

Rick Blake

21 October 2009

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Mayor Mike Jenson
City of Whitefish
418 E. 2nd Street
Whitefish, MT 59937

Dear Mr. Mayor:

I read with interest your recent letter to the editor titled “We Don’t Need This.” I believe your intentions are sincere, but you have misunderstood my interests in this race so I want to clarify.

First, my opposition to City Councilor Sweeney is based on his positions that I believe reflect his longstanding residence in the super-urban community of Dallas. In my opinion, he lacks understanding of how small towns like ours need to operate for success. Notably, Councilor Sweeney freely acknowledges being a partner in a law firm in Dallas and still owning property there. He acknowledges that his property tax bills go to Texas and that he registered to vote here only four years ago. His wife presumably continues to practice law full time in Texas. I believe these facts influence how Councilor Sweeney votes on the City Council, and therefore voters ought to know these facts. If the voters decide this information isn’t relevant, the voters can ignore it.

Second, I have been open about my opposition to Councilor Sweeney – not because I find this position to be comfortable or because I’m trying to pick an argument. Rather, I believe that operating in the open is the honorable thing. Indeed, the lack of “openness” in Whitefish politics is one reason I am so committed to participating publically.

In the past year, we have seen the following:

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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;

The announced resignation of city attorney John Phelps' kept under wraps for months for unexplained reasons;

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's being spent;

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;

Experts kept off of City Committees for unexplained reasons (e.g., Richard Atkinson and the Convention and Visitors Committee);

A broken promise for a six-week trial in the downtown streetscape matter;

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; and

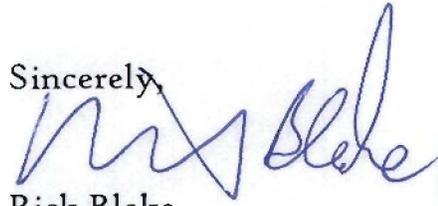
A legal fight initiated by the City against Mrs. Spoonover for an ice cream mural.

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 make all of those objectives a reality for Whitefish.

Mayor Mike Jenson

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Blake". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rick" and last name "Blake" clearly distinguishable.

Rick Blake