



March 1, 2006

Dear Mayor Kruzan & City Councilmen,

I am presenting you the minutes of Monroe County Council's February 2nd, Special Session, which was devoted to a thorough discussion and presentations concerning options Monroe County could consider for establishing more services for juveniles in need of treatment, detention, and continuing shelter services.

The meeting was not televised or documented by CATS and I hope you will find a quick reading of the minutes to be worthwhile. Many thoughtful and insightful deliberations took place during this special session. I would like to emphasize to you that the County Council's willingness to show courage and leadership in making a landmark decision was a big step towards raising public awareness of the complexity of a long standing question over what is appropriate for our unique communities.

Having said that, I would also like to share with you a wise message that was imparted to a group of county officials, county employees, and Monroe County citizens who attended a comprehensive tour of Bartholomew County youth facilities (both public and private) on February 9th. Judge Heiman, who played a great role in the establishment of youth and juvenile programming in Bartholomew County, described, "these issues are not 'police' or 'justice' issues but rather, *community* issues..." With that mission, Bartholomew County was poised to implement programming that has become successful and appropriate to their citizens' values, needs, and preferences in choices.

It is my hope that the City of Bloomington will take a stand that goes proactively beyond the minutiae of determining their role in any location and infrastructure issues the current proposal may yield. A bare minimum of, or strictly perfunctory, city involvement would be disappointing in my opinion.

For sound decisions to be made on behalf of our own county's children, Monroe County government should benefit from your expertise, perspective, and zest for progressive initiatives. Personally, I have cited the Living Wage Ordinance, the Mayor's addresses concerning economic development definitions being broadened, city education related to sustainability and civic engagement, city government's promotion of Bloomington offering a sense of place, as directions Monroe County government must also take. Does not the future of our at-risk children figure into all of these ideals and initiatives?

Please take some time to let me know how you feel about the County Council's faith in 'voting on a concept'—outlined by Judge Welch's Vision Statement. Compelling speeches by Ron Thompson (Monroe County Youth Services Bureau Director) and Charlotte Zietlow are also documented verbatim in the minutes.

I hope you will find time to read them.

Sincerely,

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