

## Blog

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## It's a Shell Game with your Tax Dollars

I wanted to see the tape of the February 18, 2008 city council meeting to verify why they want a 1 mill increase instead of asking for what they need to build/expand the library which is less than 0.5 mills. They want the extra millage to help cover increased library operating expenses. Those are "Two" separate issues, a millage for operating expenses and a millage for a new or expanded library. More importantly, they did not state how much the operating expenses would be increased. Management is using the community support for a new or expanded library to pass an extra increase in millage under the guise of paying for increased library operating expenses.

I have a problem with this in that it is very disingenuous of management to use this tactic. They should separate the two and let each stand on their own merit. This shows the true character of our city management and indirectly that of our city council should they merge the two together.

Didn't the presenters for the library needs analysis discuss the potential cost savings in energy efficiencies and how staff would be better equipped to handle the increased usage of the library? Management needs to elaborate and document what increased operating costs they are talking about.

In reality, management is pursuing their dedicated Library millage proposal without the unintended consequences that would occur if they did. A 0.5 mill increase would generate nearly 3 million dollars. The 2007-2008 fiscal year budget for the Library AND Museum is only 5 million dollars. Do you really think that the Library and Museum budget would be increased to 8 million dollars should this pass? Not on your life. Remember when the state legislature made all the Lottery money go towards school funding. Did the schools see an increase in their funding? No. What monetary increases received from the lottery was reduced by an equal amount from the general fund. The same shell game would happen here. The increased tax revenues would be used for other purposes.

Besides, the audit just completed for the 2006-2007 fiscal year showed a 3.5 million dollar surplus. Yes folks, we had a 3.5 million dollar surplus and management wants us to increase our city tax by over 0.5 mills to cover "perceived" but not documented increased library operating expenses. Why don't they use some of the 3.5 million dollar surplus?

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February 22

## New Library

The space needs analysis for the library has been completed and now the discussions begin. It will be a hard battle as four members on council are not that keen on asking Troy residents to support a tax increase. Everyone knows that I am a strong supporter for a new library to be built next to the community center and not to expand the existing library. I have given my reasons many times before city council. However, as I stated at the city council meeting this past Monday, if we vote for a new millage to build or expand the existing library, all the tax money generated should be used for that purpose. As such, the TDDA should not divert those tax dollars. They have the statutory verbage that allows them NOT to take all the millages that they legally can collect. The TDDA should be asked whether they would pass on diverting those tax dollars by passing a resolution to that effect. I will not support a tax millage for the library IF the TDDA will take the library millage tax dollars generated in their district.

We have seen in the paper and in a memo what 1 mill would generate. City management also has shown that we will need less than .5 mills to generate the needed 37 million dollars that was projected (assuming a 0.5% increase in SEV). Why are we beginning this discussion with 1 mill. If the TDDA does not take the library millage tax dollars, the millage would be even lower than .5 mills. More details to come.

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## Correcting a miss statement on mayoral appointments

Former council woman Jeanne Stine made a statement at the February 18, 2008 city council meeting that was not factual. She stated that she went over previous mayoral appointments and did not find any occurrence of the city council not approving the Mayor's choice on mayoral appointments. She forgot that a few years ago when my term on the Troy Brownfield Redevelopment Authority was expiring, Mayor Schilling was just elected and she wanted to replace me. Her nominee did not get the four votes required. She tried a couple of times before she then renominated me and I was confirmed. Her attempts to remove me were for political reasons. If anyone doubts that, please respond.

I had four council members support me, not because I sided with them politically, but they recognized that my removal was politically motivated by the Mayor. The city council approved one of the Mayor's nominees this past Monday. I can see that the last vacancy may have some issues but they should be resolved. With the recent selection, a vacancy on the Board of Zoning Appeals has been created. Let's use that vacancy to resolve this issue once and for all. Nominate the individuals that are qualified and will meet with approval of the city council. Do not nominate individuals that will prolong this battle. Do not block the selection of those that are qualified. Both sides take a step back and do what is right for Troy.

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February 08

## Nominations to boards are getting Nasty

I waited a few days after Monday night to cool down. What has happened to nominating and selecting members to our boards that will do what is best for the entire city? We have seen it happen again. Now, the Mayor wants to take it to the media. Please do. Maybe

then we can get both sides to begin nominating and approving qualified candidates. I took exception to council woman Broomfield saying that she will only vote for those individuals that believe in her philosophy. DUH. Who made you Queen of Troy. Yes Mayor. Some of your previous choices were strickly political, just like when you nominated Mary Kerwin to the planning commission a couple of years back (she was approved). I do agree that Mark Maxwell would make a good choice for the planning commission, although your previous two choices were more political. Enough already. Unfortunately, the council has lost sight of doing what is best for the entire City of Troy and is now only interested in promoting their personal vision for Troy and what their political supporters want.

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February 04

## Welcome

I am about to enter uncharted waters. I have never blogged before and will enter this medium with my fingers crossed.

Not a lot has been happening these past few months at the city council meetings. Sure, there was some politicing going on, but not much else. It was interesting to hear council woman Broomfield complain about mosquitoes in the proposed retention pond for the proposed site condo's near her home but she never said anything when the city council approved two PUD's with water features just down the road. I guess it's that old NIMBY syndrome that we all have heard about.

What about the squabbles concerning appointments to the planning commission and other boards. Wake up council. We all know that politics will occasionally raise it's crooked head when it comes to nominees and their subsequent selection. To hear council woman Kerwin complain was just LOL funny. Her appointment to the planning commission was all about politics. We all hope that people are recommended and selected based on their qualifications but that hasn't always been the case. Unfortunately, these past few years we have witnessed more and more appointments that were politically driven. These politically based appointments have not been limited to the Mayoral appointments. **Some of Mayor Pro Tem Howrylak's nominees were also politically driven.**

Well, that wraps up just some of the thoughts off the top of my head today.

Stay tuned for more.

Vic

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