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The \$63.6 million convention center ‘swindle’: Who were responsible?

As part of the Martin Plan to save the Lancaster Convention Center, the county commissioners have agreed to guarantee the full \$63.6 million in Convention Center debt.

Those who supported the project asserted this would never happen; those who questioned the project predicted it would.

NewsLanc has created a Dishonor Role of those who we believe stretched the bounds of ethical behavior and the law in bringing about the project.

Although we consider their roles in the matter reprehensible, this is not meant as an overall evaluation of them as individuals.

As indicated by the **Fox 43**, poll conducted by Opinion Dynamics, a reputable national polling company, for **NewsLanc** to publish the names of all who opposed government guarantee of the project would require listing 78% of the county adult population.

The below list was drawn from “revised” chapters of our **Convention Center Project series**. We invite readers to draw their own conclusions.

We will soon publish an Honor Roll of the courageous officials and volunteers who publicly exposed falsehoods, devious dealings, and possible fraud.

CONVENTION CENTER DISHONOR ROLE

Armstrong, Gibson State Senator

Buckwalter, John H., CEO Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.

Cooley, Nevin D., President of various High companies

Darcus, C. Ted, LCCCA Chair who squelched dissent

Farina, Louis – President Judge who oversaw Grand Jury.

High, S. Dale Principle owner of the various High Companies

Kauffman, Terry; County Commissioner

Pickard, James Early Chair of the LCCCA

Stevens & Lee law firm. Over time, they represented too many of the parties.

Thibault, Paul; County Commissioner

Totaro, Donald District Attorney who persecuted Commissioners

Wachovia Bank officers who knew better.

LETTER: Convention Center Dishonor List

“How about adding Marv Adams, former editor of the Sunday News, who declared that a volcano would erupt in Pequea Township before the Convention Center would have serious

problems. Marv also instigated the infamous 'countdown' for the days remaining on the terms of the County commissioners who opposed this financial fiasco."

EDITOR: Please recall our criteria for the Dishonor List: "NewsLanc has created a Dishonor Role of those who we believe stretched the bounds of ethical behavior and the law in bringing about the project." Adams may have misjudged the situation, but we are not aware of his stretching the bounds of ethical behavior and law.

LANCASTER SUNDAY NEWS

On the surface, "Lancaster County Convention Center: What's settled; what's next?" is a well researched and informative article.

WATCHDOG: However, there are two salient issues that are glossed over and, for all practical purposes, ignored.

Penn Square Partners, consisting of subsidiaries of S. Dale High's companies and the Lancaster Newspapers, Inc., clearly a major "*stakeholder*," has refused to make contributions towards the Martin Plan bailout. Since both were the prime sponsors of the Convention Center Project and beneficiaries of the 'sweet heart' Marriott Hotel lease and option to buy, this is craven on its part, in the spirit of 'the public be damned!'

Or, in other words, nineteenth century 'Robber Barons' emerging in twenty-first century Lancaster.

The second is the \$5 million to be raised through a City Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ). Sponsored by State Senator Lloyd Smucker, CRIZ amounts to a scheme to transfer tax revenue from our

children and grandchildren to benefit current special interests.

Why is the \$5 million needed for refurbishments and renovations? Because the normal allowance for such items was purposefully not budgeted by the project sponsors. If they had, the project could not have moved ahead. The consequence was tantamount to a fraud on the taxpayers.

A normal CRIZ diverts future tax revenues from future generations to repay benefits to special parties today. That is horrible in itself.

Since there is nothing new being created, his CRIZ will be a gift from taxpayers, both today and in the future.

When will taxpayers wake up to how powerful special interests are looting Lancaster ?

When will the citizenry understand that the current Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. no longer has an interest in protecting the public? The days of the benevolence on the part of the Steinman family are over.

Only then will the looting stop.

**The above items have been excerpted from www.NewsLanc.com
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and letters can be sent anonymously through the home page.**