

THE REPUBLIC

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"We shall endeavor to make our paper the champion of the people of Bartholomew County and we shall advocate, irrespective of political considerations, all measures that have for their object the good of the community. In short, we hope to make our paper such as no intelligent person in the county can do without."

— Isaac T. Brown, Founding Editor, 1875

Columbus' sewer plan a role model

COMPLETION of work on replacement of Columbus' outdated sewer system is still four years in the future, but the city is years ahead of others in addressing the most basic infrastructure need a community can face.

It has even outdistanced federal requirements that mandate the submission of detailed plans to fix systems where sewers overflow with human waste in wet weather.

That deadline — Sept. 30, but Columbus began work on the planning process years ago and work is scheduled to begin this summer.

The undertaking is one of the most expensive infrastructure projects in history. Cost will be \$85 million. Customers have felt the first bite with a 42 percent rise in rates a year ago and another 34 percent hike expected in 2009.

Although that represents a serious outlay — especially for residents on fixed and low incomes — there has been little opposition.

That's due to the seriousness of the problem and the effects of sewage overflow that have become apparent to just about every resident.

It was also helped by an informational campaign that included explanations by a variety of community leaders on how failure to address the issue would affect future growth.

Utility bills are higher and will escalate even more, but it is a price worth paying.

For background on this editorial, use the key word "sewer control plans" on our Web site search at therepublic.com

Family tradition

THE honorary degrees awarded by Ivy Tech Community College to Columbus businessman Hutch Schumaker and his late father Ab are a tribute to the invaluable services they have given to the institution over several decades.

They are also a reminder of how the ideal of community service can be and often is passed from one generation to another.

The Schumakers are but one of many Columbus families who have looked beyond their own pursuits to improve the lives of others.

This ideal of family involvement is a treasure the community should cherish.

No pardon for Libby

The following editorial appeared in the Seattle Times on Thursday:

A presidential pardon for I. Lewis Libby would gravely compound the abuse of power that led to obstruction-of-justice and perjury convictions for Vice President Dick Cheney's ex-chief of staff.

Libby was sentenced to 30 months in prison because he lied to a grand jury and made false statements to the FBI in the course of a special prosecutor's investigation of the 2003 outing of CIA agent Valerie Plame. Her husband incurred the wrath of the White House because he poked holes in a story used to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

A presidential pardon sends one cynical message: Powerful, well-connected people can lie with impunity. A pardon further mocks the idea of checks and balances and the rule of law.

LETTERS

Parking garage site poor choice

From: Tom Heller Columbus

Dear Mayor Armstrong: I am upset with the plan to convert a surface parking lot (Lot 6) in downtown Columbus into a four- or five-story concrete parking garage. I think this location is distinctly inferior to that offered by the post office across the street to the west.

I offer three reasons: 1. The post office site would enable a much lower-profile facility, one more in scale with its surroundings, than the four- or five-story facility planned on Lot 6;

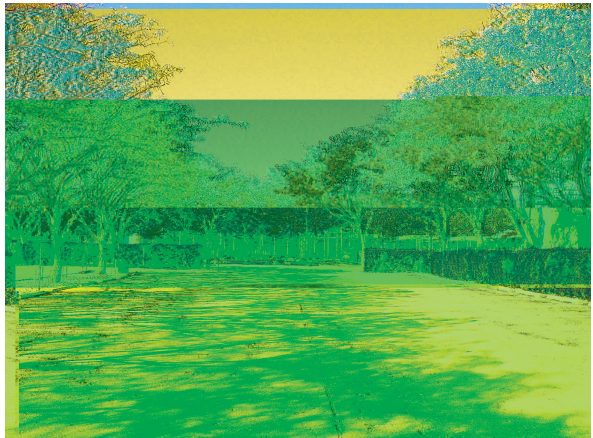
2. The post office site offers almost exactly as much convenience to downtown businesses and attractions as would a parking garage on Lot 6. (And, given its lower profile, perhaps better access.)

3. Worst of all, constructing a four- or five-story concrete "blockhouse" on Lot 6 will obliterate any possibility for creating a very pleasant green space immediately adjacent to downtown green space that could be every bit as pleasant as that achieved in the many tree-framed squares of Savannah, Ga.

If Columbus prides itself on being "different by design," how could our city reach a decidedly second-best choice with regard to locating additional parking to serve its pleasant downtown? How did this opportunity to incorporate any downtown green space slip through our city's fingers? What plans have our city's leaders advanced to incorporate public green space downtown?

This site presents an unparalleled opportunity to create pleasant public green space, a natural casual gathering space, immediately adjacent to Columbus' downtown district. But the city's current plans will instead replace this with an out-sized, four- to five-story concrete parking garage.

On the radio the other day,



Submitted photo

Downtown Parking Lot No. 6.

Mr. Jim Clouse, the city's community development director, cited "logistical and timing issues" behind the city's desire to speed construction of a 450-vehicle parking garage on this site. But the city's haste will result in the loss of an unmatched opportunity to create a pleasant green space that can complement and enhance the ambience of downtown, both today and in the future.

Should this opportunity be lost to a parking garage, this green space can never be replicated elsewhere. Jim Clouse remarked that not even he had seen the finalized plans. Even drawings for this structure have not yet been shared with the public.

Mr. Clouse noted only that

there had been a discussion — only a discussion! — at the last Redevelopment Commission meeting to make those drawings available for viewing at the library and City Hall.

