

From: "JS Swanstrom" <swansj@comcast.net>
Subject: SPOKESMAN REVIEW ALLOWS FLUFF ARTICLE, BUT NOT THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SCIENCE CENTER AND THE MOBIUS LEASE
Date: November 22, 2009 11:46:10 AM PST
To: <swansj@comcast.net>

To All, I don't know where to begin. How can camping be fun when the local paper takes only one side of an issue. The Spokesman Review prints this article but won't print the truth about the financing. Here's the facts. When this project goes in the tank, the tax payers, not Mobius will pick up the tab. The under statement on the year is marked in red in Mr. Worrall's article. That's appropriate, because that color will flow freely in red ink for the center. The Review refused to print my letter that pointed out the tremendous risks to the tax payers. The letter is in blue below.

My analysis below has been confirmed by those who know the finances of our Park System and Riverfront Park. I've also had an opportunity to review their finances from time to time. This should be an awakening for those who work for the Park's Department, the Park's Board and our wonderful City. My note below is to Jonathan Brunt about his recent article. I also find it interesting there are so many contractors and engineers connected to the Park Board and Mobius.

TO JONATHAN BRUNT-SPOKESMAN REVIEW. BY THE WAY, BY THE WAY, NO RESPONSE FROM MR. BRUNT.

Jonathan,

Why is it the Spokesman Review always leaves the important facts out of articles concerning the Science Center. 1-When it fails the tax payers are left with the debt, not Mobius. The Mobius Group demands no financial responsibility. 2- Around 1.5 million a year will have to be raised privately to sustain it's operation. Where are those social dollars coming from when the Symphony and others are having trouble meeting their obligations? 3- This same issue was voted down by Spokane voters over 10 years ago. 4- If this is such a great financial benefit for the City why isn't the Mobius Board looking at other pieces of property instead of arm wrestling the Park Board for this free Park Land? The Cowles own lots of adjacent properties. 5- Why have you not printed that all science centers lose money and this one will be no different? Finally, the Park Board's budget is between 10 and 12 million a year or 8% of the City's general fund. When this project goes in the tank, there goes the swimming pools and other activities. A million dollars of the budget goes to up keep in Riverfront Park, and that will go up when they lose the Imax Theatre. The Science Center, not the City will reap that revenue. The City loses that annual income.

This project is a financial disaster. If it goes through, Spokane will take a **major financial** hit it's tax payers and budget will not be able to handle.
Thank you, Jonathan Jock Swanstrom

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No derailing science center

Neil K. Worrall Special to The Spokesman-Review

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A meeting of a Park Board subcommittee this week created an inaccurate perception of the Mobius Science Center project. Members of the board suggested Mobius is asking for sweeping changes to the pending lease the two parties have been working on for months. This is not the case. More importantly, this meeting led to a perception that the project may be faltering. Also untrue.

Regardless of whether a successful agreement can be reached with the Park Board, the plan to build a science center is alive and well. We may build it in a different location, but we remain 100 percent committed to creating this educational asset for the youth of our region.

The changes to the lease mentioned in the subcommittee meeting had been previously discussed and the vast majority of the lease is unchanged from that approved by the Park Board in August. The environmental cleanup language required revision because the August lease stated that the technical surveys of the site and its associated cleanup had been completed and that Mobius was satisfied with the findings. However, this work had not yet been completed by the city and there were no findings to review.

Language was added to state that these studies were in process and the city has recently initiated a more comprehensive environmental study of the potential contamination of its property. Mobius recently discovered a parking easement existed that had not been disclosed, necessitating a revision to our parking plan, business plan and the lease language. Mobius also requested revision of the language allowing the use of tax credits for funding, similar to The Fox and YMCA, and this was written in cooperation with the city attorney's office. Several other minor "housekeeping" changes were also suggested.

The draft lease (available online at www.mobiusspokane.org/science) spells out the terms of the proposed relationship between the city and Mobius. It covers many topics, but a few important aspects include:

- The city leases the land for 50 years to Mobius for \$12,500 a year. The city owns the land.
- Mobius raises all money to build and operate the science center. Mobius alone bears the liability for any operating losses. If Mobius fails, the building reverts to city ownership. The city could sell or re-lease the building.
- The lease allows Mobius to sublease property to other tenants, with city approval. **Because nonprofit science centers don't cover costs through admissions alone**, this revenue would help support operating costs. Any subleasing will always be an ancillary part of the project, as science education and programming remains our central mission.
- The city will perform “initial remedial work” as it applies to existing hazardous substances, or pollution, for the property to qualify for DOE approval. This would need to be done for any use of the property.

