



The Watchdog's Kibbles and Bits – Box 7 03.03.08

Air Bud. As we've said before, we here at PublicWatchdog encourage citizen involvement in local government, including the writing of letters to the editor of the local newspapers - even if the letter writer can usually be counted on to swing and miss on local government issues. By that standard, Bud Jones' letter to the editor in this week's Park Ridge Herald-Advocate ("Cut the cameras and balance the budget," Feb. 28) does not disappoint.

Jones points to the city's budget problems in denouncing the Park Ridge City Council for considering spending \$130,000 to televise its meetings. Fair enough, Bud...but if spending \$130,000 to televise meetings is a "screamingly lamebrained idea that should be vetted via public referendum," where were you when Mayor Frimark and his City Council alderpuppets recently gave Napleton Cadillac a whopping \$400,000 of taxpayer dollars to clean up environmental problems at its old dealership so that Napleton could sell that property to PRC Partners, presumably at a tidy profit? Or when they committed to giving Napleton up to \$2 Million of the City's sales tax revenue over 15 years – which coincidentally averages out to \$130,000, but *per year*?

If you aren't just blowing smoke and really do want a referendum on a \$130,000 television set-up, Bud, can we count on you to lead the petition drive for a referendum on the new \$20-30 Million cop shop, or the multi-million library addition/entirely new library for which Richard Van Metre and his merry band of edifice-complex Library trustees are still pushing?

Bud? Bud? Bueller?

Stay Free Mini-PADS. This week's H-A also features a story on St. Mary's Episcopal Church's plan to become a "Public Action to Deliver Shelter" (PADS) facility beginning in October, 2008. ("Park Ridge to join PADS network of shelters," Feb. 28).

Whether a PADS shelter is good or bad for Park Ridge is certainly worthy of public debate, but what we find noteworthy at this time is the secretive way St. Mary's got to this point in the process. Specifically, we wonder why St. Mary's didn't go public with its PADS plan earlier

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this year when the dust-up arose over Christie's Carousel of Learning relocating to the Park Ridge Presbyterian Church after 25 years at St. Mary's. Rev. Carrubba, why didn't St. Mary's advise our community *at that time* that Christie's was being cut loose to create room for a PADS operation?

Sad to say, it looks like the Culture of Secrecy practiced by our local governmental bodies might be spreading to our churches and our clergy.

We've Got It And We're Spending It. Fresh off its recent multi-million dollar referendum victory, Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 isn't about to let all that new money burn a hole in its pocket. So at its March 10 meeting, the D-64 Board expects to approve over \$700,000 in new staffing positions, which it attempts to justify in classic bureaucrat doublespeak:

"What will happen if we don't add (these positions)?" District. 64 Superintendent Sally Pryor asked at Tuesday's board meeting. "That's something that's hard to quantify, but I can tell you in our professional opinion, given the resources that we have outlined, we will be able to make great improvements to student learning." ("District 64 administration asks for more staffing positions," Herald-Advocate, Feb. 28)

How convenient that Supt. Pryor's "professional opinion" can assure us that adding those positions will cause "great improvements" in learning, yet that same "professional opinion" can't seem to quantify the consequences of not getting these extra positions. Will the extra staffing help our kids learn to spell words like "devious," "disingenuous," "duplicitous" and "deceitful"?

They've Got A Secret. Although the local newspapers have reported the financial elements of Police Chief Jeff Caudill's "separation agreement" with the City, the entire separation agreement has not been released to the City Council or the public because – according to ex-City Mgr. Tim Schuenke – it contains a confidentiality clause.

Not surprisingly, 3rd Ward alderpuppet Don Bach is more than happy to keep those details quiet, but at least 1st Ward Alderman David Schmidt has once again stood up for the public's right to know:

"We should explain to the public why [it was created] and the public should also be provided with details of the agreement because it's their money," Schmidt said.

Amen.

CATEGORIES: CITY OF PARK RIDGE GOVERNMENT
POSTED BY PUBLIUS ON 03.03.08 @ 8:44 AM | EDIT

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It looks like you can't turn anywhere in Park Ridge without running into something that's screwed up. Now Dist.64 and the churches are going south on us.

BY HOOVER ON 03.03.08 6:45 PM | EDIT

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