



Letter to the Editor

Stop Schuetz buy debate, go forward with eastside development

Dear Editor,

I was extremely heartened by Village Trustee Gordon Kenggaard's letter that he "all along" has thought the purchase of 19 acres of land on McFarland's east side is a good deal for taxpayers.

I am heartened because this is a terrific note on which to start the new year in this village.

I am heartened because it suggests it is time for the board to revisit the issue and get the job done once and for all.

To repeat: We can purchase 19 acres of beautiful land on the east side for roughly \$250,000. The state is picking up half of the total cost of the land and the county up to a third of the rest. The village portion of the money will come from fees assessed on developers.

Gordon is correct that builders are badly behind schedule so there is little money currently in that fund. No one has disputed this. What we have said is that, at most, village taxpayers would be responsible for the interest costs on

a bridge loan until those funds are available.

That is hardly a burden on taxpayers for the purchase of 19 acres of land. It is still an incredible deal.

Gordon says he's simply trying to "explore options" for financing the village's small share of the cost. That's fair enough. But state and county grants aren't open-ended. And the Schuetz family, which has had other, higher offers, has graciously given the village plenty of time (February) to make its decision.

What has been difficult is that the "options" explored so far seem more like obstacles. Those who want private money to fund half of the village's share have done nothing to raise that money, for example.

Let's put this debate behind us. I speak for many people who strongly urge the board to revisit this in the new year. Let's approve the purchase and get on with the hard work of developing McFarland's east side all built around one of Dane County's finest new recreation areas that will define our village forever.

Mike Flaherty
McFarland