

## **UPDATE June 28, 2006 - SULTAN ONLY**

*[First, it's important for folks to know that the attachment contains important information re a proposed Sultan ordinance declaring a financial emergency and recommending deletion of police concurrency from the city code. This ordinance also mentions the need for a city-specific B&O tax, and gives as one justification for this "emergency" the inability of the city to meet its LID 97-1 (assessment) bond obligations due to the Hammer bankruptcy, until the Hammer Estates' development is built out.]*

From Sultan Hearing Examiner John Galt's most-recent decision (Ramirez's Twin River Estates, June 19th), Conclusions #24 and #18, he finds:

- *[#24] DCDs [i.e., Sultan's Director of Community Development, city planner Rick Cisar; emphasis provided] position on Concurrency has ebbed and flowed throughout the series of hearings this Spring. For example, in the Hammer PUD hearing held on May 10, 2006, DCD argued that a developer agreement was necessary in order to insure that the police service LOS was met. It abandoned that position for the Vodnick Lane hearing on May 15, 2006. However, three days later on May 18, 2006, DCD again argued that a developer agreement was necessary during the Twin Rivers Ranch Estates open record hearing. Such inconsistency demonstrates why the Examiner has not been able to rely on the staff for guidance during these contentious hearings.*
- *[#18] DCD's concurrency determination is to be considered part of its recommendation to the Examiner. [SMC 16.108.040(B)]. The Examiner can not (sic) recommend and the Council can not (sic) approve a development application which does not demonstrate compliance with the concurrency requirements of Chapter 16.108 SMC [SMC 16.108.060].*

The City is now stuck (despite the fact that it has known since at least last May that concurrency needed to be addressed). It has essentially only two approval options available for the five remaining plat applications heard by Galt (the city "solved" Garth York's two plats by rejecting Galt's recommendations): Deny his recommendations and give their own council's stamp of approval (which will likely sidestep any legal challenges by developers), or do the right thing and uphold Galt's recommendations (what the taxpayers pay him for) to send these applications back for "fixing."

Thus far, the City has chosen the "easy" way: Disregard Galt's recommendations.

The Easy Way, too, will apparently be chosen to "Fix" its most-pressing city problem: The deteriorating police staffing levels and service, caused by yet another self-inflicted wound, the City's lack of funding.

The Sultan Council will hold another SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING this Thursday, June 29th, 7:00 PM. This SPECIAL meeting has not been legally noticed (neither in the *Herald* nor on its new website) and the reason for which it needed to be held. It was decided [i.e., **action taken**] during the DISCUSSION period of its June 15th meeting (which was also a special meeting, but

legally noticed), to set a special meeting for 6/29 for one purpose and one purpose only -- to decide disposition of the Skoglund Estates plat. The city's council agenda "published" yesterday, 6/26, is STUFFED with important items, not the least of which is an ordinance declaring that a FINANCIAL EMERGENCY exists (attached), and recommending revised levels of staffing for the police, as currently published in Sultan's comp plan, be revised (previous council discussions have suggested eliminating police staffing levels of service entirely).

As if that is not bad enough, the city has included the proposed ordinance and its contradicting agenda cover sheet as a CONSENT AGENDA ITEM (for those new to government, Consent items are normally used only for "housekeeping" issues), rather than as a published ACTION ITEM. The "summary" -- the agenda cover sheet explanation -- states: "City Council on June 15, 2006 **directed** Staff [again, an **action taken** during a council discussion period] to prepare an Ordinance amending the Comprehensive Plan to include Option Two of the Draft Ordinance. Option Two would eliminate the Level of Service (LOS) for Police in Appendix B, page 74 of the Comprehensive Plan."

If this is confusing all of you, well, then the city has finally done **something right**: All of this finagling, position-shifting and "Where's Elmo?" activity is sleight of hand intended to confuse and confound. And it is working, just as many other, previous slippery machinations were used during the comp plan creation and approval process, and which, is one of the primary reasons the City now finds itself in this mess.

We thought with the election of Ben Tolson, all of the City's process and professionalism problems were at an end. Had things gone too far to fix? Has he listened too much to those who created these long-term and deep-seated problems? Has his attention been deflected by events elsewhere? Why has he chosen to retain -- rather than remove immediately for cause or for the overall long-term good of the City -- key personnel whose decisions and activities have long been "questionable" -- and, even worse, actually followed their advice? Regardless, the ultimate responsibility for these ongoing problems is quickly becoming undeniable. Mayor Tolson, who is in essence "Chairman of the Board" of the city, not only *has some 'splainin' to do*, but needs to find himself an OVERSIZED BROOM.

In closing, I wish to state that in contrast to the reality of the City's current problems, I find the words below to be an amazing piece of self-denial. It is the last sentence from the front page blurb ("Welcome to the City of Sultan") published on the city's newest, most-recent website effort, as of this morning:

*"Our city is on the brink of a great transformation. Already several hundred new residential homes, commercial and retail projects currently in the development process. We recognize that growth is inevitable, and we are actively taking the steps necessary to protect the wonderful way of life that our residents have treasured for over one hundred years."*

Travel safely,  
Loretta Storm, Co-founder  
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