

Real Reporting.org / NewsLanc.com

7/26/13 • Publisher: NewsLanc.com, LLC • Volume II, No. 202

Charlie Smithgall says Brunswick Hotel should be part of Lancaster Square East redevelopment

According to the Lancaster *Intelligencer-Journal*, former Lancaster City mayor and current candidate Charlie Smithgall criticized City Planner Randy Patterson and the Gray administration for failure to include the Brunswick Hotel in redevelopment plans for Lancaster Square East. It said:

“Smithgall cited a recent newspaper article in which the Bulova building and Lancaster Square were named as possible revitalization zones.

With Lancaster Square behind him Thursday evening, Smithgall said the Brunswick Hotel also should be included.

‘Let’s fix this block right,’ he said, noting that the Bulova building and the hotel are connected.

They were built together as a failed urban renewal effort, he said. They should be revitalized together, even if that means leveling them and starting over, he said.

‘To do it right, you have to do the block as a project,’ Smithgall maintained.”

Lancaster Square East includes the Bulova Building that has long been vacant, the Brunswick Hotel and

the Brunswick Annex. Along with the parking garage at Duke and Chestnut, they are part of a land condominium which prevents alterations of the building footprints.

There is no adequate market for the Brunswick now that the City built, owns and leases the competing Marriott Hotel. Yet the high cost of maintaining a structure as large as the competing Marriott continues. It is an impossible situation to correct without massive subsidies from ownership.

Even more inexplicable and little known, the Bulova building was long allowed to manufacture munitions at the risk of blowing up half of downtown Lancaster!

Let’s raze the block, other than the parking garage, and start over again with a needed upscale condominium residential development. Let’s get it right this time.

After two full terms in office, it is long overdue for Patterson and Mayor Rick Gray to stop focusing solely on the Bulova building and to address Lancaster Square East as a single project. Nothing less will serve the interest of downtown revitalization.

NewsLanc has no regrets

We recently reflected on whether in NewsLanc has become a public ‘scold.’ So we reviewed issue by issue:

Convention Center: We exposed deceit and demanded a Feasibility Study. None was ever commissioned until we contributed about \$80,000

to supplement funding from the County Commissioners. The resulting PKF study was ignored despite being correct in its prognostications.

Street Cars: We opposed the lame brain trolley project. We exposed the inaccuracies in all of the sponsors' faulty claims of successes elsewhere. We ridiculed the 'push poll' conducted to sell the project to the public.

Lancaster General Health: We criticize Lancaster General Health for being so stingy in its support of needy causes in contradiction to its lofty mission message. We challenged the propriety and legality as a public charity of paying over a million dollars to its president while he was away on leave for a year. We observed that the entire board of trustees consists of establishment Caucasians and all but the annual trustee meetings are closed to the public. Through its expansion throughout the local health care system, LGP has gained a monopolistic influence, increasing its profitability at the expense of driving up local health insurance costs.

Lancaster City: We currently are critical of City Planner Randy Patterson and Mayor Rick Gray for failure to comprehend that the derelict Brunswick Hotel is a victim of the City built, owned and leased Marriott Hotel. The entire Lancaster Square East, apart from the public garage, needs to be included

in redevelopment efforts, not just the former Bulova building.

County Library System: We have pointed out that either all libraries should be run by one system or the System should be radically downsized and live off fees for its services, if indeed it could. The present "*one library, one vote*" allows the many small libraries with far few users to consume an unfair portion of grants, thus causing them to turn a blind eye to System bloat. That the System would presume to run its own fund raising campaign in competition with the major libraries is an indication of its self-aggrandizing mindset.

LCBWMA: We question their spending up to \$200 million to acquire the trouble plagued Harrisburg Incinerator which includes the environmental hazardous 'mountains' of ash accumulated over forty years. It has not provided a third party Feasibility Study or a professional Environmental Impact Study. The waste authority had originally offered \$45 million for the incinerator. Now it is spending more than its own net worthy and putting at risk its annual earnings. The accumulated wealth of the authority and thus the Lancaster population is being plucked to bail out Harrisburg.

So why NewsLanc? *When there were multiple newspapers, they competed through investigative reporting and publishing exposes. Today the monopoly newspaper has no economic incentive to serve as community watchdog. Its business interests (and perhaps survival) lie in reporting day to day local news articles and in 'getting along.' We understand.*

LETTER: Disagrees but encourages

"Newslanc does a far better job in bringing 'news of interest' to us, and Newslanc is NOT afraid to ruffle feathers or challenge the 'power elite' of Lancaster City/County. You are definitely a 'voice worth listening to'.

"While we differ in our political leanings.....Keep up the good work!!!"

EDITOR: *Thank you. We don't seek to compete with the Lancaster Newspapers. Rather, we try to supplement their coverage.*

**The above items have been excerpted from www.NewsLanc.com.
Visit the website daily for news, commentary, letters, and other features. Suggestions
and letters can be sent anonymously through the home page.**