

Recreation Partnership

I was involved with the formation of the RP. I was part of the hard negotiations necessary to bring all the parties to the agreement. I know the fragility of this organization and I know the vision that was articulated in agreement. I am a public servant who has business, advisory, and legislative experience. I will stand up for my Town, but I have found that by being a team player rather than a bull dog, I can be more effective in securing good things for Caroline.

I was one of the first outside the County Legislature to recognize that the taxpayers were in big trouble as the State ramped up its use of the property tax to pay for State programs. The RP is seeing the effect as the County has reduced its funding. With all due respect to M. R., who works tirelessly for our youth and all of us and who is a prime activist with the PUSHBACK movement, I don't share her optimism that the County could find the funds in the 2005 budget to continue its support of the RP. Even if it did, I don't believe it would be able to sustain that funding level in future years until the State stops using the property tax as a revenue source. The County not being a ¼ partner is a change from the assumptions and basis that the RP was formed. With this change and reduced funding our future is changed. We can either be victims of the future and the State's unsatisfiable appetite for PT or we can look at this as an opportunity to strengthen the RP for 2005 and beyond.

It is with this baggage that I come before you. Searching to strengthen the RP and look for the opportunities. These are the opportunities that I see.

With the County removing direct funding, how should the RP be structured? Should the County still have 2 voting seats?

How will the loss in revenue from the County affect the RP? Less programs? Our last choice or other funding sources such as Sponsorships, donations, fundraising. Is there another RP structure that allows easier access to these funding sources?

Can we use this opportunity to bring Lansing into the RP?

Can we use this opportunity to get programming to the rural areas or find others ways to deal with the transportation issue which limits the rural youth participation to those from families that are economically well off.

I don't claim to have all the answers. These are a few ideas that have been kicked around by the TCMOA, of which the Town of Lansing is a member.

1. Consider restructuring the RP given the removal of some and probably all of the County's ¼ funding.
2. Consider another RP structure such as 501c3; creating a NFP agency, to facilitate accessing funding streams other than PT.
3. Explore a joint program coordinator role with staff recreation program directors from municipalities that have them (City, Dryden, Lansing, Ithaca, others?). This has the dual effect of getting Lansing involved and getting more programs to the rural areas.

4. In addition to more rural programs, explore funding sources or collaborations with transportation agencies like TCAT and School districts. To achieve the desired effect of involving more rural youth in RP programs which may have a positive effect on relieving tensions and violence at ISCD.

To some these ideas may seem bold; to others unworkable; and still to others undermining relationships. To those who know me, it is the antithesis of my nature to undermine. This perception is not in anyway my intent and I hope that I can/have removed this emotion.

In conclusion, I have heard rumors that some RP members have been upset that the conception and initial discussion of these ideas occurred outside the halls of this great body. My response is that in order to involve Lansing it necessarily had to. Also you should know that the TCMOA talks about many issues that affect Towns. We gather information and have wide ranging discussions about issues and strategies. Since changes in RP cannot happen without the cooperation of a majority of the RP, we humbly bring our thoughts and ideas to you now.

Thank you for your consideration.