

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Shaping the future

An opportunity to shape the way International Falls uses 122 acres of property will be offered to area residents through a series of meetings to be held this month and in October.

We urge anyone with an opinion about the property to get informed about the facts and then respectfully offer your ideas at one of the four public meetings scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 25, Oct. 9 and Oct. 23. Each of the meetings are to begin at 6:30 p.m. at the AmericInn and be led by Andy Hubley, senior planner with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission. The meetings are being held in the fall to allow the greatest number of people to attend.

A chance to tell government what it should do should be viewed as an opportunity for the people who help to pay for that government's actions.

In this case, many options range for the property. Among those are that the city could hold it and do nothing but what's required in a 17-point agreement that was a part of deal with the Donahue family trust, which provided it to the city.

Other obvious options include the city selling the property, as well as considering an offer by Matt Donahue to buy the property from the city for the amount the city has

paid to his firm in brokerage fees. And some city officials have suggested selling lots for housing from the property.

Ideas offered by members of the public during the input meetings are expected to be compiled into a report in December for consideration by the International Falls City Council.

The property has obvious value, and the city would likely benefit from it if the market and timing was right. As we understand it, the Donahue family sold some lots adjacent to the property it provided to the city prior to 2009. But public input may help city officials determine whether the city can afford to wait for a period to achieve that value while completing the agreement requirements, or whether its best to end ownership and either recoup costs or attempt to make a gain by selling.

Certainly, we all could come up with a money's-no-object dream wish list for the property. But of course, that's not reality. This community must invest wisely and carefully without burdening local taxpayers with unreasonable risk and this public input process may provide city officials with a level of understanding about the level of comfort residents feel about this property.

FIRST AMENDMENT "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hearings turning into fiasco

To the editor,

These Congressional hearings to be held to determine whether or not Syria should be bombed by the United States are turning into one big fiasco and farce, almost like a circus, since the real issues aren't even being broached.

Something no one wants to talk about:

What exactly created the current violent unrest in Syria?

George W. Bush and his administration used Shiite militias in Iraq against Sunni insurgents, which helped trigger the Shia-vs.-Sunni dimension of Syria's civil war.

This had been a civil war

with leftists the United States government didn't like on the verge of bringing down Assad much the way George Washington defeated the British.

The CIA has used ethnic strife to inflame animosities to the point of violence since the end of World War II. The CIA's first objective in destabilizing foreign governments deemed to be "enemies" of the United States was to foment religious and ethnic violence.

Hopefully Congress is now going to completely explore these dirty deeds and the Syrian people will come to understand how they have been used by the CIA as part of Washington's plans

to dominate the oil and gas fields along with the pipeline distribution system of this region.

Aren't all these dirty wars about defending Wall Street's assets and investments or to help these Wall Street vultures secure and accrue the wealth of other nations?

Just on its surface it is morally wrong to discuss whether or not we should bomb a country that has done nothing to hurt us. Since when has bombing anyone helped them?

Alan L. Maki
Founder and Chair
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How to contact your lawmakers

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Share your point of view

Make a difference by writing a letter to the editor or contributing to our online discussions. The Journal's Opinion page is where meaningful community discussions take place.

The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author's city address will be published.

Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifalls-journal.com.

'Gift to the city' should be returned

To the editor,

It would be nice for Mr. Donahue to return the \$60,000 he has received for his so-called "gift to the city."

Ms. Sandstrom has it correct in her terminology of what has been said.

The proper thing is for Mr. Donahue to return the monies to be held in escrow and put the issue up to the voters in the next election. That is the wise thing to do, seeing the voters' money

is being spent in the first place.

Citizens can understand the voting process of letting the public decide certain issues, especially when it comes to larger sums of money like this is.

Let the voters decide to purchase or not to purchase that property and the upgrades that are wanted.

The people have a hard time with an actual sale being presented as a "gift" and turn around and charge a brokerage

fee for the property.

Mr. Donahue, it would be honorable of you to return your fees and take your property back and let the voters decide to purchase or not.

If this property is valued at \$1.8 million, according to some people, I would think with that kind of value you could sell this property and realize a better profit than \$90,000.

Joe Donnell
International Falls, MN

GUEST COLUMN

Let's all write America's bucket list

Over the summer I've perused three or four books about bucket lists (those collections of tasks, large and small, that one dreams of completing before "kicking the bucket") and my reading dovetails nicely with the perceived state of the nation.

Someone is always predicting that the United States of America is either slowly or rapidly descending into bankruptcy, complete moral depravity (think Miley Cyrus at the MTV Video Music Awards show) or international irrelevance. If these predictions are really going to come true, surely there are some goals (whether frivolous or grandiose) that we as a nation would like to accomplish before time runs out.

I invite you to submit suggestions via either email (tyreetyrades@aol.com) or snail mail (1801 Snake Creek Rd., Belfast, TN 37019). But only if you've secured the borders first. I'll wait.

I've already received a few unsolicited ideas from readers and would like to share those in the meantime.

A reader from Santa Clarita Valley, California, hopes to live long enough to see Puerto Rico become the 51st state -provided Puerto Rico can supply DMV-issued photo identification.

An anonymous donor from Erie, Pennsylvania, was generous enough to offer two suggestions: "Helium balloons for everyone — THEN let the NSA listen in!" and "Grand Canyon. Chocolate fountain.



Danny TYREE

TYRADES!

Have Ben Bernanke crank up the printing press."

Steve of Mountain Home, Arkansas, had a revolutionary idea for modernizing congressional procedures — but would C-SPAN or ESPN have dibs on televising "Mixed Martial Arts Filibusters"?

A reader from Oneida, New York, would like to see the Statue of Liberty change her gown to a pantsuit and the inscription to "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled Friends of Bill..." (The impact on the televising of the Republican presidential debates is still unknown.)

A reader from Peru, Indiana, would like to see the phrase officially changed to "As American as two moms and genetically modified apple pie." (This reader probably does not spend a lot of time socializing with the gentleman who questions "PURPLE mountains' majesty" and asks for a "manlier" color in the lyrics of "America The Beautiful.")

Some respondents are real

extremists. One from Ketchikan, Alaska, demands a living wage and other benefits for FICTIONAL CHARACTERS. ("Call me Ishmael...but not today! I'm starting my five-week vacation. Booyah!") Surely that reader has little in common with the stressed businessman from Lafayette, Louisiana, who just once before the end comes-wishes OSHA would look the other way if he happened to drop comical anvils and Acme safes on flesh-and-blood employees.

Another looming battle involves the rights of the unborn. A reader from St. Johnsbury, Vermont, insists, "Well, technically, the child-er, blob of tissue-isn't really a human being until after the SECOND knee replacement.." This is in stark contrast to the correspondent from Farmington, New Mexico, who champions the Gleam Act. ("Any pollutant or distraction that removes the gleam from the father's eye shall be punishable by incarceration for not less than...")

No matter how divisive the suggestions, there are probably a handful on which we can find common ground. Like pumping more money into the space program so we can send celebrities on a one-way trip to the moon or Mars. ("In space, no one can hear you mangle the National Anthem.")

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