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Van Wezel / SPAC

1 message

Kelly Franklin <kelly.a.franklin@gmail.com>

Tue, Apr 5, 2022 at 8:43 AM

To: Marlon Brown <marlon.brown@sarasotafl.gov>, mary.bensel@sarasotafl.gov

Cc: City Commissioners <CityCommissioners@sarasotafl.gov>, Rachel Brown Hackney

<Rachel@sarasotanewsleader.com>, Roger Brown <roger.brown@heraldtribune.com>, Blake Fussell

<bfussell@yourobserver.com>, Dan Lobeck <dlobeck@lobeckhanson.com>

Greetings Mr. Brown and Ms. Bensel,

First off, thank you both for all you do to generally keep our active citizenry informed and engaged, and for serving the public in really hard jobs, made all the more harder because they inevitably involve competing demands and disagreements. I could never do what either one of you do with such general equanimity, and I am grateful that we have you both in city government.

That said, I am both hurt and disappointed that you would publicly disparage me, particularly when I have not disparaged you, and am, in fact, recounting the actual facts and history that brought us to this point. So was Dan Lobeck, although in more combative terms than might seem necessary or effective.

While it certainly seems possible that the Van Wezel leaders, potential private donors, and some commissioners may have been proceeding for the last few years under the assumption that, without regard for what the orchestra might do or decide, the city needed, and the citizens were prepared to support, a several hundred million dollar new performing arts center at the bayfront and put the Van Wezel out to pasture, those assumptions were never articulated to the public.

Moreover, the question of a Van Wezel replacement was explicitly NOT part of what was discussed, decided, or approved when the commission authorized that partnership for the Bay Park (see A.J. Laffley's text to Commissioner Brody that day from the audience thanking him for approving the Bay Park Conservancy agreement and queuing up SPAC as the next topic).

While I can certainly see that reasonable people might come to different decisions on the Van Wezel replacement question, the fact is, **citizens have not been asked that question**, and I take exception to you both implying, one by invoking my name from the dias, that it I was being less than honest about the facts that got us to the point of *3 commissioners approving a huge blank check for a new hall which will render the Van Wezel obsolete, with no business plan, P&L, or publicly debated "greenlight" decision.*

It is certainly possible for insiders like you to be working from assumptions that are different from what has been discussed with the taxpaying public, but that doesn't mean that citizens with whom you have not shared your market research, environmental analysis, structural requirements, cost analysis, and financing mechanisms, are being untruthful when they point out that none of that information, if it currently exists, has been shared with the public or approved by the taxpayers.

Like all humans, I sometimes get things wrong. However, I do not, knowingly lie or spread disinformation, did not do so in the case, and I am getting awfully tired of hearing that slander directed against citizens from city hall.

Kill the sacred purple cow if you must, but I would thank you not to accuse ME of being less than honest about what just happened here as experienced from the cheap seats of a citizen / taxpayer / resident / arts and architecture aficionado with a great deal of affection for the charming creative community Sarasota has been, and an equal measure of disgust for the "greed is good" "more is better" mentality of conspicuous consumption that seem to have been imported of late from The Hamptons circa Great Gatsby.

Thank you,

Kelly A. Franklin