

Sterling, Andrew

From: Gary Votes [garyvotes@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 11, 2011 11:06 AM
To: Sterling, Andrew
Subject: DUAB & Gary's Request for Tax Cap Exemption

Monday, April 11, 2011

Greetings, Members of the DUAB:

Several key events have taken place in the City of Gary that you should know about that will affect your vote on whether or not to grant the City of Gary a third year of property tax cap exemptions:

1. Gary Mayor Rudy Clay has been diagnosed with prostate cancer and has withdrawn from the 2011 race for Mayor for the City of Gary.

This would mean that there is going to be a change in leadership and that the Clay Administration in requesting the financial help from the DUAB is **NOT** going to be the same administration and/or individual that will be administering the City of Gary, thus his appeals and presentation before the DUAB should be considered invalid or not applicable to the future budget needs and finances of the City of Gary.

2. The City of Gary has experienced a 22 percent drop in population (2000 to 2010) resulting in additional homes being vacated and abandoned. Noting the link between higher property taxes and out-migration of residents, the extension of property tax cap exemptions that would result in a third year whereby property taxes in Gary are 50 percent higher, would result in a continued loss of residents with people continuing to vacate the city.

3. Senate Bill 105, a bill designed to reorganize the DUAB and allow for a different resolution for financial problems with the political sub-divisions throughout Indiana, will pass with the support of the current administration and be signed into law. The bill has an emergency provision that will take effect immediately. It would be prudent for the DUAB **NOT** to vote to exempt Gary from property tax caps and allow the new law to be applied as quickly as possible.

4. Property Tax Cap Exemptions have not worked. As for program evaluation, there is no evidence that actions of the DUAB in 2009 and 2010, granting property tax cap exemptions for the City of Gary which were designed to avoid financial collapse and give Gary an opportunity to recover, have had any positive influence on bringing about changes in the city. If there had been any progress, one could support a third year of relief. But no progress and no sign of resolution exists that would justify a third year of hardship being imposed on the property tax payers of the City of Gary.

It is for these reasons and for many more that we implore you not to vote in favor of granting property tax cap exemptions for the City of Gary, Indiana.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Barnes, Ph.D.

739 N Montgomery St
Gary, IN 46403

Sterling, Andrew

From: AYoung7550@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 12, 2011 10:31 AM
To: Sterling, Andrew
Subject: Electronic version of letter sent via overnight US Mail

To DUAB Members:

Enclosed along with this letter is a list from a Commissioners' Certificate tax sale that was just conducted and just ended on Friday the 8th of April, 2011. As you can see, there were over 12,000 properties offered at this sale. If you were to look closer, you would likely notice that over 10,000 of these properties are situated within the City of Gary and the areas which were affected by the "relief" which the DUAB was responsible for awarding to the administration of the City of Gary.

It should be noted that the vast majority of these 10,000 properties which were just offered on this Certificate Sale, were not tax sale eligible 2 years ago when the DUAB first granted "relief" to the City.

It cannot be known as an absolute that solely because the DUAB granted the administration this "relief", that this is the only reason that this enormous number of properties fell into default; but it should be assumed that this was a contributing factor. Besides the fact that Gary taxpayers are the only taxpayers in the entire state that have not been allowed to benefit by the tax-cap legislation which has helped all others across the state, Gary taxpayers have simultaneously suffered from skyrocketing assessed values that have risen exponentially in some cases, while the actual market values have continued to drop precipitously.

I am also terribly disappointed that this board continues to deliver life-changing decisions which severely affect the taxpayers and citizens of Gary without first visiting the city to see the results of these prior poor decisions firsthand. Only the few DUAB members that visited Gary the first year would be able to see the remarkable difference in the city. The new members, or the members that were unable to make the trip the first time would not be able to see the difference; however, even without having seen the city in the past, I think they would be stunned to see it in its present state.

There is little that is more destabilizing and destructive to an area than an inconsistent and uneven system of taxation. It was obviously the intent of the Legislature to bring parity to a somewhat arbitrary, byzantine, and outdated system. However, this particular board has operated in such a manner that has undone the Legislature's intent. This board has fallen for the sympathetic pleas of this weak, ineffective, and corrupt administration; while they concurrently cast aside the pleas of people that sincerely have the restructuring and rebuilding of the city in their hearts.

You've been suckered once. You've been suckered twice. Please don't let yourselves get suckered for a third time. The sooner you pull the plug on all that which supports this

administration which serves primarily to obstruct all healing and development which would naturally occur, the sooner the business of rebuilding the great city of Gary, Indiana can begin. If you again fail us in your duties, the city will have to wait another year. But who can say how much more of the city will have been destroyed; how many more will have died in the streets; how much more money will have vanished without a trace of useful benefit to the community?

We don't have better police protection as a result of your decisions. We don't have better fire protection as a result of your decisions. The streets aren't the slightest bit safer as a result of your decisions. Not one little thing is better as a result of your past decisions. But are things any worse? You betcha!

The same excessive--and in so many cases, unnecessary--payrolls are met each week. The same bloated, unqualified staffs of inert departments are funded. The same bunch of cronies and relatives draw multiple paychecks while the rest of the city struggles to survive. Even with the "relief" you have granted this administration in the past, there wasn't enough to do anything more than barely cover paychecks. There wasn't enough left over to produce anything. This additional funding which this board allows to fund this top-heavy, inert organization, does no one except those directly funded by it the slightest bit of good. But it *can* be shown that these very same decisions do everyone else that is not directly a beneficiary of its largesse direct and quantifiable harm.

It is hard to expect board members that meet once a year in advance of rendering their decision--and in many cases, have never even been to the city--to be able to make an informed decision; especially so when certain members on the board are quick to dismiss citizens' objections as "noise" and suggest that we are all in "la-la land".

You have in your hands the power to start the city on its road to recovery; or you can continue to lead it down the path of destruction. Whether this recovery begins this year or the next is up to all of you (or at least a majority of you).

Even though none of you will be here next year, we will. The longer the city proceeds down the wrong path, the longer it will take for others to set it right. Like they say, "There is no time like the present!"

The DUAB have become "enablers". What they have enabled in the past has turned out to be costly, destructive, and harmful to the city as a whole. It has only enabled the perpetuation of that which does the city as a whole the most harm. Stop it now...stop it today! The road to healing can start tomorrow; or the city can go on bleeding for another year. Can it survive another year of this bleeding? How many more thousands will be gone in another year? Who could say for certain; we'll just have to wait and see. We'll let you know how it all turns out; as I would be surprised if you ever give Gary, Indiana another thought.

Sincerely,
Andy Young