



Letter To The Editor: Wood River Is At Crossroads: Steps Should Be Taken To Address The Real Problems

by Bill Dettmers

February 17 2023 1:30 PM

Letter To The Editor:



Questions are swirling in Wood River about candidates for City Council. Most residents know me and my position. I have been a vocal opponent to the Rec Center. In my opinion, the Rec Center will hinder economic development, lower property values, increase taxes and fees, hurt our schools, cause families to live elsewhere, thus hurting our growth and prosperity.

According to a recent report by the Park and Rec Director, the city it is now classified as an “Economically Depressed Community”. Some took this information as a good sign, because the city now qualifies for additional state grant consideration. To me, this is terrible news and an embarrassment.

Each and every voter should be appalled that the current and prior City Councils have allowed this community to deteriorate to this state. There is no excuse for this mismanagement. Unfortunately, voters should not be surprised that Wood River is now in this classification.

The current council has ignored the wishes of the community and placed the noose of this Rec Center around each taxpayer’s neck. The state statute is clear, the Rec Center is not classified as “Public Infrastructure” and use of the 1% Sales Tax to construct the Rec Center is not permitted. In spite of this fact, the council continues to misappropriate funds for this purpose. This only makes our economic and development situation worse.

The Rec Center is about halfway completed, so the question becomes what to do with it. At least one City Council candidate has stated outright support for the Rec Center. Two have publicly said that we must now support the Rec Center to make it successful.

My platform as a candidate for City Council includes the following:

1. All funds spent for the Rec Center construction must be returned to the 1% Sales Fund for Public Infrastructure projects.
2. Enter into a Public/Private Partnership with the YMCA or other Not-For Profit organization to remove it from the tax rolls.
3. Require the Rec Center operate profitably until the city has an opportunity to remove it from the tax rolls.

Our community is at a crossroads. Do we continue down the path of economic self-destruction, relying on government handouts to limp along? Or do we take the steps necessary to address the real problems to make Wood River a place that people want to live and fulfill the needs of the voters?

Bill Dettmers

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Wood River City Council

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★ Infrastructure

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