 minutes all that's required is to have 3 people allow you to speak for them and jot down their names next to yours. Remember, the Council tabled the UDO until Feb. On Oct. 21, 2014 our Mayor said in a reply on the internet "you quite misunderstood the purpose of the Council. We listened, took notes and plan to let things alone until February. Then we will answer the concerns of the citizens and do as they wish." At present there is turmoil in Weaverville. We'll see if they do as we wish.

There is absolutely no interaction between citizens and our government. We can stand up at meetings and ask questions till hell freezes over. You won't get answers. Tell the Council you want transparency. We want a public forum where we can get answers, not have to call a Councilman on the phone.

Take note. The Council's Workshop meetings are open to the public. It's where the sausage is made! It's where Doug Dearth said this regarding parts of the UDO. "Makes no sense", "a mis-step", "an oversight", and "the people involved in the process didn't realize the nuances". A big proponent and a cohort with Boas, he also said, "pass the UDO and changes can be made later." Sound familiar? Changes cost more dollars! In our house we call it the Weaverville Pelosi Ordinance! The next workshop is Feb. 5th at 4:00 at Town Hall. These meetings are bi-monthly. There is no public participation.

Yes, meetings can be snoozers. However, don't just grouse about your taxes. Come and see how they spend our money. Come to the meetings once in awhile or arrange with a neighbor to rotate so you'll know what's going on. Get a network going. Hold their feet to the fire!

Through all of this there is a light at the end of the tunnel. His name is Mike Morgan. We may not have always agreed with you Mike, but you were always respectful in your dealings with us. We need your leadership. Welcome back! I hope you brought your magic wand.

P.S. Inquiring minds want to know. Where are the water bills?

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