

NORTH BAY TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

Letter to the Editor of North Bay Nugget

Date: November 3, 2017

Silence is not always golden

I saw a T-shirt once that had a picture of a Roman slave galley with the slave master at the helm and the caption: "The beatings will stop when moral improves." A recent opinion piece from the Chamber of Commerce has taken this humorous piece of irony and adopted it as the gospel truth.

The article supports the notion that if we all just kept opinions to ourselves, our troubles would be over and the beatings would stop. The article implies that bad policy becomes good policy as long as the policy is promoted with a unified voice. This attitude is exactly the source of the City's current situation and the anecdotal facts to disprove that attitude are legion.

For example, if only people had been more positive, we could have avoided the Council approved \$16.2 million spending on the 50 year old Memorial Gardens building renovation or the plan to spend \$2.7 million over the next 10 years for continuing Arena upgrades.

If only people were more pleasant, they would see the benefit in Council giving Invest North Bay \$1 million dollars without any hint of an actual plan and no real evidence that any substantial benefit would arise from this expenditure.

If only people were more optimistic, they would see the benefit of Council burdening future generations with the cost of the Mayor's Plan and that all it does is relieve the current administration from actually making decisions to correct our ever worsening financial dilemma.

After reminding everyone that we can speak freely in this country, exploiting memories of lost lives and misquoting Mark Twain, the article suggests that people who are speaking out against the status quo are being untruthful and should ask themselves if they are being fair in criticizing City administration and City council members. The not-so-hidden message is that those who agree with the status quo have a little more right to speak freely than those who disagree.

The article's main thrust is that rather than insist that the City change its ways and protect the financial interests of citizens that individuals should just keep their opinions to themselves. Hmm.

According to its website, one of the Chambers vision statements indicates: "*The Chamber will be recognized as effective and highly relevant in its representation of members to all levels of government.*" Instead of demeaning those who question the costly financial decisions being made by Council, the Chamber would do well to put those questions to the City itself and continue to put pressure on City administration to respond directly to those criticisms.

The article suggests that better communication is the answer. To date, the City has suggested that a Communications officer would accomplish that end. Is there anyone reading this article who believes a communications officer would improve communications and be a benefit to the recipients of the information? North Bay taxpayers have become slaves to the decisions of this council and are now being asked by the Chamber to sit quietly and let the beatings continue.

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