Yet the city is planning to open bids for constructing the parking garage next month. "Cart before the horse" comes to mind.

The design and appearance of the planned garage is not at issue. I don't think any garage in downtown Columbus would ever be allowed to be an "eyesore." Instead, its location and scale are poor choices. These two dimensions are interrelated, as the chosen location is a small, half-block, requiring several more stories in height and bulk than would be necessary if a

larger, full-block site were utilized (specifically, the post office block immediately across the street to the west.)

"Logistical and timing" considerations have pushed aside considerations of enhanced downtown ambience. A parking garage can never be as inviting as a green space. This particular green space opportunity is truly worthy, but it will be replaced by a multistory parking garage.

Such a wonderful opportunity to create green space downtown should not be blithely discarded for the sake of "logistical and timing" considerations. Such short-term considerations have a place, but shouldn't outweigh long-term considerations, especially in a community like Columbus.

Panel recommends PUD despite folks' concerns

From: Michael A. Schulman Columbus Received: June 7

Wednesday afternoon the Plan Commission met to decide whether or not to recommend a Planned Unit Development in the northeast side of Columbus.

The area is currently zoned as R-2 and the largest adjoining neighborhood has a density of 1.8 units per acre. The PUD proposes a gated community consisting of 156 luxury condominiums, four units per building, with a density of 3.9 units per acre, more than double the density of the adjacent neighborhood. The out-of-town contractor stated that there is a need for a gated community in Columbus and that their community will serve the elderly and gives them an added sense of security.

There was standing room only and people were overflowing out

of the City Council chambers. During the public hearing more than 15 people spoke out against this PUD and were all met by applause. Another developer and several others spoke about duplexes and quadts not selling well in Columbus and having to be converted to apartments.

Concerns were also raised about the density of this development in comparison to the adjacent neighborhoods. The biggest concern seemed to be what will happen if the 156 units are not sold. Will they have no choice but to turn them into apartments?

None of the questions seemed to be answered to the satisfaction of the community. The developer said they know that this concept will work and they know that they will sell out and so we need not be concerned. They said they researched it and we should trust them, yet they did not produce any scientific

research or data to support their statements.

When pushed, the developer admitted he had never built anything like this and could not provide any examples of similar communities in Columbus or surrounding areas.

One of the members of the development team said he spoke to many people and that they were interested and want such a community. Yet only one person came to speak in favor of this development.

If the developer wants to prove this to us, why can't they start with a smaller PUD? A less dense community with tens, not hundreds of units? If this works, we will have every reason to support a larger development of this type.

The Plan Commission brought up that the maximum number of houses that could be built in the current zone is only 16 fewer

than the proposal. They said that approving this PUD will allow for only 16 more units to be built than currently allowed.

However this does not address the difference between the adjoining neighborhoods. The existing neighborhoods zoned R-2 and R-1, are far less dense than the maximum. The PUD also changes the zoning from single-family houses to condominiums. And finally, if 156 condominiums do not sell, as other developers have demonstrated and their target market has indicated, then we are stuck with apartments.

Despite the compelling arguments from the community, the Plan Commission favorably recommended this PUD for approval to City Council by a vote of 6-1. Let's hope that City Council listens to its citizens on June 19, and does not approve the PUD.

LOOKING BACK

Around Columbus

June 11 News about Columbus and the surrounding area as reported on or about this date in the pages of The Evening Republican and The Republic 10, 25 and 50 years ago.

1997 Medians, vacant buildings, neighborhoods and intersections were listed as high-priority targets by the Community Development Department in announcing its Columbus Beautification Program.

1982 Retirees Robert and Elizabeth Clarke were accepted into the Peace Corps and assigned a two-year tour in the Fiji Islands to work on rural development.

Mark Pfeiffer and Lewis Hoy were named winners of the Junior Chamber of Commerce bicycle

Around the world

1770 England's King Henry VIII married Catherine of Aragon.

1776 Capt. James Cook, commander of the British ship Endeavour, discovered the Great Barrier Reef off Australia by running onto it.

1778 The Continental Congress formed a committee to draft a Declaration of Independence calling for freedom from Britain.

1919 Sir Barton won the Belmont Stakes, becoming horse racing's first Triple Crown winner.

1947 The government announced the end of household and institutional sugar rationing.

1970

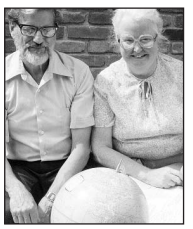
The United States' presence in Libya came to an end as the last detachment left Wheelus Air Base.

1977 A 20-day hostage drama in the Netherlands ended as Dutch marines stormed a train and a school held by South Moluccan extremists. Six gunmen and two hostages on the train were killed.

1978 Seattle Slew won the Belmont Stakes, capturing the Triple Crown.

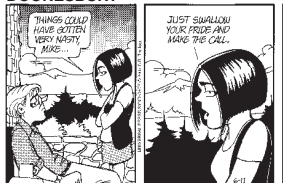
1997 The parents of Timothy McVeigh pleaded for their son's life during the penalty phase of the Oklahoma City bombing trial.

2001 Timothy McVeigh was executed by injection at the federal prison in Terre Haute for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing that killed 168 people.



From The Republic Archives Robert and Elizabeth Clarke posed with a map and world globe in 1982 before beginning a two-year tour with the Peace Corps in a rural area of the Fiji Islands.

DOONESBURY



MALLARD FILLMORE

