

## **The Issue of Trust**, excerpt from Steve Kozachik, Ward 6 Newsletter of Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>.

With that thought in mind, I share this quote (sent to me by John O'Hare) that kind of paints the picture I'm afraid might be the prevailing sentiment, locally right now:

*"The most dangerous man to any government is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane, and intolerable"*

— **H.L. Mencken, *Prejudices: Third Series***

I'm sure I wouldn't go as far as Mr. Mencken goes, and yet if you also consider this post that came out in immediate reaction to the Main Gate development vote last week, it might not be too far off: <http://urbanuniversityinterface.com> Note also that the post mentions road projects that have been under scrutiny and the RTA in general, and other land use concerns. The urban university interface post, along with an article that appeared in the Star over the weekend demonstrate that the level of distrust we have engendered, most recently through the way we side stepped the public input that was received in the course of coming to a conclusion in the Main Gate zoning decision, is not to be underestimated.

I believe we may well have sacrificed the road bonds in favor of the 130' height being requested by a single developer. If so, the collateral damage is far beyond the limited gain that the 4 supporters of that vote felt they were achieving. It would only take one of them to request a reconsideration of that vote and we might be in a position to regain some level of cred in the "hoods". Oddly, the motion specifically involved 2 parcels, and yet in a follow up newsletter one of the council members who voted in favor of the 'compromise' said it only included "one parcel."

That same council member said we shouldn't be "bullied by neighborhood groups." Considering the fact that he never made it to any of the meetings to participate in – or even observe – the exchanges in which the "neighborhood groups" were negotiating in good faith with the developers, I'm a little surprised at the boldness in his statement. There was no bullying going on, but an honest attempt to find common ground between groups of people who had previously disagreed on the bulk of what we were negotiating.

This motion was passed by people disengaged from that public process, and clearly by one of them who has a fundamental misconception of either the vote, or the process that led up to it. Politicians make political decisions, not always good economic ones, and not always decisions that show an understanding of perceptions outside of the political bubble. They can afford to. After all, they're playing with other peoples' money. A very recent Gallup poll asking the top priorities of voters validates the importance of the trust issue: The number one priority was job creation (film bill) and a close second was eliminating corruption in government. I'm not alleging corruption in the vote, but simply pointing out that the electorate has issues with the credibility of politicians. We didn't help that perception.