

Skykomish Senate



Politically Incorrect

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Dieter Benz

Working to Promote American Values in Skykomish

Sky Chamber of Commerce?

an open letter to members

15 months ago I was invited to a Skykomish Chamber of Commerce revival meeting being held at the Cascadia.

Like others, I had plenty of things to do that day. Still, I drove up from Tacoma to attend.

The business community has made numerous attempts to maintain an active, ongoing Chamber. Such efforts have consistently met with failure.

why?

Mr. Rick Gorenson of the Sky River Inn and Mr. Larry Johnson spearheaded this latest revival.

They invited businesses, citizens and government officials from up and down the Sky Valley. King County, Skykomish School District and Sky government were also included. I guess you could say that just about everyone within a 75 mile radius had been invited.

By trying to be so inclusive, Messer's Gorenson and Johnson had, in my opinion, set the stage for yet another failure. It's called **failure to focus**.

Chambers of Commerce throughout this great land exist to promote healthy environments where business and commerce can flourish.

This includes educating citizens and government about the vital role business plays in creating and maintaining a strong economy.

It includes making sure elected officials



Battling heavy winter snows is nothing new in Sky

understand this role, especially as it relates to building a strong tax base.

Business pays a significant portion of the taxes in healthy communities. This relieves residents from having to shoulder the entire burden necessary to provide good schools, streets and government services.

the wrong people showed up

Not one business owner from up or down the Sky Valley showed up.

As small as our own Town of Sky business community is, four business owners didn't bother to attend.

Plenty of government types, School Dis-

trict employees and those who just like to go to meetings were in attendance.

The big theme was how to raise enough money to buy an electronic sign for the highway in order to promote all the wonderful things to see and do in Sky.

I poured rain on this parade early by pointing out that we already had a perfectly good sign on the highway (Lions Club) and that it was being used mainly to announce Town Council and School Board meetings. How many tourists driving by give a hoot about this?

I suggested we work with the Lions to make better use of this existing sign instead of talking about raising tens of thou-



There's no fooling around here. This one's pulling for all she's worth.

As usual, I was the leper, the out-cast, the trouble maker.

Another meeting was to be scheduled later at the community centre. I was given short notice of this meeting (an oversight, I'm sure), but never the less drove up once again to attend.

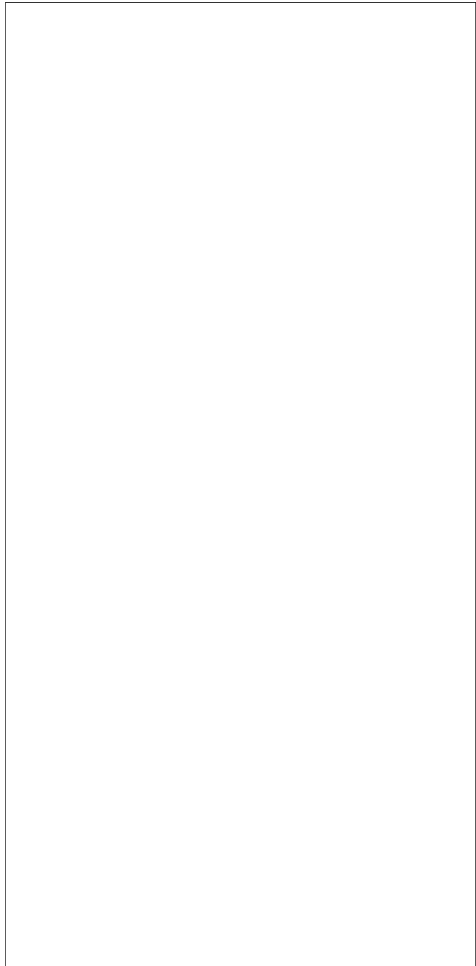
This time Rick and Larry divided attendees into small groups to 'brainstorm'.

This appeared childish to me. I remembered this from grade school, but hadn't seen it since, except at government sponsored events.

Groups provide a convenient hiding place for those who are unprepared or have little to offer. Yes, it certainly promotes diversity and inclusiveness, but at a severe cost.

Those who are prepared and have real meat to offer, won't stick around for this nonsense. Before long such groups are left with only those who can't cut it.

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sands of dollars for a new electronic one.

I also brought to the group's attention that at the present time Sky really didn't have much to promote and it might be better to address issues like this first.

After hearing a few naïve ideas from the school Super, I replied, that with all the problems over at the school, she might be better advised to concentrate efforts there.

One school teacher expressed interest in starting a photographic business and sought advice. While this was commendable, these were the kinds of distractions that prevented the meeting from actually moving forward.

I stated my willingness to pay \$100/month chamber dues to be a member of a good organisation, but that I wouldn't

be interested in paying even \$10/month to belong to an ineffective one. Quality, not quantity.

