Joe, I would prefer you put this email below in as a letter to the editor, and I hope it can make the next paper deadline. email me back to let me know. Thanks, Terry Zeller

I have been reading several articles in your paper and on the WNDU website about the roundup and euthanasia of 400 geese in Mishawaka’s city parks. In at least 3 of the articles, Mayor Wood stated he had “no idea” or “wasn’t aware” the geese would be killed. I need to set the record straight. The impression is that I, as former Superintendent, signed the contract and made the decision to have the birds killed rather than relocated. None of that is true. I will instead tell you what really happened.

- For the last couple of years, the Parks Department had internally discussed options with geese. We had a person from Notre Dame come to a board meeting to discuss using herding dogs, we were using a cannon at the golf course to scare them each summer, and had in the past oiled eggs during nesting season. In the summer of 2015, I heard of an option to round up geese and euthanize them off site, but had no details, not even the company's name. I only knew that it would cost $25 or $26 per goose to have them euthanized.

- In budget talks in August of 2015, I put this option on the table in a private meeting with the Mayor. There was no discussion of relocating birds, because I had made no contact with this company, and heard that killing them was the only option. The Mayor approved funding to round up and euthanize the birds at that meeting in August of 2015.

- I did not pursue it after the funding was put in place; it would be spring before anything had to be lined up. I left the Parks Department in March and moved to California. I felt personally that it was not going to be a popular thing to do, and would require some public discussion before moving forward with it, but I did not hire or authorize the company to kill the geese.

If a permit was pulled to euthanize the geese on June 1st, I can only assume that this was done or
ordered by the Mayor. There was no interim Superintendent, the Park Board would not have ordered this done as they were not current with this as an option (and it would be in their public meeting minutes), and Phil Blasko was not hired until July.

I am not sure why there seems to be an intent to scapegoat me, but I wanted to set the record straight, as I am very uncomfortable with the insinuation that "the former Superintendent" was to blame, and not sure why City Hall is not just taking responsibility for a difficult decision. Our elected officials have to make a lot of difficult choices. It is in taking responsibility for the unpopular ones that defines one's character.

If I would have stayed in my position, I would have been made aware of the options, and weighed the cost versus the possibility of a percentage of the geese coming back.

I may have decided to go forward with euthanasia, but I absolutely would have owned that decision.

Terry Zeller
Chico, California