

Letters to the editor

Woodridge Reporter

April 6, 2007

Incumbents wasted money on land issue

I would like to thank District 99 Board Member Craig Greenwood for his recent letter to the editor in the Reporter, "Board member explains District 99 land stance." While I strongly disagree with Mr. Greenwood on some points, I feel that he has taken an important step.

District 99 Board members have been dodging the issue of the Woodridge land sale for more than a year, hiding behind the claim that they cannot speak about it due to litigation. They changed the rules of board meetings to limit discussion of the matter by citizens and even filed a motion in court to prohibit public dissemination of any discussions. Mr. Greenwood seems to grasp the obvious — to solve the problem it needs to be brought into the open and discussed.

The District 99 board decided to sell the land in April 2005, announced the sale, advertised the sale, and released documents explaining the sale. This is indisputable fact. Later, the board decided not to sell the land and even went a step further and claimed that the land had never been for sale. Perhaps they believed that they could magically go back in time and change things. Perhaps they just thought nobody would dare call them liars.

When Woodridge made an offer to buy the land in September 2006, Board President Julia Beckman continued with her delusional position that the land was not, and had never been, for sale. Ms. Beckman was quoted in October saying that District 99 "cannot accept an offer for something that is not for sale." I am

glad to see that Greenwood's letter indicates a firmer grasp of reality, arguing the obvious, that the real issue is the sale price of the land.

Now that this has been said, a discussion of price is in order. As thankful as I am to Mr. Greenwood for starting the discussion, and hopefully setting us on the road to resolution, I must disagree with the argument he uses to establish a price for the Woodridge land.

Mr. Greenwood argued in his letter that because the District 99 board is trying to buy land in Downers Grove near North High School at \$1 million per acre, it would have to sell the Woodridge land for \$1 million per acre. He used the term "replacement cost," usually used in property insurance matters and relating to assets, not land. In any discussion of replacement costs a key element is similarity. If your house burns down the insurance company will not pay for a larger, more expensive one. They will cover a similar, if not identical replacement.

According to the District 99 board "replacement cost" theory, however, the value of an item being sold is determined by the cost of the item the seller hopes to

buy with the proceeds from the sale, regardless of market value. For example, I want to buy a new BMW so I am selling my 1997 Toyota. Research will tell you the Toyota is worth about \$5,000. But I need \$45,000 for the BMW. Using the District 99 Board Replacement Cost Theory, I am selling the used Toyota for \$45,000. Any buyers? Don't get your checkbooks out all at once! I hope they're not teaching the District 99 Board Replacement Cost Theory in economics class.

I must also respectfully disagree with Mr. Greenwood's appraisal of the current board's performance. The waste, lack of communication, and dishonesty have all gone on for too long. Mr. Greenwood needs fellow board members, new ones, who will help him to stand up to the tyranny and end this madness.

The District 99 board has wasted resources to advertise the sale of land, and then wasted more money to hire lawyers to help pretend it did not happen. These resources could have been used to purchase books, computers, and needed capital repairs instead of being spent on bruised egos and pathetic real-estate fantasies. Taxpayers in Downers Grove, Woodridge, Darien, Bolingbrook, Lisle, Oak Brook, Westmont, and unincorporated portions of DuPage County have all fed money into this sinkhole.

Please vote in the April 17 election. The three incumbents up for re-election have participated in the waste and every one of them has tried pathetically to defend it. For the good of our schools, our communities and our children they must be replaced.

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Woodridge