

Letter To The Editor: Facts, Laws and Ostriches

March 14, 2017 11:49 am

By Chesla Seely-Anschutz, Sturgeon Bay

The Friends were right on the facts and right on the law. The ruling from Judge Huber finding in favor of the Friends is crystal clear. His unwavering conclusion and verdict is that the mayor is wrong in his attempt to sell the parcel which is wholly or largely owned by the State.

The ruling states indisputably that the parcel was a dock, filled by its owners and that filled lakebed cannot be sold. The City never obtained an Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) for the parcel although the Friends and citizens asked the mayor repeatedly to simply ask the WDNR. This case was never in question and only went to trial because of the mayor's ostrich-headed management.

In addition to being wrong on the facts and the law, the mayor's plan will undermine the economic future of the waterfront. Building hotels on waterfronts goes against all current development trends and thinking. In locating the hotel set back from the water's edge, increasing the economic opportunity surrounding the waterfront, the Friends are trying to protect the long-term economic value of our city.

The Mayor is continuing to blame the people for the problem he created. Blaming is not leadership; it is cowardice. The mayor can continue to live with his head in the sand (or dirt piles), or he can show some leadership, and join the Friends in our petition to the WDNR to determine an OHWM. Moving forward and finding a legal location for the hotel, rather than fighting the facts or the law, is the only sensible path. It will also create lasting value and a wonderful waterside public space.

Those that attempt legislation to reverse such a clear ruling are promoting a gross miscarriage of justice. It would be a tremendous injustice for the mayor or any elected official to try and reverse the court's clear and compelling verdict that this was filled lakebed and according to our constitution cannot be sold for private development.

1. MaryAnn on Mar 14, 2017 at 10:18 pm said:
Chesla, great message! Thank you!
2. Linda on Mar 15, 2017 at 03:28 am said:
Well stated, Chesla! Even an ostrich comes out of the dirt to the light, hope the Mayor can do the same.
3. Mike on Mar 15, 2017 at 07:21 am said:
Well said! It is increasingly clear: we don't need "new" legislation to remedy this situation, we need a new, more inclusive plan. Apparently, the only way this city will get one is with a new city council, one that puts the Mayor in the minority. Once that happens, hopefully in April, we can work towards getting a new Mayor.