

## Concerned Mayor Views Center As 'Expendable'

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Editor, Journal: In the last two years the Center of Concern has endured a 20% reduction in city funding. Last year we were granted \$49,500 and although that appears to be a small percentage of our overall budget, the reality is that it is a very substantial portion of our operating budget.

When the city reduced our funding the last couple years, we needed to adjust our business plan, which we did. We made necessary cuts, cutting staff hours and pay and closing the Center on Friday afternoons. These cuts were financially necessary, but painful and difficult to implement. It required us to limit services to a client base whose needs are in fact increasing during these economic hard times. More cuts in city funding will mean even less services for those vulnerable members of our community whose number and needs continue to grow. But, the recent veto issued by the mayor is different because it amounts to cutting human needs service funding in Park Ridge by 100%.

The veto message from the mayor is even more disturbing. The statement that the organization's volunteers need to "increase its efforts" is shameful. The phrase "Community Groups" is being used in a way and manner which would suggest that The Center of Concern is simply a "feel good" supplement to Park Ridge city life. Something expendable rather than the only source for human needs services in Park Ridge which The Center performs at such a bargain with its large complement of hard working volunteers.

Jim Radermacher, Finance Chair, Center of Concern