

# OPINION

**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.”

OUR VIEW

## Time is right for plan input

Ranier residents have the chance to shape their city’s future if they choose to get involved.

An open forum 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Ranier Community Building is designed to take citizen input on a proposed land use ordinance.

Thursday’s forum offers residents a chance to give their opinion of the proposed plan and suggest changes. City officials ask that residents submit their comments in writing to the Ranier City Clerk’s Office to allow for a thorough vetting of the proposed plan.

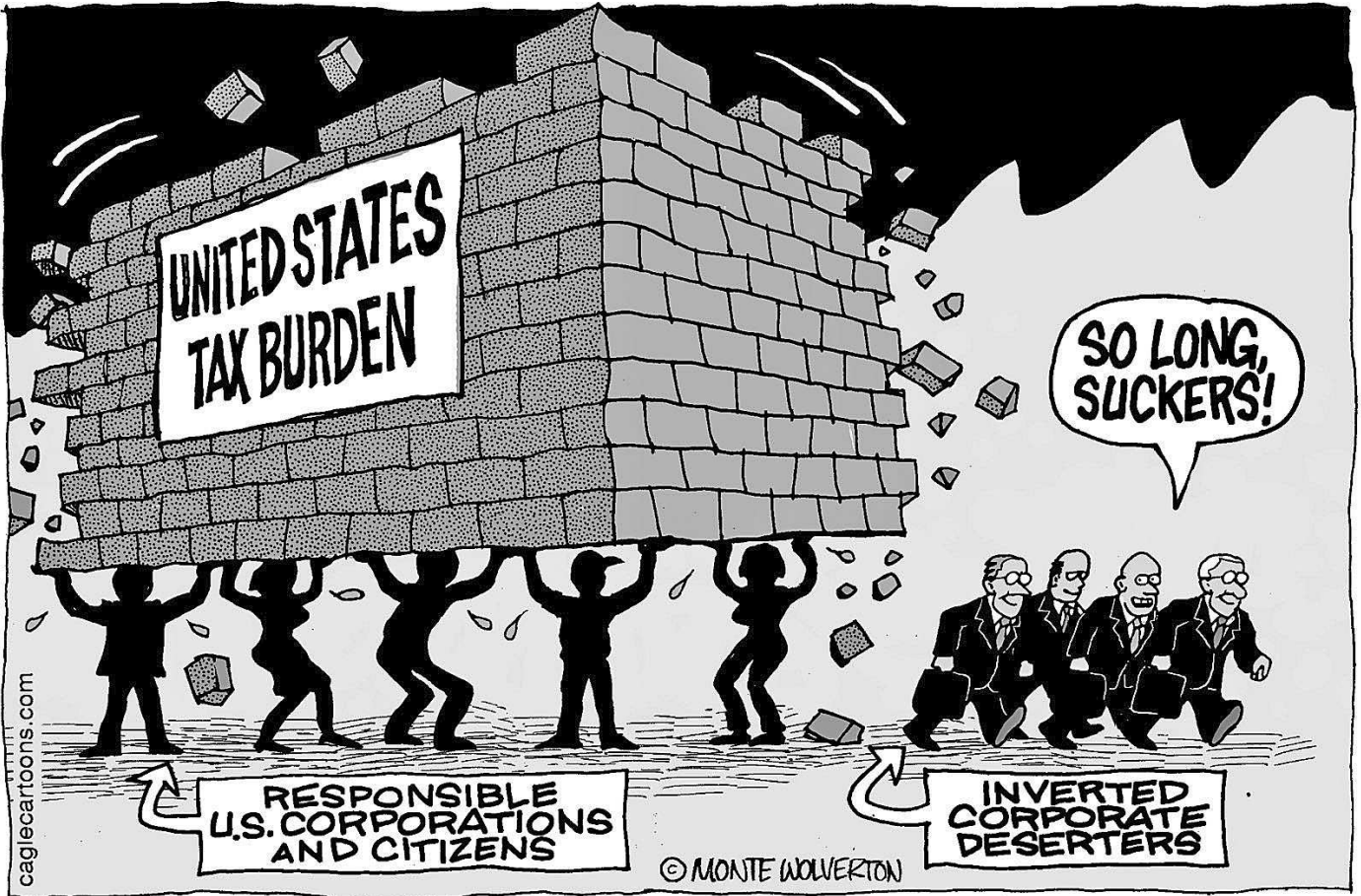
The ordinances governing land use in the city haven’t been updated in years, and portions of those ordinances only apply to land within the city limits prior to the 2010 annexation of French, Jameson and Riverside additions and Brennan’s Beach. Since that process, the annexed portions of the city have been governed under