Hosts re-emphasized the need to get other members of our community as well those from up and down the valley to attend future meetings.

I followed up, commenting that those who were really interested, were already here today. Excuses were offered for the four Sky business owners and others who didn't show up, but I wasn't buying.

I stated that I too had other things to do today, but thought the needs of our business community were important enough to make time, including the four hour round trip drive.



Pretty soon it's time to fold up the tent once again and go home.

This communal approach limits outcomes to mediocre at best. The push for consensus versus results is being driven by government, not business (Sky being the exception).

I endured sitting mostly with those who had no business experience or skin in the game. They felt completely at ease saying whatever came to mind, no matter how inane. Everyone was of course congratulated for their contribution.

Following this path leads to drivel like the 'Vision for Skykomish' and the plan to turn the Historic Commercial District into an interpretive centre with public baths for bums and perverts.

Hey folks... This isn't Leavenworth. We missed a great opportunity to partner with them decades ago.

a different reality

My business experience is very different from yours. Upper level business meetings don't employ 'government speak'.

Attendees must use the English language to quickly and succinctly state the facts and make their case or be prepared to suffer the consequences.

Fluff, B.S, generalities and buzz words have no place. Those who transgress are swiftly brought to justice by the Chair, without benefit of the warm and fuzzy. It's rough, it's tough, but it's what it takes to be successful.

I'm certainly not proposing such a Nazi regimen for Sky, but I think you get the point.

respect for the rule of law

Next, Mr. Gorenson promoted some sort of plan that sounded illegal to me. I stated my concern and listened as **Rick said that he didn't care about the law.** It was at this point that I got up and left the meeting.

I have zero tolerance for those in Sky with a demonstrated lack of respect for the rule of law. This is one of the principal reasons Sky is in such an unenviable position today.

fast forward to the present

It's fascinating to observe the divergence between what people say and what they actually do.

During the past seven years, I have listened to people in Sky talk about economic development. The Town even has two self styled economic development gurus.

Mayor Mackner and sidekick Council member Lorna Goebel attend economic development seminars to learn the latest techniques for developing existing business and attracting new business.

Preventing the Sky Hotel from being restored, passing water and sign ordinances whose sole purpose appeared to be harassment of the Hotel and ploughing in owners are just a few of the techniques they've learned.

Well, we can certainly see the results.

the difference between us

As your neighbour, I would never stand idly by as the Town ploughed you in or prevented you from conducting or developing your business in a manner consistent with the law and the rules as laid out.

I would be camped out with you at Town Council's doorstep until this injustice was rectified.

I have watched neighbours and business associates sit on the sidelines while our and their interests were placed in harms way.

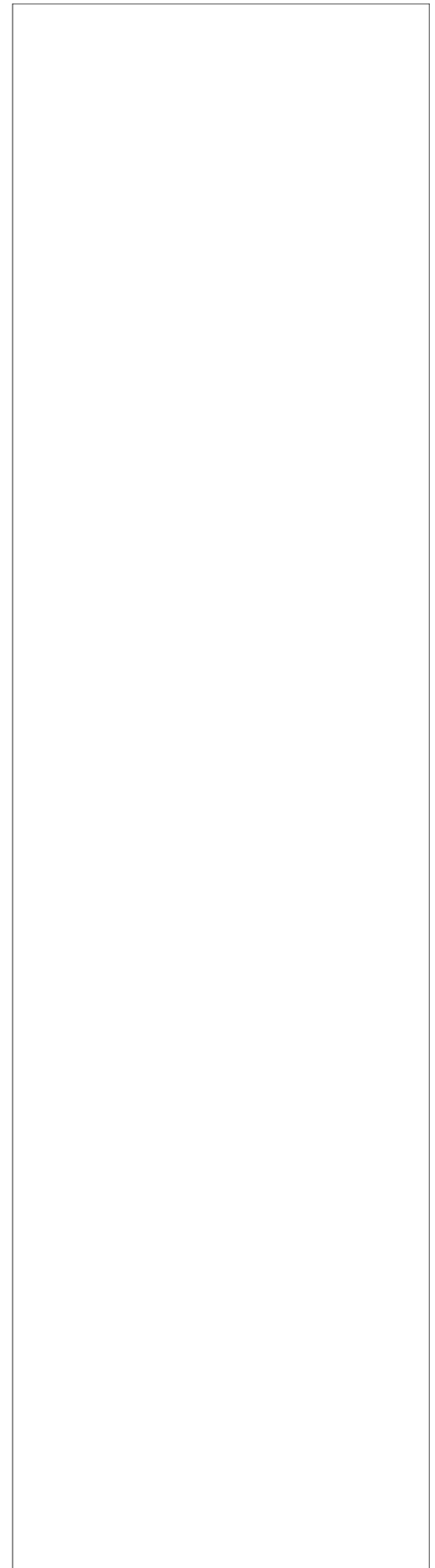
Mr. Henry Sladek has been on Council for years. During this time he has failed to move as much as an eyebrow to allow the restoration of the Skykomish Hotel to proceed.

