

The other side of the story...

Of, By and For the People

In his famous Gettysburg Address, Lincoln emphasized a 'Government of, by and for the people.' Have we drifted away from that?

Too often we've become a government *by* the consultant and *for* special interests. The 'Bigger and Grander' agenda has never been on the ballot, but it's what our local electeds keep promoting.

If we were truly a 'Government of, by and for the people,' ordinary folks would have more of a say.

No one voted for overcrowding.
No one voted for stifling traffic.
We didn't vote to add 7,000 people in 2,800 new subsidized housing units. And the list goes on...

Maybe there's a subtle form of deception going on. The really important political issues are left unspoken. It's because growth proponents know the people are against them. If they were upfront about their 'Bigger and Grander' agenda, people would vote 'NO.'

The first big-growth attack on Town was repelled by locals at the grassroots level. The Porter Estate annexation of 2002 was overturned in a referendum vote 2-to-1.

The referendum process is demanding. You have to go door-to-door and collect signatures from 10% of the registered voters in a very short amount of time.

Then you've got to advertise and inform voters of the issues. You have to explain why you took such drastic action.

The electeds will have already told their story countless times as local media will have reported

on their unending public meetings. And there will be more free media coverage for the electeds leading up to the referendum vote. The other side will have to pay to get their story out.

Even though the first 'Bigger and Grander' attack was defeated 2-to-1 by voters, there was a quick second attack. The DRD, Downtown Redevelopment District, was passed by Town electeds in 2004.

*We didn't vote for
overcrowding, traffic*

It too was defeated 2-to-1 in another referendum vote. Voters sent a clear message, twice: We don't want big growth. We want to keep the small town we have.

So the 'Bigger and Grander' folks took a different path, a clandestine approach. They took 5+ years to manipulate the 2012 Comp Plan just right. Local politicians with no planning credentials were in charge.

Over those 5-years they perfected the use of 'Stakeholder groups' and 'consultants' to manipulate policy. They succeeded in giving the appearance of doing the people's business while avoiding the growth issue, pretending it isn't a problem.

When candidates run for office now, the 'Bigger and Grander' agenda isn't a topic. They run on tangential issues. If media was doing their job they'd make overcrowding an issue. It spawned two overwhelmingly successful referendums. It's very important to voters.

The people's most important issue has become a non-issue. Local media has been mum, absent, AWOL. Politicians aren't going to bring up the sticky issues themselves. Local media could do much better.