

No Standing News

Since we have no standing, we stand with those left standing.

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LOOMING DISASTER TO STRIKE ROLLA?

From the Editor's Desk

According to City Administrator John Butz, an inevitable "disaster" will hit Rolla if the outdoor pool is not updated by the summer of 2000. Huh?

The Butz label of "DISASTROUS" to the delay in the outdoor pool renovations is puzzling. Usually that term is reserved for life-altering events like Oklahoma tornadoes, school massacres, and Chernobyl. Interestingly enough, only three months earlier at the February 9, 1999 Ad Hoc Committee meeting, Butz told the committee that, "...by delaying the construction of the outdoor pool it would allow the sales tax surplus to accumulate. That way the outdoor pool could be paid for as soon as it was built." Why the sudden change? Why is there now such urgency to upgrade the outdoor pool immediately instead of designing the indoor rec center and outdoor pool renovation in a complimentary fashion?

Taxpayers of Rolla, listen carefully. You are paying for a new recreational center and updates on the existing outdoor swimming pool, yet that is the extent of your input. The recent actions of the Rec Center Ad Hoc Committee and city administration has created yet another air of justifiable suspicion, and where there's smoke....

CITY COUNCIL DISSENTION

At the May 17, 1999 Work Session, the council turned down the proposed outdoor pool design, which was very different than the design that had been drafted in 1996 by Councilman Hunsaker. The city claims that the '96 outdoor pool design would compete with the indoor pool, even though the entire rec center has yet to be designed! Some members of the council who voted against the new design voiced their concern over the absence of deep water or lap lanes. (The deepest water in the design is 3' 8".)

Councilwoman Charlotte Wiggins led the debate, which resulted in the defeat of the motion to accept the outdoor pool design. Her suggestion to look into the feasibility of designing the outdoor pool and the rec center side by side was met with sharp criticism. She reminded the council that she had voted for both the sales tax in August and the bond in April without seeing anything because she liked the "concept" of the rec center, but that it was now time to have the "big picture" better defined. Wiggins temporarily tipped over their apple cart regarding their construction schedule. She insisted that the project should take as long as necessary to get it right.

CRYING OVER HALF-SPILLED MILK

After the outdoor pool design was defeated, there was a disproportionate reaction by some members of the committee. Councilman Don Brown, a committee member, insisted that members of the council put their concerns in writing (in other words, "justify your 'no' vote").

The written responses made to Brown by Councilwoman Sheffield (who resigned from the committee), Councilwoman Trundle, Councilman Rothwell, and Councilwoman Jepsen (Jepsen is currently serving on the ad hoc committee,) have all been read. Jepsen's response brings up a very important point. She wrote, "I suggested for four weeks my concern regarding having a little deeper 'swimming' water. My desire, based on citizens' input would be to have a design more closely resembling the 'concept' presented to promote and secure the sales tax and bond votes." It appears that the ad hoc committee is attempting a "bait and switch" on the taxpayers and the council!

FORGET DEEP WATER ANYWHERE

For those of you who like to swim and dive in the deep end without kids underfoot should take a good look at the outdoor pool design the committee is now trying to promote. There will be no deep water! The outdoor pool as you know it will be gone. In its place will be a large waterpark, with a 60' diameter vortex. The deepest water in this proposed waterpark is 3'8". Fun for the younger kids but no place for serious swimmers or divers.

Certain members of the Council and Ad Hoc Committee are so desperate to get their shallow water park approved by June 7, 1999, that they are baiting yet another hook. The Committee voted in favor of "guaranteeing minimums" in the indoor pool in order to get some of the reluctant members of the council to approve the outdoor design. Another bait and switch? You bet! Will the council take the bait? Probably.

The "guaranteed minimums" are a 15,000 sq. ft. natatorium, including a leisure/recreation component, changing rooms, 4 lap lanes, "deep" water of at least 6', and "programmed" diving. You will not be allowed to enter the "deep" water by diving or jumping. Think of it as an "otter in the water." You must slither, slink, step down,

or otherwise ease into the water, unless Kwantes or one of his subordinates blow the "program" whistle and give the nod for diving for ten minutes. Is this the pool you had envisioned when you voted for this thing?

Minimums DO NOT include having a swimming pool as a separate body of water apart from the leisure pool. There was neither discussion of "minimums" for the hospital or any other corporate customer, nor discussion about any other part of the building.

THE VOICE OF REASON

The prominent members of the ad hoc committee now think they can somehow "convince" the members of the council that they need to approve this outdoor pool design. According to Lou Magdits, the council must not be "up to speed" and are coming from a "different knowledge base." These kinds of insults from our beloved Councilman Magdits are nothing new, but in this case are unfounded. The members of the council who rejected the outdoor pool design understand exactly what is happening, and are raising logical questions, some saying that they had been in contact with constituents in their ward who voiced concern over the shallowness of the water. Magdit's attitude toward the public is one of scorn, blaming "them" for not attending meetings, including the recent open house, and thus being disqualified from their opinions and wishes.

THE PHANTOM MENACE

The ad hoc committee continues to claim that the citizens of Rolla were promised a new pool by next summer. They also seem uncharacteristically concerned about keeping their promise, worrying that their credibility will be damaged if they don't fulfill their promise. (WHAT CREDIBILITY?) The outdoor pool was not the primary focus of the sales tax or

bond campaign. Weren't most people interested primarily in the INDOOR facility?

The question is, "WHAT'S THE BIG RUSH?" Is the sales tax burning a hole in the city's pockets? Is the city willing to compromise quality for meeting a deadline? A slower pace will mean less debt, lower payments, and less liability for property taxes to go up.

What about the 62,000 square feet indoor design that was suddenly deleted from existence when the public learned specific details of the project before the April 1999 property tax bond vote? What about the hospital's "partnership" with the city? In a new pro forma financial statement which was unveiled at the May 24, 1999 Rec Center Ad Hoc meeting, PCRMC was the high-lighted "partner", (excuse me, that's now changed to "Corporate Customer") which will bring in big bucks and keep the rec center afloat. Without revenues from the hospital contract the anticipated revenues will fall short of break-even. Contracts can be broken, canceled and the terms changed at any time. Then how will the city council keep the facility open?

Taxpayers, you are slowly being bled to death with excess taxation, poor representation, and a "go-home-and-shut-up" attitude from some of the ones who asked you to impose more taxes on yourself.

Please consider attending the June 7, 1999 council meeting (6:30 p.m.) to witness first hand if the town of Rolla will be spared from the DISASTER!

MAYBERRY IS STILL WAITING!!!

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