

From: Stephen Renner
Sent: Thursday, July 28, 2022 11:04 AM
To: Council; Planning Commission; Ray Mularski; Laurie Jadwin
Subject: Comments with July 27th Planning Commission Meeting

My Friends and Colleagues,

I am writing this open letter to you all as a fellow city leader, with my only objective and hope is to share my thoughts. I have known many of you a very long time, and for those who I don't, that fault is likely mine. I only say this as I am an open, honest, and sincere fellow public servant, and so I hope you take this letter with its truest intent.

Each of us have a role to play in city leadership. And it has been my opinion that we collectively do it well in uniting our community around forward thinking visions of just who and what Cahanna is as we are propelled deeper into the 21st century in a larger region of hugely influential economic prowess and a broadening culture.

However, I am very disappointed and upset with the some of the tone and accusations made within the "unfinished business" portion of the July 27th Planning Commission meeting. It is my opinion that as a group, you faltered and failed upon your larger mission as city leaders. As city leaders we are supposed to be beyond reproach in our duty of care. That is, our rectitude, our very integrity is not just defined by how we reject bribes or influence, but also how we conduct ourselves with information even in cases when things may be bleak or dark. We must always question until we have the evidence.

While our city attorney was doing his due diligence in informing you of a major shift in process and procedures regarding a major project, this was not a time to make unsubstantiated accusations against another legal political entity. And while it was clear that some had prepared statements, you did not seemingly invite a representative of schools to a public meeting to hear your qualms. So then, there's no option of a rebuttal. We have NO evidence that there is any mismanagement. Further, that is not even the issue before you as a Planning Commission, nor is it before us on Council. There may be disagreements on steps but there is no evidence of anything else beyond antidotal or conjecture. And it's NOT our job at this point to even make accusatory statements.

I wholly agree that this whole issue takes some time to get used to. I have had to reread Brownfield v State (and analysis therein) multiple times to get my very small brain around it. And it is very unusual and unique for us as a city to adjust our years of processes. So, I get it. But we cannot lose focus that the State decided this in 1980 and cases thereafter. So, our job is to learn, adjust, and figure out how to work together in this paradigm.

I also very much appreciate and understand how Planning Commission members may be feeling as if their vast years of expertise, training, and thoughts may not be counted. Or even the feeling of impending liabilities, whatever that may be. I get this, too. That is why we have our city attorney and others to advise us. Yet, please remember too that pride is one of the 7 deadly sins. Please do not misunderstand me. You are justified in your feelings, but I would not as a fellow city leader take this as a slight against you.

If you feel so strongly that you have something to say, and you feel that your input should be counted, then why not reach out to the other political entity and volunteer your thoughts and influence? Lend a hand. That IS what a community does.

For those of you who may be thinking that the city will be blamed for anything. Stop it. You and I know too well that there will always be those in our town who will make baseless accusations of us. The only thing I can say is that this is part of the sacrifice we make as public servants. We serve the greater good, but never did anyone say that service was easy. We are to rise above it. Always. Besides, we can easily defend ourselves with the truth of just actions, processes and legislation.

Yet as public servants, we are not to mix our political feelings with the cause of service to all. This is a very dangerous mix, and you have only to look to the national level to see what I mean by this. Please look at this issue before us with a deeper lens.

I will end this with these final thoughts. First, I highly respect each and every one of you. If I didn't, I would not have bothered with this letter. Second, I know you share my love for this community and see the greatness it is, along with it's potential for the future. Yes, this project is over \$100MM and is significant and impactful. And I will play my part, like you, to ensure it comes together well. That's what we should be focusing on. Further, add up all the projects the city has done and those that are in the pipeline: these easily surpass that mark. So there's a greater role here, for all of us. But, in the end, it's the people of Cahanna that we concern ourselves with too. How do we provide services in the best service to them? It's is NOT my intention to declare anything other than a plea to all of you. You may think all of this is unfair, or even be indignant. Again, my thoughts.

Your friend and colleague, in humble service always,

Stephen A. Renner
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