

Pedestrian Bridge – sample opinion

The growing expression of local resident taxpayer opposition to the controversial cross-highway pedestrian bridge is focused on problematic behavior by the former Council and hold-over staff, not the Current Council whose members the public hopes will insist that future Council transactions will be far more transparent and far more extensively documented on the Village website without complicated individual request procedures being necessary.

In addition to the many deficiencies in the current Pedestrian Bridge concept, it should be noted that such a bridge will not moderate - and certainly not cure - the inescapable, multi-hour traffic congestion and back-up caused by vehicles slowing and turning off US 1 to use internal Founders parking, and later egressing back onto the highway. Thus it will accordingly not reduce the necessity or the cost of having Sheriff personnel actively supervise those impacts.

The FDOT feasibility analysis that concluded the Pedestrian Bridge was "... not a cost effective option..." and was "... not warranted ..." at a cost of 1.2 million dollars **was not openly discussed, and therefore not publicly disclosed**, at the former Council approval hearings. If it had been, the current public opposition would have manifested itself much sooner -- they are not "Johnny-come-latelys" as claimed by a prior speaker, but are "Johnny-INFORMED-LATELYS" ! Yet the current design appeared a year later at a significantly inflated cost of 4.7 million dollars (plus some under-estimated local taxpayer-funded, annual operating and maintenance costs) without any follow-up FDOT study that justified it.

Clearly, some persons actively negotiated this nearly 5 million dollar reversal on behalf of former Village Councillor

interests through non-publicly disclosed or discussed contacts out of the sunshine !

Surely, neither the Governor's office nor senior FDOT officials will be comfortable having these highly questionable issues and transactions exposed in the media- and courts - by local citizens groups as a public scandal, and in light of FDOT's multi-Billion dollar annual budget, any Pedestrian Bridge cancellation costs would be literally petty cash for them -- contrary to the just-expressed non-legal, biased, personal opinion of the acting Village Manager.

And any further contacts with FDOT officials should be made directly by newly elected Councilors with electoral reform mandates, not by hold-over, non-elected staff who are on the record advocating the Bridge despite increasingly expressed local resident tax-payer opposition.

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Former Chair, Keys Comp Plan Drafting Committee