

NORTH BAY TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

Published: North Bay Nugget

Date: March 12, 2014

COUNCIL PLAYING A SHELL GAME

I read with interest the recent article "Gardens Funding Plan Approved" published in the Nugget on Mar 4, 2014. So, it seems that council is playing a shell game and shuffling some money around to pay for the Memorial Gardens disaster. Robbing Peter to pay Paul is simply not sound fiscal management.

Now what? We know how you are going to pay the \$16.2 million for the Battalion contract but there are still a lot of unanswered questions that we, the public, would like to see answered. Attempts by Councilors King and Kozial to get those answers were quickly shut down.

1. Where is the promised report on the cost breakdown showing where the money went?
2. What are the consequences promised by Mr. Knox during the press conference in December?
3. Who else, other than Mr. Chirico, was involved in the over-spending as revealed in KPMG's audit?
4. What work remains to be completed on the Gardens and how much will that cost?
5. Where is the \$5-million interest-free loan from the Battalion; how much interest did North Bay taxpayers pay out before they paid us?
6. Council is aware that the Battalion loan will be repaid by the \$2.50 surcharge but did they know that an annual minimum payment of \$135,000 per year must be made even if we do not sell the required 54,000 tickets?
7. What are the cumulative gate receipts for Memorial Gardens since the puck dropped in October?
8. How much has been generated by the \$2.50-per-ticket surcharge?
9. When did Memorial Gardens acquire two Zambonis, how much did they cost? Who owns the Zambonis and who owns the \$1-million score clock?
10. Where is Mr. Knox's long overdue city Operational Report that Mayor Al MacDonald promised would be delivered last fall?

Taxpayers deserve straightforward answers on these outstanding issues. These questions are being asked in an open letter in the local newspaper because I have no desire to be the target of insults and condescending behavior by several of the more defensive members of city council.

In fairness, Mr. Mayor and Council, we should not have to ask you these questions – we should have been provided the answers long before the funds were approved and disbursed.

Elizabeth C. Fournier
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North Bay Taxpayers' Association