He talks about Council's policy setting role, but I'm not aware of anything he's done other than prevent the Hotel project from moving forward and selling us out to WSDOE.

still destroying our town

Mr. Michael Moore is the Design Review Board Chairman responsible for tanking the Sky Hotel restoration. Six years later, he continues to sit as the Chair.

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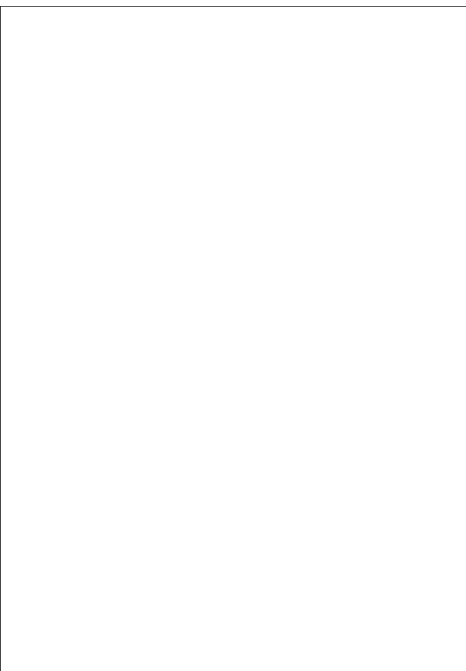
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His house is all fixed up, including a new roof that looks nice but is certainly not historically correct.

Anyone who pulled that crap and cost the Town millions of dollars in lost revenue, taxes and resident wages should have been sacked a long time ago.

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let's turn back the clock

It would be nice, but most adults know that some mistakes can't be undone.

While mayor Mackner and Council worked to severely cripple our Town's economy, the world enjoyed the greatest economic expansion in recorded history.

make hay while the sun shines

Most business leaders understand the 'business cycle'. Good times eventually lead to excesses that distort the economy, causing bubbles to develop. When these bubbles burst, lean times follow.

History cautions us to fill our granaries during the bountiful years in order that we may be sustained during the lean times.

Mayor Mackner and Town Council foolishly wasted hard earned taxpayer money on purchases like the new snow plough and sanding truck.

As expensive as these were, why do they sit idle while the Town uses an old borrowed dump truck in a vain attempt to get the job done?

I guess I'm just not smart enough to understand such things.

the future

Some may be tempted to think the message here is all about getting the Sky Hotel renovation approved.

What would actually happen if Town Council approved the Sky Hotel restoration today?

Answer: Absolutely Nothing!

what?

Hotel owners understand the United States economy is now headed toward, what in all likelihood, will be the 2nd Great Depression (GD2).

The time to have restored the Skykomish Hotel has passed. We don't anticipate business conditions will justify such an expenditure for at least 5 years.

This won't be good for you, the business community or the Town, but that's the road Sky chose when it turned its future over to those who know how to destroy but not create.

In heartfelt appreciation for destroying our economy and selling us out to WSDOE, you are awarded this

Certificate of Achievement

Mayor: **Charlotte Mackner**

Council members (present and past):

- Henry Sladek
- Lorna Goebel
- Darrel Joselyn
- Charlie Brown
- Bill Gould
- Cheryl Wahl

our future

Sky is in for a rough go. The economy is headed south big time and WSDOE will

be allowing BNSF to run ruff shod over our town as soon as the snow melts.

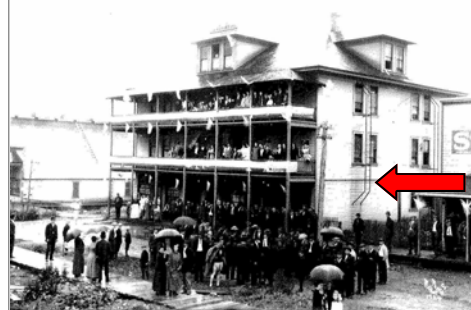
You're about to discover that Council's policies regarding the environmental cleanup are more than hollow, they're non-existent... Our ticket to disaster.

Thirty pieces of silver.

REWARD

\$100/\$500

One of two Skykomish Hotel wrought iron fire escape ladders has been stolen from the rear yard of the Hotel property. The fire escape ladders can be seen in this historic photo.



A \$100 reward will be paid for information leading to the recovery.

An additional \$500 will be paid if perps are arrested and convicted.

theSenate@SkykomishHotel.com

See You Later Alligator

