

Where are Republican conservatives in Allen County?

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March 13, 2015

At a meeting about the flooding of the Bullerman Ditch on March 5, with a large number of concerned citizens and a number of city and county officials about how to help the residents of Hacienda Village to stop the ditch from overflowing into the neighborhood again, we had to hear the standard answer to the question of how can we fix the flooding, which is always, “We don’t have the money.”

I had to ask myself, why don’t they have the money to fix the problems? We all know that the problems are not just in Hacienda Village but are in every neighborhood throughout the city and county. This is not just a flooding issue in Hacienda Village, but sidewalks, streets, curbs, combined sewers overflow, breaking waterlines, potholed streets, abandoned houses and abandoned buildings that are in every neighborhood in Fort Wayne.

I was recently at a meeting where the neighborhood I live in was said to be “at the tipping point of good or bad.” Now, why is that? Have we given the city and county administrations a pass on what the elected officials were elected to accomplish for the voters? To be more precise, the so-called “conservative Republican” officials, who say they are watching the dollars and pennies for all taxpayers. With all of the economic development subsidies to be handed out to businesses in the form of property tax abatements, tax phase-in credits, free or low-cost land, infrastructure improvements, reimbursements for worker training or cash grants, I need to ask, is this not a form of corporate welfare? The so-called conservative Republican officials rail against any type of welfare for the less fortunate in our community but hand out the corporate welfare checks with glee to the business that fills out all the forms and promises to create more jobs for the residents of the city.

Well, how do we as citizens know that the commitment that has been asked of the corporate welfare recipient is being carried out? By what yardstick, or, better yet, by whose yardstick do we measure the success of the corporate welfare monies being taken from the pockets of every citizen who owns property within Allen County and who are paying more than their fair share? What does that one job cost the taxpayer, and does anyone know the cost of creating that one job?

Allen County and Fort Wayne have four or five different astute groups working to bring new business and jobs to the area, and all have a different role, but they are working together to help create more business and jobs for Allen County and Fort Wayne residents. They are armed with a large war chest of money and promises that are being backed by the taxpayers to get that important job done at any cost, even if they have to fly to Philadelphia to talk to a big corporate client on the subsidies airline. The astute economic development groups say they need these tools of economic development to entice the new businesses and jobs to our area for the betterment of our city and county. What is that cost or better yet what is the return on investment to taxpayers?

There is study from the Cato Institute that states the average American family pays an average of \$6,000 in subsidies to support the corporate welfare state of America that we are fast becoming. Just think of what that money could do in the pockets of the average American taxpayer or in the budgets of Allen County or Fort Wayne.

Maybe without us supporting of the local corporate welfare system and not by choice, Hacienda Village might not have the problems of flooding and my neighborhood might not be at that tipping point?