

I would like to see more transparency in the conduct of business before the Council, and I welcome agenda item #6 that seeks that goal.

We should have transparency in regard to contracts for the City Manager, settlements that incur the expenditure of our limited tax dollars, subtle agreements with the City Manager that result in Council programs and perks, and ongoing dealings with developers, real estate interests etc.

When I see several Councilors receiving over \$40,000, \$50,000 and \$60,000 for their campaigns, I believe that we need more transparency in regard to campaign contributions that come from developers, large real estate corporations, universities, biotech companies and pharmaceutical companies; **those with business before the Council**, especially when those contributions amount to several thousands dollars when they come from owners, employees and family members of the entities seeking something before the Council.

Unfortunately, these types of transparency that are so vital to our democratic goals are hard to establish and maintain.

Tonight I am suggesting, once again, that we eliminate a limit on transparency that has existed for years at the Council level. I am suggesting a change that would be relatively easy to bring about. Currently the record of Council meetings, which are available on-line and which are commonly available at the Clerk's office, do not indicate how Councilors vote on a particular matter before the Council. While there is a record of which Councilors bring resolutions before the Council, the names of Councilors voting for or against an order, agenda item, resolution etc. is oddly not included in the on-line or commonly printed record of the meeting.

I have spoken about this in several past years, and the Council has been unwilling to change this practice of non-disclosure of individual names being associated with their vote.

There have been many recent votes, such as those regarding special interest zoning benefiting Chestnut Hill Realty, disclosure of settlements entered into by the City, etc. that should be clearly on the record.

Once we can more easily track the votes of councilors, then perhaps we can move on to more easily understand and track the impact of the money that is given to Councilors by special interests that win the votes that benefit them. Meaningful transparency will become more of a reality.

I want to thank Minka and Lelund for speaking with me about this issue of transparency in the recording of votes by the Council, and for their apparent support of this change. I hope to see action on this issue in the near future. Voting transparency has been too long in coming.

