

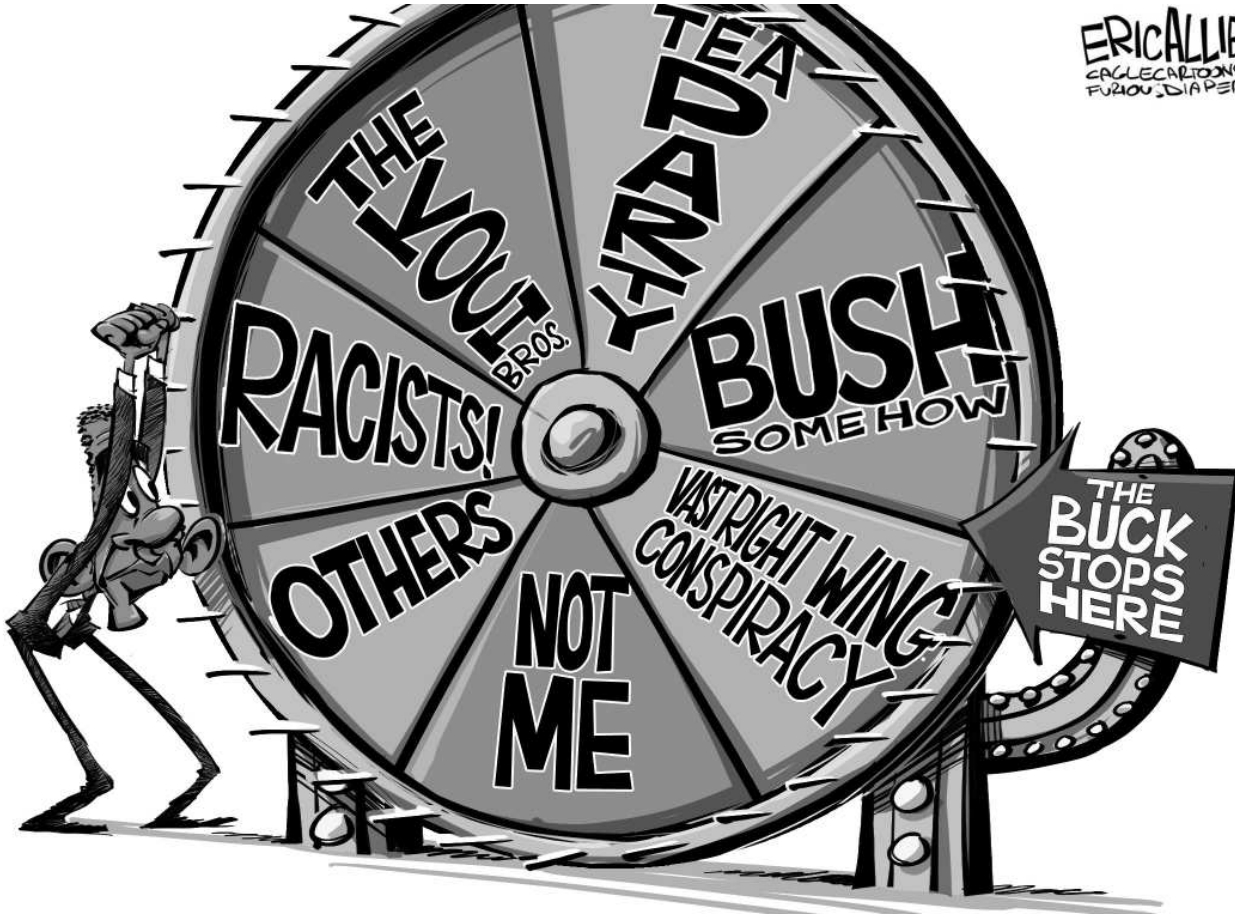
OPINION

OUR VIEW

Take next step soon

Sounds like the community is heading toward consent involving what’s turned into a controversy surrounding 122 acres of land known as the Donahue property. The final meeting intended to gather input on what to do with the land that was provided to the city by the Donahue family appeared to turn a corner. City Attorney Steve Shermoen boiled down the most vocal sentiment: People are angry that Matt Donahue is gaining money and getting a tax break by providing the property to the city and people do not think money should be spent to develop the land. Clearly, it appears that some mistakes or misguidance occurred when the deal was made. Questions remain about why the appraisal on the property was conducted by a Hibbing appraiser and whether appropriate information was provided for an accurate appraisal. But, as Shermoen noted, the city has a contract with

