

IN POLITICS, NO GOOD DEED GOES UN-PUNISHED

As I am unable to be with you in person, I am relating my opinions through this letter. For those who do not know, I was a principle player in the defeat of the original Police Mileage, the Yes Vote to preserve our current Deputy force, the failed attempt to increase our Deputy force, and the successful re-election our Mayor last Fall. As such, I have gotten to know the Mayor, some of her staff, the Council and watch our government at work.

Rochester Hills is on balance a well run city, and I credit the Mayor for calming down some of the prior silliness in our local government. Yet I have been very vocal in calling for more effective and efficient delivery of city services. As a fixed income retiree, I can't absorb added taxes easily. Here's my take on the current hubris, almost all comments based on published materials:

At the ground level, it appears that there has been some klutzy handling of the administrative processes involved. That has gotten a lot of attention and much emotion, and the "City", (Mayor, staff and Council) have been soundly roasted for these actions. It also appears our leaders may have been overwhelmed by a surplus of good fortune, a very rare event. To most observers it seems two strong developers are vying for land with plans to develop the Adams-Hamlin/M-59 intersections. This area was designated as a special development area at least two years ago when Bob Spaman explained it to me. But it was never set aside as a nature preserve, so its development should not have been a surprise.

If we go up to 2,000 feet and look around, we could easily see another picture. And that picture looks quite promising in many aspects:

1. **Adams/M-59 Interchange** - For those of us who drive that way, the re-opening of this interchange will be a very welcome action and may relieve some of the Crooks and Squirrel Road congestion. Thankfully, we got the State to fund a lot of it.
2. **Adams Road - Hamlin to Auburn** - Those who drive Adams from Orion to Birmingham will attest that this mile is the sorriest mile on Adams, an otherwise delightful road to drive with excellent scenery. Good development will make the entire journey along Adams pleasant.
3. **Traffic** - Lets face facts, there are two drivers that increase traffic. Traffic will increase no matter what when the Adams Interchange is opened, and some added traffic will result from the retail outlets. However, the business and hospitality traffic will be negligible and largely absent evenings and weekends. I worked in Troy and sometimes in Southfield where high tower structures could actually shade homes, yet the homes had high value and the streets were as quiet as a mouse on Sunday mornings. Until SE Michigan addresses commuting at the regional level, there is no relief in sight.
4. **Land Development** - The areas under proposals (SW and SE of Adams/Hamlin) are not the best examples of nature, they are second-growth scrub lands with few

buildings and not much to commend them except that no-one lives there. With proper development and an emphasis on establishing hard-wood tree lines along property edges and on parking lot islands, this area could eventually provide a far more pleasant view than what's there now.

5. **Land Fills** - This area contains the old Avon Twp. land-fill, topped off. There are differences of opinion about its safety, but in today's environmental frenzy, open or closed, the EPA will want it cleared, with or without development. So we have been able get one of the developers a "Brown-field Abatement" that lets us clear this mess without further investment of City (read our) tax money. Hard to find any fault here.
6. **Economic Development** - Possibly the most depressed area in our city is the North side of Auburn between Crooks and Adams. Locating new business, hospitality, and retail outlets in this area opens up the possibility of jobs for many citizens in this troubled area. If the folks north of Hamlin are frustrated, the folks south of Hamlin have cause to rejoice - is one voice any more important than another?
7. **Tax Base** - Homes are nice, but for too long our city has missed the powerful tax base generated by high density business and professional buildings (over three stories) that also generate secondary forms of investment and that additional tax revenue. Getting such revenue by effectively using our marginal lands allows our overall rates to stabilize while proceeding with major road improvements, so we all win!

To recap, at the ground level we have feelings of betrayal, inept actions, possibly poor decisions, and general turmoil. We recognize the feelings of those who feel deceived or sad at the loss of some privacy. This situation tends to happen whenever we move next to nature, and it certainly happened to me several times in my life.

However; at the 2,000 foot level we see the "City" finally doing what so many of us have long espoused. **The "City" has integrated land development that addresses traffic, roadway, and environmental problems while reaping beautification, economic, and tax revenue growth!!**

Surely the "City" deserves to be pillared for such good work!!.... it's only normal that "no good deed goes un-punished" in local politics!

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