

To set the record straight in response to Pete Johnson's letter.

My actions are to help the Town of Davis. If a non-resident developer's activities conflict with the Town's interests, then I choose to support the Town of Davis.

To be clear his development has 18 lots and the first six are currently being constructed. There is **no issue** with those homes. The Town seeks to purchase 12 vacant lots for which NO building permits have been issued. **The developer plans to build 12 houses, roads, and a private-use parking lot on 1.1 acres of land!** That compacted construction is appropriate in DC suburbs but incompatible with Davis.

On Facebook, Johnson questioned our use of eminent domain for the public good. Well, this is what 'public good' looks like:

- Build a paved road to re-open an unofficial alley used for decades by residents and businesses. Incidentally, for \$5,000 each Mr. Johnson would let paying residents use **his** road – very neighborly!
- Construct a parking lot to address inadequate parking on William Ave. No other land is available to build parking lots to support restaurants and businesses on our main street. This includes adding a lighted stairway and ramp to connect the parking lot to William Ave.
- Build a network of paved ADA-accessible trails throughout the park and along the riverfront.
- Install an outdoor theatrical clamshell for conducting concerts, shows, and films in the park. So, get a pizza, sandwich, burger, or burrito, go to the park with the family and be entertained.
- Collaborate on constructing a pedestrian bridge over the Blackwater River connecting the Davis trail network to Blackwater Falls State Park.
- Stop the construction of DC-type houses along the Davis riverfront.

The above initiatives **are** for the public good.

The Town of Davis has attempted to purchase land on multiple occasions, but no deals were closed. In 2022 we paid \$10,000 in earnest money but that check was never cashed. The Town had the property appraised in July 2023 and learned that Mr. Johnson's asking price of \$59,000-\$113,000 per micro-lot was excessive for Davis. It was then (July 2023) that I first mentioned our possible use of eminent domain if we could not reach an agreement. However, we continued to request meetings to pursue a purchase agreement. No meeting ever occurred. While Mr. Johnson stalled the efforts of the Town he continued to market and sign contracts for individual lots knowing full well the Town would initiate eminent domain proceedings.

Mr. Johnson maintains the Town does not have the funds to purchase his property. If we are successful in the court with eminent domain, then the Town will have the opportunity to purchase the property at fair market value. Then we will see who is correct.

To be clear Annlee Curtis Boutwell (Building Commission) and Daniel Arnold (Parks and Recreation) did not initiate this action. I, as mayor, with the concurrence of others, initiated the eminent domain legal proceeding.

Al Tomson
Mayor, Town of Davis