

Public comment: RTA Board Meeting - April 10th, 2013 - Jim Casha, Norwich, ON, 540-717-9240, jim.casha@gmail.com

Just outside this building is the body of 'The Boy Governor' – Stevens T. Mason – he was **re-buried** there in 2010 for the fourth time – as they say, 'it's hard to keep a good man down'. 'The Boy' was Michigan's first governor and the man, or 'boy', who singlehandedly, despite the unwillingness of Congress and others, 'invented' Michigan.

We now have a 'man Governor' - a man whose plans are to **re-invent** Michigan. Will he be remembered as a visionary - like the 'Boy' – or is he just another glorified accountant? Is he a man of integrity – or one who will *knowingly* let private individuals profit at the expense of the people?

One of Mason's greatest contributions was the creation of the University of Michigan. We now have the opportunity to create a Regional Transportation System - one that can connect one of the finest schools in the country, by bus *and* rail, with Michigan's most important city – Detroit. Will this Governor, like Mason, have the courage to do the right thing - or, will he keep us 'mired' in the scandalous, short-sighted, greedy actions of the, not too distant, past?

To fund the 'University', 72 sections of *prime* real estate (46,080 acres), was deeded to the school.

To help fund the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) the 163 acres of the people's land, known as the Michigan State Fairgrounds & Exposition Center, along with any publicly held land from Woodward to I-75 and Seven Mile to Eight Mile, should be deeded to the RTA. This land can serve as the location for an iconic, 100% federally funded, Multi-Modal Transit Station, headquarters for the RTA, and the lands surplus to the needs of the RTA could be long- termed lease for **true** public private partnerships.

Seventy acres of land, encompassing the historic buildings of the Fairgrounds could be leased to a Michigan State Fair Authority (MSFA). The former chair of such an 'authority' sits on your board. Out of the hands of the 'State' – the Fairgrounds can be **re-invented** into a year-round Exposition Center where Michigan can show the world what we can do in the areas of energy, technology and agriculture.

Will the RTA Board take the first step, and ask the Michigan Land Bank, and the Governor, to stop the transfer of this property until such time as the Board can get up and running and can evaluate all the options for the use of this property? It needs to be done soon, as the Governor, through the Land Bank, is about to make a serious mistake. A letter, or a phone call, is all it would take.

Do your part - then no one can blame you. It will then be up to the Governor to 'do the right thing'. Hopefully, with his skills as a finance manager – those lacking in 'The Boy Governor' – he will be able to avoid a major public scandal.

A vision – integrity – and 'financial ingenuity' are all that stand in the way of a **Grand 2015 Michigan State Fair & Exposition** – The Best State Fair Ever. One that will showcase our new Regional Transit System and honor the efforts of Michigan's citizen soldiers with a Sesquicentennial Celebration commemorating the end of the Civil War- and 'uniting our Great State'.