

November 1, 2013

To the members of the Ann Arbor District Library Board,

Pittsfield Township held a Public Hearing on the potential CIA/TIF on State Road 10/9/2013. You may have already received my statement from that hearing.

There are many other options for improving roads, and I urge the AADL Board members to exercise your authority to opt out of the CIA/TIF during the 60 day opt-out period, which began October 9, 2013.

As the former Clerk (2000-2004) and Treasurer (2004-2008) of Pittsfield Charter Township, and as the former Chair of the Planning Commission (2000- 2008), I can assure you that Pittsfield's past administrations avoided these types of tax capture districts, for good reasons.

As a strong supporter of the services that the AADL provides, as a person who has encouraged voters to support AADL millage votes, and as the owner of property in the AADL district, I am deeply concerned that tax dollars that should support our Library could be diverted, in part, for road expansion in Pittsfield Township.

How can you explain to AADL taxpayers, and voters that substantial funds will be captured from the Library millage, in order to expand a short section of State Road in Pittsfield? This expansion provides no direct benefit to the AADL, which has no physical presence on State Road.

State Road has three lanes or more in most sections, and signalized intersections, and is in much better shape than most County roads. The capture district is not blighted or deriorated. In fact, it is almost fully developed, or in the process of development, with attractive buidlings and campus style business parks, and a lovely shopping plaza with major roads improvements already in place. This road needs no enhancement in order to encourage development. As expected, Pittsfield is already experiencing a resurgence of development in all sectors, after a temporary decline.

The properties in the CIA/TIF would increase in value whether or not the road is expanded; that is why the CIA/TIF is being rushed through to put on the tax rolls this year, in order to capture tax increase that is inevitable. There is no benefit to the AADL from this road expansion, only a loss in tax revenue.

Businesses moving to the corridor automatically receive a tax abatement from the current Pittsfield Board, and the CIA/TIF would cut revenues further.

In the past, developers have funded their own required road improvements, based on traffic they add when they build. The proposed 20 year CIA/TIF in Pittsfield would reverse this policy, instead placing this expense squarely on the taxpayers. Funds intended for buildings and services in the AADL would instead be diverted to pay for road improvements for new development.

This is unfair to the many responsible developers who paid for their own improvements in the past.

It is unfair to the existing residents and taxpayers of the Township, who should not have to pay more to replace tax dollars siphoned off from the properties on State Road, to pay for the infrastructure costs of for-profit development.

It is unfair to our taxing authorities that provide valuable services to our residents, who are being asked to contribute to infrastructure for new for-profit development.

It is unfair to the homeowners who live on State Road, who were not invited to sit on the CIA Board, and who do not want this road expansion in their yards.

My husband and I are the only members of the public who attended every meeting on the CIA/TIF. I attended the work session of the Board in March which began this \$35 million plan, and my husband and I made efforts to attend the swift succession of daytime meetings of the CIA and Board that followed. The rapid timeframe meant little public information would be disseminated, and little public input sought, in order to rapidly rush the district onto the 2013 winter tax bill.

This short timeframe effectively excluded most members of the public. The first work session (3/27/2013) had only a vague agenda "State Street Corridor Improvement," with no mention of the creation of a CIA/TIF. It was held in a small side room, where most members of the public don't even realize they are allowed to attend.

Other special meetings of the Board and CIA were held during the day. Those of us who work had trouble attending. The Board meeting was an unscheduled special meeting at 11:00 am on 7/24/2013. Only residents accustomed to monitoring the legal notices were aware.

At that meeting, the resolution establishing the district and its boundaries was adopted. There was a Public Hearing on the CIA 5/22/2013 at a regular Board meeting; several people attended, but were moments late due to traffic backed up on Michigan Ave. So, the Public Hearing was closed with no comment and was not re-opened.

I have brought several other written statements from the final public hearing on 10/9/2013, to give you a sample of the opposition to this project in Pittsfield. I have found that most residents and taxpayers are opposed to this tax capture district. The residents are unaware of the project, and this should not be confused with approval.

On 10/9/2013, Township Supervisor Grewal dismissed all opponents who spoke as her political rivals. As I stated then, I am speaking as a resident and taxpayer. There are sound reasons to opt out of the CIA/TIF, to preserve taxpayer dollars and use them as the voters intended.

At the first work session, Township Clerk Alan Israel described State Road as looking the same as it did 25 years ago, with no improvements.

In fact, many major improvements have occurred over the past 25 years, and especially over the last decade. A strong Master Plan and political will led to road improvement agreements forged by the WCRC with developers, so that those who added traffic to the road paid for their upgrades. For example, Wal-Mart and Federal Express paid over \$5M, and business property owners paid for the traffic signal at State and Textile through a Special Assessment. This light would be torn out and replaced by the CIA/TIF plan.

Sidewalks that were built and are owned and maintained by business park owners would be torn out and replaced by the CIA/TIF. These are six and ten foot wide concrete walks. After demolition and replacement, taxpayers (not business owners) will be obligated to maintain and repair asphalt paths built with CIA/TIF dollars.

At the March work session, the Clerk also stated that the tax capture district had to be established this year, as property values are at their lowest, and would increase rapidly in years to come. The most funds could be captured beginning in 2013 over the next 20 years.

This proves that taxable values will increase on their own, without the CIA/TIF: The proposed improvements will not happen for a number of years. The increase in taxable value bears no connection to the CIA/TIF, since many of the parcels included in the district are already developed. The open lands that remain will undoubtedly develop, with or without the CIA/TIF, due to a desirable location and an Ann Arbor address.

I urge you to vote opt out of this rushed and ill-advised CIA/TIF

Thank you,

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