But more important than any lease is the idea behind creating a world class science center. This is an idea that has been alive in our community for years because of what it would mean to our youths. A science center is a place where young people get exposed to new ideas, experiences and career possibilities.

The history of the idea of a science center on the north bank goes back a decade. In 1999, a Park Board-run planning and community input process revealed a science center was the public's top choice for the use of the north bank property. Because the city had no funds to support the science center, it issued a request for proposal in 2002 to select an independent science center operator. Mobius was selected.

Mobius has been working to raise private and state funds to build the science center. Having a private nonprofit take the responsibility, and the liability, for operating a science center is viewed by many as a win-win. It would enable the city to fulfill the public's vision for the use of the north bank.

Mobius Spokane is a nonprofit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors. We are a group of both current and retired business people, physicians, community volunteers and educators. Mobius Spokane operates Mobius Kids in River Park Square, which provides young children with fun, hands-on educational opportunities and averages over 65,000 visitors a year.

The proposed Mobius Science Center will build on this success, providing youths ages 8 and up with fun and educational experiences designed to engage them in learning. This past summer, MobiusLab at NorthTown provided visitors with a sneak peek of the science center. We received great feedback from some 10,000 visitors.

Many good questions have been raised this week as a result of media coverage. You can e-mail us through links at www.mobiusspokane.org/science with questions or comments. As we make decisions about whether to pursue collaboration with the city or build elsewhere, we welcome the community's perspective.

Neil K. Worrall is president of Mobius Spokane.

THE REVIEW PRINTS NEIL WORRALL'S FLUFF MESSAGE, BUT WILL NOT PRINT MY LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

MANAGED NEWS? YOU BET!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

MOBIUS PARK LAND LEASE IS A HEIST

Mr. Jim Camden left out some important facts about the MOBIUS Project Group draft lease. Voters rejected this science center project over a decade ago. The proponents spent over \$150,000 campaigning for it and still lost. It was the most expensive single campaign in Spokane history. Why was it defeated?

Science centers lose money. My research estimates \$1.5 million in red ink annually for the Spokane Science center. The proposed fifty-year lease at \$1 per year also allows for subleasing to other parties. This lease confers valuable parkland to a group that will have no financial responsibility when it fails. Who will pick up the tab? Not MOBIUS. It will leave the taxpayers with their debt. Sound familiar? This doomed to fail project may mimic the Riverpark Square Parking Garage fiasco that is costing the tax payers around \$100 million bucks.

The unelected Park Board approved this lease. City Council members will now review this draft lease agreement. This is a heist of public property with no recourse. "Halt before default" is the cry. Demand the City Council put this to a public vote.

*Please don't edit my letter without letting me know about the possible changes. Thank you, Jock
Jock Swanstrom*

We heard over 10 years ago, this is for the kids. It's an educational center and how wonderful it will be for Spokane. The voters didn't believe it even after the Science Center folks spent \$150,000 on the voting campaign. Why does this group need a public land

heist for \$1.00 a year and foggy subleasing for other businesses? The fog or smoke screen is the Science Center. I have yet to find out what these other businesses will be on the North Bank of the River. Their revenues would have to be beyond any financial belief to sustain the Science Center on 15% of WHAT?? WOULD YOU LEASE PUBLIC OR YOUR OWN LAND TO SOMEONE WHO SAYS, IT'S FOR THE KIDS, BUT WE ARE NOT SURE HOW WE CAN PAY FOR IT? MONEY NOW IS TIGHTER THAN THE LID ON A SPACE CAPSULE AND THIS LEASE SHOULD BE HALTED TO SAVE THE BURDEN FROM THE SPOKANE TAX PAYERS.

*ANOTHER FOOT NOTE TO MR. WORRALL'S ARTICLE. 65,000 UNCONFIRMED VISITORS AT THE RIVERPARK SQUARE MOBIUS FACILITY. THE SEATTLE PACIFIC SCIENCE CENTER HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE 1962 AND IS THE OLDEST ONE OF IT'S KIND IN THE U.S., CLAIMS 1 MILLION VISITORS A YEAR AND LOSES MONEY. ANY QUESTIONS?
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