



## Council Chair attempts to waste millions of taxpayer dollars

And now, the rest of the story...The majority of Pierce County Council members are abdicating their responsibility to lead on the issues they were elected to consider. On April 13, 2015, Council Chair Dan Roach – along with Councilmembers Jim McCune and Doug Richardson – attempted to pass an ordinance that would have required a public “advisory” vote on the construction of a new county building. This is a project that the council has voted to support. In other words, it PASSED, but these three individuals were on the losing side.

Roach introduced his proposal knowing that such a vote would not be binding (in other words, the election does not mandate the council to follow the results) but could potentially kill a sensible project that would save taxpayer money. I can only assume that he and the others were upset about losing the earlier vote and were bowing to pressure from Tea Party activists who want to stop the project and rack up millions in cost increases to the county. They have, in the past, voted twice to authorize spending \$1 million for the project design. Now, after a million dollars has been spent, they are pulling their support.

### More about the project

The project is actually a lease-to-own building that will be financed with private money, built with private money and leased to the county for 30 years before it becomes county property. The new building is a great example of a public/private partnership that would consolidate county services into one place, leading to more efficiency in government and resulting in a building fully owned by the county. If we do nothing, the county will continue leasing around 150,000 square feet of commercial office space at eight different locations around Tacoma to house hundreds of employees, costing taxpayers more than \$3.2 million each year (that's over \$100 million after 30 years, assuming lease costs increase!). Those who supported Roach's proposal know that, and apparently they think that's a good idea.

Once again, Councilmembers Roach, McCune and Richardson are giving the public misinformation. Since the lease payments will be made with the money currently being spent on leasing non-county-owned buildings, this project will NOT require an increase in taxes. But these three continue to misrepresent the financing of this project by saying that it will negatively affect the public's taxes. And then they want the public to vote on it with this misinformation! I believe it is our responsibility as elected officials to make sure that the public receives ACCURATE information.

I, along with Councilmembers Rick Talbert and Derek Young, voted against Roach's proposal for a number of reasons. First, we already voted in support of this project. Second, this issue is currently under examination by the court system to determine if a lease agreement qualifies as a ballot issue. Any future action must wait until a court decision takes place. Third, lease agreements are administrative decisions (the county

executive's role), not policy decisions (the council's role). Fourth, as mentioned before, Roach's proposal is misleading about the effect the new building will have on your taxes.

And finally, I believe that we have been elected to research and study the issues that are brought to us, to represent the public's best interest and to take tough votes when needed. I believe that the public wants us to save money and to be more efficient in our delivery of services. It appears that Roach and others may not have the courage and leadership to make tough decisions and prefer instead to send even lease agreements to non-binding votes. If they get their way and everything goes to a public vote, then why even have a representative form of government?

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