

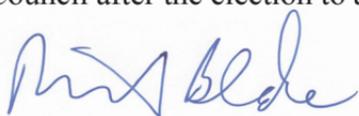
SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Last week Whitefish Mayor Jenson wrote an opinion criticizing the “negative” tone of the city council elections.¹ He attacked me for questioning Incumbent Councilor Sweeney’s qualifications, despite the fact I provided factual documentation and the fact that Frank Sweeney admitted my points were true.

While I have responded to the Mayor in writing², I am compelled to set the record straight here. Frank Sweeney and his supporters have attempted to deflect voters’ attention from issues that really matter, such as:

- A City Council position given not to the man who actually ran for it (John Murdock), but to an attorney from Dallas (Frank Sweeney) who had to get his property annexed into the City in order to serve in what appeared to be some sort of back-room deal;
- An incomprehensible budget that’s up over 50% from last year and filled with gimmicky tricks to keep average citizens from understanding where our money is being spent;
- The announced resignation of city attorney John Phelps kept under wraps for months for unexplained reasons;
- A \$400,000.00 judgment against the City in the Walton case that isn’t reflected anywhere in the budget;
- The proposed eating disorder clinic, with all its jobs, moving to Missoula because it found the City’s planning process too burdensome;
- A broken promise for a six-week trial in the downtown streetscape;
- Costly regulations imposed on Doughnut residents who can’t vote for City Councilors (and then complaints from City Councilors when these residents get involved in the pending election);
- An ongoing lawsuit against the County that surrounds us on all sides, without regard for the consequences;
- A legal fight initiated by the City against Mrs. Spoonover’s for an ice cream mural; and
- Citizens afraid to criticize City Hall for fear of retribution.

Mr. Mayor, I respect your judgment and intentions for the City. The concerns outlined above, however, are real and legitimate. Surely, we can all agree that we need transparency in our government, remarkable schools, and a continuing great environment for our children and families. I look forward to working with you and the entire City Council after the election to address these important issues.



RICK BLAKE