Koochiching County’s ordinances. Clearly, it makes sense to have cohesive land use ordinances governing all of the city, and the timing seems right to put such an plan in place.

City officials say the proposed plan has been developed over a three-year period by a committee. The next step in the process of adopting the plan as a governing document is providing a time and a place for citizens to weigh in with their comments.

We urge residents to get a copy of the proposed plan so they may discuss it at Thursday’s meeting. Knowing what is being proposed and what is not will go a long way toward a production discussion about how land is used and developed within the city.

Now, not later, is the time to weigh in on this plan. By getting involved now, residents can help shape what this city’s future will be.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Cell phones should be turned off

**To the editor,**

Last Friday I attended the funeral of Mr. Robert Trompeter Sr. During the eulogy two women had their cell phones ring within minutes of one another. I had a clear view of what transpired for I was seated two rows behind both of them. The first phone rang with a chime ring tone for a good 30 seconds until the owner answered the call. The ring tone could be plainly heard by the audience while Beth Shermoen was reading a very sincere and thoughtful remembrance of her grandfather.

Having a disturbance such as a cell phone sound was at a minimum annoying and very distracting. I looked around me and saw many attendees looking around

for the source of the chiming ring tone. During the time in which the phone’s owner was fishing around for the phone to address the call, the message Beth was trying to convey was lost.

Why is it that some people cannot be without their cell phones while attending funerals, lectures, concerts, and a class room situation where attendees expect not to be disturbed? Do these individuals feel their calls are so important and urgent that they are entitled to be inconsiderate of others and such rude behavior can be tolerated when their cell phones ring? News flash: You and your calls are not so important that you have the right to disrupt a

performance, lecture or a funeral. At these events there is an expectation that all attendees practice common sense and decorum. If you attend, turn your cell phone off or put it on vibrate and excuse yourself to answer any calls. Do not sit there and text your answer while the screen shines like a flash light for all of us to see. Better yet, if you cannot be without your phone for a hour or so, do not attend and spare the rest of us of your inconsiderate behavior.

Another subject I wish to touch on concerns the Donahue property acquisition. Much has been written and talked about in the past months related to the broker fee of \$90K paid by the city for the “gift.” The fees

are minor compared to future tax savings generated by this arrangement. Possibly the reason the conditions of transfer are non-negotiable is that with a \$1.8M dollar appraisal, the donor(s) enjoy a federal tax write-off of that amount less the fees that they get to carry forward for up to five(5) years. At a 33 percent tax bracket, that amounts to \$600K in savings plus the fees and more if income sources places one in a higher tax bracket. The fact that the city paid the fees has legitimized the \$1.8M valuation for tax purposes. I wouldn’t negotiate either with such savings hanging in the balance.

**George Hnatiuk**  
International Falls, MN

### 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@ifallsjournal.com.

### Candidate letter policy

The beginning of 2014 brought a new policy to The Journal. A charge of \$30 will be required to publish letters to the editor from candidates or about candidates. The letters must be 500 words or less and the fee must be paid prior to the letter being published. The name and city of the author will be published with the letter. Letters may be emailed to laurel@ifallsjournal.com. The Journal will publish a deadline for publication of paid election letters prior to the Aug. 12 primary and Nov. 4 general elections.