

Friends of Bill Lynn
1935 Walling Ct.
Davenport, IA 52803

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5th Ward Meeting *with* ***Alderman Bill Lynn***



Monday, February 16, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.
Davenport Police Station, 416 Harrison St.
In the Community Room

Paid for by Friends of Bill Lynn

Let's Keep in touch!

You can reach me

Cell Phone: 563-320-3675
E-mail: Bill@ProfBillLynn.com
www.ProfBillLynn.com

1935 Walling Court
Davenport, IA 52803

Or just come to one of the ward meetings.

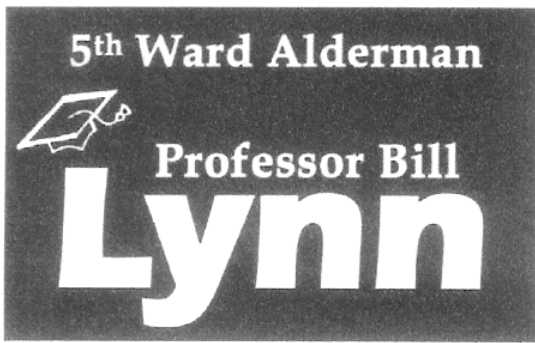
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QUIET IS GOOD

It has been a long, long winter. It has also been somewhat quiet in the city since the last newsletter. This is not to imply things are perfect, but we seem to be working on problems in a much quieter mode than previous councils and **that is good**. Again Mother Nature has thrown us a curve ball and I will discuss that later.

PROMISE PROGRAM

Right now I would say the proposed **Promise Program** is the **biggest issue** on the horizon.

As you know, the City is proposing that we use part of the local option sales tax to fund a program to pay for college tuition for Davenport students. It would cover students that attend Davenport public schools, private schools, and home schooled children. They must live in Davenport. The program would pay the equivalent of the first two years tuition at Scott Community College and the equivalent of the last two years tuition at the University of Iowa. The money could be used at any college or training program in the United States.

Other items included would be a grant to a returning veteran that purchases a home in Davenport (\$7,500) and a freeze of city property taxes for low income senior citizens and disabled home owners; it would allow the city to use 10% of the local option sales tax (about \$1.5 million) for public safety. This **does not necessarily mean an increase** in the public safety budget. It simply means we will **be able to free up about \$1.5 million in the operating budget** and it could be used for public safety or something else.

While I agree that some type of training or education beyond high school is necessary in today's job market, I do not believe this is the right approach. I cannot provide a detailed analysis for the entire program in this newsletter, but it will be available on my website at www.ProfBillLynn.com.

We are being told that without this program Davenport's population will decline, but if we implement this program, our population will increase. This argument is based on results from the Kalamazoo, Michigan, study. This study was done by the Upjohn Research Institute. I have read the study and I attended the presentation—at best the estimates are based on very little information. An economist at Iowa State University reviewed it and concluded the results were not supportable—as an economist, I agree.

The problem is that the supporters are basing their claims on the Upjohn study. They are saying that we will be able to generate more tax money and the school district will be able to receive more state aid if we implement this program. This assumes that more people will move to Davenport, that property values will rise (and thus revenues), and the school district will receive more money since they will have more students (about \$5,500 per student in state aid). They further claimed that without the Promise Program we will need to raise taxes and fees.

If their results do not occur, then Davenport will have a problem. We will not have as much money for capital improvements and debt service. Further, if the program does not work as proposed, then we are **stuck with it for an unknown period of time**. We will be committed to funding it for many years, thus creating an entitlement at the city level.

PUBLIC SAFETY

I agree that public safety is a major function of government. It has been a big issue with me since I was elected. Before we simply go hiring more police I believe it is critical that we look at reorganizing the Police Department. If we do not have an efficient structure, hiring more police will not solve our problem.

Our new police chief is doing a good job. Things have improved and I believe we have seen a much greater police presence in the central city. It has paid off, but we still need to study the structure of the police department to determine if we are using the number of police as well as we can.

Some time ago I completed a study which is on my website comparing the population of other cities in Iowa and Illinois to the number of police. I found that those cities had no more police than we did (based on population) but their crime rates were lower. I think we need to determine why that is true. Before we proceed to hire more police, we need to know that more police will indeed solve the crime problem.