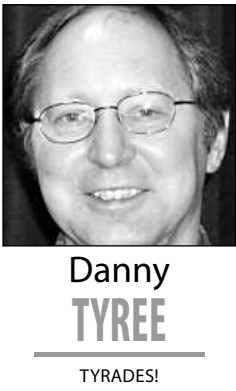
Donahue and could face a lawsuit if it violates that contract. Options for the property are still plentiful; selling to the highest bidder among them. Relatives of Matt Donahue have said, even he couldn’t sell the property, which is what led to the city gaining it. But it seems there is consent among city officials that now is not the time to spend money developing the land. Sure, these options could be explored, but we agree that there are other, more pressing spending needs in the city at this time. The question that now must be answered is simple: Is it in the city’s best interest to create a trail and a monument at the cheapest cost and keep the property as is until a reasonable and profitable future use or need for it becomes clear or sell it up to the highest bidder? We urge city officials to consider that question and put this issue to bed soon to allow more focus on the needs at hand.



GUEST COLUMN

The martians were coming...

Ah, time passes faster than a flying saucer. So we blink and find that October 30 marks the 75th anniversary of one of the most embarrassing incidents in American history. I’m speaking of the hysteria surrounding the CBS radio adaptation of H.G. Wells’ science fiction novel “The War of the Worlds.” The first two-thirds of the hour-long “Mercury Theatre on the Air” broadcast (directed by and starring Orson Welles) was designed like a live newscast. More than one-fourth of the six million listeners tuned in late, missed the disclaimers, and thought that tentacled Martians were actually landing on earth and (without “Take me to your leader” niceties) using brutal “heat rays” to incinerate every civilian, soldier and weapon they encountered. Those who remained with the program until the bitter end learned that the aliens (75-YEAR-OLD SPOILER ALERT) were ultimately defeated by common earth bacteria for which they had no immunity. Granted, one Brooklyn mother insisted that the extraterrestrials actually failed because they refused to wait an hour after eating before wading the Hudson River with their tripod machines. And timing certainly mattered. A scene cut from the script had one dying alien grousing to another, “I wanted to schedule the invasion when earth had the Powdered Wig Generation or even the Big-



Wheeled Bicycle Generation, but YOU had to go up against The Greatest Generation, Mr. Big Shot! All these humans saying ‘sir’ and ‘ma’am’ and pulling their pants up and offering to buy us a new spaceship for a nickel have got me off my game!” An unnamed source said that President Roosevelt was a bit peeved by the reaction to the show, muttering, “‘Say goodnight, Gracie’ they remember – but ‘nothing to fear but fear itself,’ they forget. I’d like to give the ingrates a NEW New Deal, but Eleanor insists I watch my language.” Historians have questioned early reports of suicide attempts and wild gunfire, but references to the broadcast have permeated popular culture over the decades. (ABC aired the movie “The Night That Panicked America” in 1975. “American Experience” on PBS will examine the events on October 29.) When I was trying to become a professional cartoonist

(circa 1976) I drew a strip in which my main character (Tat McGrat) chuckled at the silliness of people overreacting to something they heard on the radio. Of course he was next seen running screaming from the house because a radio newscaster declared, “President Ford has just announced his newest economic policy.” (Wow, a punchline so subtle you could see it from the Red Planet.) COULD a “War of the Worlds” broadcast cause such hysteria today? Not likely, considering the fragmented listenership, fact-checking websites and general cynicism of our age. Crashing alien cylinders would be deemed less dangerous than Lindsay Lohan’s driving. Donald Trump would demand to see the tentacled aliens’ birth certificates before accepting that they weren’t Kenyan. No one would believe the Martians could afford the airline “carry-on” charge for bringing the heat rays. Still, we have our own ways for spreading hysteria in smaller doses. (“A CELEBRITY said vaccinations cause spontaneous combustion in children! A CELEBRITY said that avoiding piles of broken glass can lead to Siamese twin births in ...”) When is the next ship for Mars? Tyree’s weekly column is distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc. newspaper syndicate.

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WHAT OTHERS SAY

TIME FOR CONGRESS TO AGREE ON REAL BUDGET
 The nation has barely avoided a fiscal crisis, but unless Congress is willing to do some old-fashioned budgeting, we are headed that way again. It has been three or four years since Congress last passed a budget. Without making a real decision on how much to spend and how to pay for it,

the government is forced to operate on the basis of continuing resolutions, which say the government can keep spending as much as it has been spending for another period. Each time that period expires, we are set up for another crisis, another opportunity for someone to try to hold the process to gain some concessions. We have until Dec. 13 for a

group of Congressional negotiators to come up with a budget. We don’t know how, in a few weeks, they will solve a puzzle that has baffled them for four years. But it is time for them to try, to talk, to try some give and take, and actually pass a real budget for this country. The Journal of New Ulm, Oct. 20

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