

Pulte Homes. Camarda Park. What's next? Oh yes, Union Place.

I have watched over the years as the Carmel Town Board repeatedly wasted millions and millions of our tax dollars. I have watched as the Town Board bastardized our zoning laws to create such disasters as the Pulte Homes Mountainside Defacement and the spending of more than \$2.5 million of our money to build Camarda Park. To put the cost of Camarda Park in perspective, Baldwin Meadows Park, which is a superior park, cost less than \$450,000. Why?

At the January 5, 2011 Town Board meeting, some of the individuals who were instrumental in the approval of these disasters, and who could be involved in the approval of Union Place, were scheduled to be reappointed, I decided to attend the meeting to express my concerns.

What I witnessed was truly despicable. First, the Carmel Town Board denied me and other residents an opportunity to comment on the reappointments until after the Town Board had already voted to approve the reappointments. Regrettably, this is the twisted form of democracy our Town Board created to cloak their dirty work and discourage resident participation.

Next, the Town Board began to spew a series of misinformation, half-truths and lies pertaining to the approval process and costs of Camarda Park. What are they trying to hide, and why? Aren't they supposed to be working for us?

For example, Councilman Ravallo incorrectly stated Camarda Park cost less than \$2,000,000. When I refuted Mr. Ravallo by presenting a copy of the Camarda Park Cap Fund Expenditure Ledger that lists payments in excess of \$2.5 million, Supervisor Schmitt and Financial Consultant Carey incorrectly responded those were the combined costs of both Camarda Park and Baldwin Meadow Park. That's simply not true. See for yourself, the expenditure ledgers for both Camarda Park and Baldwin Meadow Park are available on [www.carmelresident.org](http://www.carmelresident.org).

Mr. Ravallo then appeared to justify the excessive spending by stating that 80 percent of the \$2,000,000 was paid from a restricted Parkland Trust Fund that was could only be spent on capital construction park projects. First, that is again simply not true, and even if 80 percent of the moneys did come from a restricted fund, that's no reason to waste it by paying for a long narrow road with a costly storm water detention system to reach a landlocked parcel of land and build a poorly designed second-rate ball field.

And as a further excuse, Mr. Ravallo wants you to believe the land on which Camarda Park was built was the only available land for the ball fields. That again is simply not true.

There are reasons our Town Board spent this grossly absurd amount to build Camarda Park, and it has to do with secret agreements our Town Board made outside of the

public eye. In response to this accusation Mr. Ravallo proffered the enlightened defense, 'if it was a secret meeting, how could you possibly know it?'

Yet, in a surprising admission, Mr. Ravallo stated the developer for the Camarda Park-Willow Ridge subdivision was given "additional building lots." That's eye opening. Please join me in demanding a complete investigation to determine to what extent our Town Board may have participated in the approval of building lots beyond that which was legally permissible.

The Carmel Town Board has the duty and obligation to disclose any wrongdoing that may have occurred in the approval of Camarda Park, and to provide a full accounting of all costs associated with Camarda Park. Mr. Ravallo said he is proud of what he has done and said he would do it again. I think it is the responsibility of each resident to make sure he doesn't have that opportunity.

If any improprieties have occurred, those responsible should be held accountable. We may not be able to stop the wrongs in Washington, but in a small town like Carmel, together we can rid our community of those who perpetually waste our tax dollars and degrade our community.

Misinformation, half-truths and lies are the weapons of wrongdoers. We deserve a transparent Town government where the interests of the residents are paramount.

By Scott Friedman

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