SNOW, SNOW, AND MORE SNOW

It seems Mother Nature is giving us another bad winter. At last report we had used up almost 70% of our first salt shipment and have ordered more. It is much more expensive than last year so this is putting a strain on our budget. It appears we need to budget much more for this than we have in past years and we need to find that money.

I have had calls asking for us to clear alleys. Currently it is our policy not to clear alleys. I understand the reason. We have **550 miles of streets to clear** and clearing alleys would increase the mileage significantly. On the other hand, I have asked for a review of that policy, and the clearing of alleys during heavy snows is being considered. As with many things in government **this will take time**. We will probably not make a decision until the new public works director is installed. We need the new director to be on board with any of our policies. We will also need to consider the impact on the budget.

THE BUDGET

The next major project of the city council will be developing a budget. Given the current economy, that will not be easy. I believe we need to be sure we do not increase fees or taxes. That would be a very bad move in the current situation. We are now negotiating new union contracts and pay increases will require at least another \$1.5 million. The total amount has not been determined since the contracts have not been negotiated.

A major consideration has always been health insurance. Currently the maximum amount an employee pays for health insurance is \$25 per month. If you work for a private company, I am sure you pay much more than this. For instance I pay \$250 per month at my job. This is always a major issue and a major point that really upsets many taxpayers.

NEW CITY SURVEY

We recently had a private company complete a citizen survey. I believe this was the best survey we have ever administered. It gave us a large amount of information. It is very long, but I recommend you review it.

We find that a large majority of our citizens rate many aspects of our city good or very good. Although I have been very critical of customer service, the citizens gave it high marks.

One area they rated very low was streets and street maintenance. I believe we will be looking at this very carefully in the new budget. We increased the budget for streets last year and I anticipate another increase this year.

PAST/FUTURE

Someone once said most people overestimate what they can complete in the short run but underestimate what can be accomplished in the long run.

Progress over the Last Five Years

As I look back over the last five years I find we have made progress. We now have a **strategic plan** which I believe has improved our budgeting process. We have **improved technologically**. We have **lowered the crime rate**, and we have made great strides in taking **action against bad rental property**. We have developed the **NETS** and **VIPS** program in the Police Department which has really changed the quality of policing. The **Village of East Davenport** has made a marked turn around and we are **seeing big improvements**. This I am happy about, but there is much more to be done.

I have worked on putting a grant together for a Center for Economic Improvement. It would provide **education in financial literacy**, a **microloan program** for very small businesses, and assistance for **work force development**. We have applied to the Gates Foundation for \$60,000 and we have asked the state for

PAST/FUTURE (continued)

\$100,000 for the microloan program. The microloan program has been tried in many other countries with great success, thus we have a blueprint to follow.

Plans and Hopes for the Future

Bill Boom and I met with Palmer College and St. Ambrose University to discuss how we can work together to improve the area between the two institutions. We believe that if we can improve the area and encourage students to move into that area, we can redevelop that area. I believe the opening of the **Walgreen's will be a catalyst to improving the entire area.** We will be enlisting the assistance of the fire and police departments in this endeavor. We have found that when we enlist as many organizations as possible towards a goal, it increases the probability of success.

I am also planning on meeting with restaurant owners in the Kimberly and Brady area. I realized some time ago that the mix of restaurants in that area made it very unique. I believe we can brand this as the international food area. I believe it is important we move on this quickly, since several restaurants have recently closed in that area. With a little effort, we can turn this around. If we wait much longer, we may find the cost to rejuvenate this area will be much greater in the future.

YOUR SUPPORT IS APPRECIATED

Thank you to those who have sent me contributions to support the publishing of my newsletters—your support means so much to me. As you know, I will not use city money to publish the newsletter. If you can make a contribution, no matter how small, to support the publishing of future newsletters, it would be greatly appreciated (please do not send cash—make checks payable to *Friends of Bill Lynn*, or you can go to my website (www.ProfBillLynn.com) and pay via PayPal.

NEXT WARD MEETING

Our next Fifth Ward meeting will be **Monday, February 16th**, at **6:00 p.m.** in the **Community Room** at our **Davenport Police Station** at **416 Harrison**. If you need help with transportation, **please call me** at **563-320-3675**.

There will be a presentation on the Promise Program at the meeting.

Hope to see you Monday night!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Lynn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.